

youth & policy
no. 101
Winter 2009

Youth & Policy

Number 101
Winter 2009



The National Youth Agency
Getting it right for young people

Editorial Group:

Aylssa Cowell, Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs, Jean Spence and Naomi Stanton

Associate Editors:

Janet Adams, University of Bedfordshire
Priscilla Alderson, Institute of Education, London
Judith Bessant, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, Australia
Bob Coles, University of York
Bren Cook, Lancashire County Council
Keith Cranwell, University of Greenwich
Michelle Doyle, Youth Worker, London
Roger Green, University of Hertfordshire
John Holmes, Newman College, Birmingham
Gill Millar, South West Regional Youth Work Adviser
Jenny Pearce, University of Bedfordshire
John Pitts, University of Bedfordshire
John Player, Adult Learning Project, Edinburgh
John Rose, Welsh Assembly
Joyce Walker, University of Minnesota, USA
Aniela Wenham, Youth Support Worker, York
Anna Whalen, Freelance Consultant
Elizabeth (Elee) Wood, IUPUI-School of Education, Indianapolis, USA
Tom Wylie, Consultant

Published by:

The National Youth Agency,
Eastgate House,
19–23 Humberstone Road,
Leicester LE5 3GJ.
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Fax: 0116 242 7444
E-mail: nya@nya.org.uk Website: www.nya.org.uk

Proofread by:

CN Proofreaders Tel: 0191 581 2427

Copyright: The NYA, February 2009

The National Youth Agency

supports those involved in young people's personal and social development and works to enable all young people to fulfil their potential as individuals and citizens within a socially just society.

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.

ISSN 0262 9798

Material from the journal may be extracted for study and quotation with acknowledgement of the journal and author(s).

The views expressed in the journal remain those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editorial Group or The National Youth Agency.

Whilst every effort is made to check factual information, the Editorial Group is not responsible for errors in the material published in the journal.

Subscriptions: 0116 242 7427

Advertising: 0116 242 7480

Information for contributors: Inside Back Cover.

Contents

Youth & Policy
no. 101
Winter 2009



Hooligans or rebels? Thinking more critically about citizenship and young people	5
<i>Mae Shaw and Ken McCulloch</i>	
Exploring the spatiality of participation: Teenagers' experiences in an English secondary school	15
<i>Susie Weller</i>	
Full-time UK-based volunteering and the gap year	33
<i>Sue Heath</i>	
Can child employment legislation work?	43
<i>Jim McKechnie, Sandy Hobbs and Seonaid Anderson</i>	
Contested spaces, young people and canals	55
<i>John Holmes</i>	
The 'Lens Model': A practical tool for developing and understanding gender conscious practice	67
<i>Susan Morgan and Ken Harland</i>	
Reviews	81

Contributors

Mae Shaw teaches community education at the University of Edinburgh.

Ken McCulloch teaches community education at the University of Edinburgh.

Susie Weller is Senior Research Fellow at London South Bank University. Her recent work focuses on teenagers, citizenship and social capital.

Sue Heath is Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences at the University of Southampton. She is co-director of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods.

Jim McKechnie is with the Child Employment Research Group, University of the West of Scotland.

Sandy Hobbs is with the Child Employment Research Group, University of the West of Scotland.

Seonaid Anderson is with the Child Employment Research Group, University of the West of Scotland.

John Holmes is Senior Lecturer in Youth and Community Studies, Newman College, Birmingham.

Susie Morgan is with the School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies at the University of Ulster.

Ken Harland is with the School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies at the University of Ulster.

Hooligans or rebels? Thinking more critically about citizenship and young people

Mae Shaw and Ken McCulloch

This paper explores competing explanations of young people's behaviour and their consequent expression in discourses of citizenship and participation. We argue that young people are constructed in particular ways and that those constructions imply different consequences for the way in which citizenship is seen and to what being a citizen might mean. Concepts of citizenship, power and empowerment are critically examined in order to develop an argument about creative participation and democracy, and to consider how alternative 'spaces of participation' might be conceived and enacted.

Keywords: *youth, citizenship, politics, participation*

A striking picture of a 15-year-old delinquent, photographed in the 1920s was used as the frontispiece for Cyril Burt's *The Young Delinquent*, (1925), one of the most influential books on juvenile delinquency in the inter-war period. It was an ambiguous image, for although Burt suggested that the youth's face expressed the psychological disturbance of the adolescent years, it could equally well be seen as expressive of justifiable anger, rebellion and stubborn independence. It could be either the face of the hooligan or the rebel. With much preoccupation in policy and popular opinion about increasing hooliganism in society, it is perhaps timely to reconnect to the ambivalence suggested by this image.

Hooligan or rebel?

There are fundamental differences between hooligans and rebels¹: hooligans are mindless, rebels have a cause however inarticulately expressed; hooligans are disconnected and self-seeking, rebels are making a statement about society more than about themselves; the behaviour of hooligans is irresponsible, the behaviour of defiance and rebellion may be the most responsible behaviour in the face of injustice. This ambiguity suggests that it is possible to make sense of the same thing in very different or even conflicting ways. The important question is who has the power to say what the approved meaning is and through what interests are meanings mediated and (re)presented?

There is currently an unhealthy tendency towards psychologistic (increasingly, genetic) explanations of one kind or another for individual behaviour. See, for example, Tony Taylor's broadside against the current interest in neuro-linguistic programming for young people (Taylor, 2008). Such approaches wilfully ignore the obvious truth that individual experience is always embedded in social structure; that structure is inscribed in personal experience. In sociological terms, the image of irrational and self-serving behaviour presented so

repeatedly in relation to young people might equally be understood as a perfectly rational response to the contradictory and often hypocritical world into which they are socialised. For example, the possessive individualism which characterises the dominant social, economic and political order does not exactly give a message of cooperation and community; nor, indeed, the ritual personalised incivility displayed as popular entertainment in programmes such as 'The Apprentice' or 'Big Brother.' Indeed, it could be argued that a sense of community is deviant to the norm, despite government rhetoric to the contrary. Why should young people be expected to behave differently to their elders and betters? As Sivanandan (2006:7) so unequivocally puts it:

... the transition of the welfare state to the market state ... has altered the priorities of government from the social welfare of the people to the economic welfare of corporations, which in turn replaces moral values with commercial values: caring with indifference, altruism with selfishness, generosity with greed ...

The socialisation of young people into such a moral vacuum has serious consequences, not least because it actually reinforces that which it seeks to condemn. It is also important to remember, but conveniently forgotten, that corporate greed, selfishness and indifference have infinitely greater social consequences than the anti-social behaviour of a few individuals, however disagreeable that may be. It may also be important to recognise that there are other influences on young people, some of them more positive than the quotation implies.

Nevertheless, the dominant culture, whilst promising endless choices, offers few real options to many young people. They can seek to emulate the cultural sources of power, as manifest in the empty celebrityisation of public life; they can conform to the limitations imposed on them through what Miliband (1994) calls a 'hegemony of resignation'; they can disengage from or reject the world around them through various forms of inward or outward abuse, or they can try and change the world for the better. It is the latter instinct which surely needs to be cultivated wherever possible, in a way which may challenge, enrich and perhaps even change the nature of democracy. Which of these responses is dominant will, at least to some extent, reflect relative position in society. It is important to acknowledge that, whilst in some respects young people might be considered as homogeneous, in other critical respects their experience is significantly mediated through class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, dis-ability and so on. Writing about poor young men, for example, Ferguson and Lavalette describe vividly the processes of alienation which profoundly shape their lives:

Excluded from a commodified society and culture, denied access to the world of work – or facing the prospect of occasional, casual 'poor work' – divided from and suspicious of others who are portrayed as competitors or a 'threat', increasingly controlled by policing and welfare agencies ... (2004:305)

There is clearly unequal distribution of choice and opportunity and any theory of youth participation which does not take account of these social divisions will not be adequate to address those issues of oppression, exploitation and inequality which underlie personal behaviours and the parameters of choice.

The general point to emphasise is that if young people are seen or constructed in particular ways, then those ways of seeing them might have quite different consequences for the way in which citizenship is seen in relation to *them* – and to what being a citizen might mean. For example, if poor young people are constantly regarded as what Richard Holloway (2002) calls ‘internal exiles’ – inside outsiders – then they will not be regarded as legitimately entitled to the rights of citizenship. It is hardly surprising then if the causes of their failure to engage constructively with society is perceived as a lack of social obligation rather than the social effects of wider economic change which have left them at a serious disadvantage.

A contemporary study of young people’s understandings of their own citizenship (Smith, et al, 2005) throws a helpful light on the ways that these issues are understood by young people themselves. It shows that the ‘respectable economic independence’ model is widely understood to create exclusionary differences between young people with different levels of education and their consequential prospects of employment. Predictably, young people characterised as ‘outsiders’ tended not to enter long-term careers or tertiary education, and defined themselves as lacking important attributes of full citizenship, particularly independence and power. In addition, they were found to conceive of their own citizenship in ways that were complex, ‘multi-dimensional, fluid and dynamic.’ In this sense, policy might usefully shift its basis from a deficit view to one which recognises young people’s potential contributions as ‘socially constructive citizens.’ This highlights an important role for youth workers in creating the educational conditions in which young people can begin to make sense of their experience and regain a sense of their own collective power.

Power and empowerment

The idea of empowerment is ubiquitous within contemporary policy discourse. Yet empowerment – in the sense of making people more powerful – is a notoriously complex concept, despite the simplistic propaganda peddled by government. That there is a serious limit to what individuals can do in relation to the real sites of power in society may be one of the keys to understanding the disenchantment many young people appear to feel. Ferguson and Lavelette argue that it is a lack of real power rather than a negative exercise of power which results in destructive behaviour:

It is the lack of control, especially when accompanied by poverty, which frequently leads people to behave in violent or anti-social ways towards themselves and others, and which breeds the despair and frustration that contribute to drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems and family breakdown (2004:305).

Power here is more than the kind of individualistic conception expressed in the banality of ‘girl power,’ for example, and based on the sovereign right of ‘user/chooser’ citizens. In fact, it could be said that reducing social relationships to the interpersonal level in this way actually masks the real unequal power relationships in society, thereby rendering them invisible and un-negotiable. Thus, as Langan (1998) observes, ‘the playground bully appears as a major public menace, while the state ... appears powerless.’ This is an outstanding sleight of hand – but one which has served well to justify the kind of punitive approach to criminal justice which has all but severed the link between inequality and youth crime

(Gilling and Barton, 1997). Personal empowerment is reduced to competing, coping or surviving – as individuals – leaving out (thereby ruling out) any question of social change. Thus are aspirations curbed and wider ambitions thwarted before they can be given thought or expression, with negative consequences for young people themselves and how they are perceived by others.

It has almost become a truism that young people do not generally receive a good press these days. In a survey conducted by *Young People Now* into stories about teenagers in the press, findings showed that 14% of stories were positive, 15% were neutral and 71% were negative, with words like ‘yobs’ or ‘hooligans’ routinely used as shorthand for ‘teenagers’. The question is whether such reports describe reality or create it. To put it another way, and somewhat crudely, is there something inherently wrong with young people, or is there something wrong with the world around them? To begin to address these questions, it is necessary to consider how policy constructs young people, how this has changed over time and whether it makes life better or worse for them.

Certainly the attenuated transition from childhood to adulthood associated with a world of work which no longer exists might predictably cause a crisis of identity as many have argued (see Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). An *Observer* report in 2004 pointed out that ‘during the past 30 years we have completely redefined life for 16-18 year olds. In the mid-seventies, about 70% of 16 year olds were working and earning money; now the figure is around 5%’ (*Observer*, 2004). This sea change is clearly significant. However, the crisis, if such exists, is surely as much a crisis for society as it is for young people because it raises profound questions about whether young people consider themselves to be a valued part of society or a problem for society. The answer will most certainly affect the way in which they behave socially. If young people are defined primarily as social problems, rather than active and valued social and political agents then they are, in a real sense, infantilised and fundamentally marginalised from power. And they have behaved accordingly – or voted with their feet. For example, the Electoral Commission (2002) found that only 39% of young people between 18-24 voted, compared with 70% of those 65 and over. Of those non-voting young people, the majority were from particularly ‘disadvantaged’ areas. When attention shifts to specifically youth oriented institutions an even more depressing, though perhaps predictable, picture emerges. For example a MORI survey of ‘Young People’s Participation in Youth Work, Arts, Culture and Sport’ (2005) showed that less than 1% of young people in Scotland aged 15-18 are involved in youth councils or other participation forums

This may tell us that poor young people are not interested in formal politics, including those forums which have been specifically designed with them in mind, but it also raises serious questions about whether democratic politics is genuinely interested in young people as active subjects in politics rather than simply as problematic objects of policy. A different way of framing the question would be to ask whether democratic politics can afford not to be interested in young people as political actors because of what they offer that is distinctive, and because of what is absent if they are not there. To address these questions, it is necessary to think more critically about the relationship between citizenship, democracy and the political lives of young people.

Politics, democracy and citizenship: remaking the connections

Citizenship is the practice through which subjects engage in democracy. Democracy has a long and complex history which demonstrates that it has been as much about exclusion as inclusion; about legitimising certain groups and interests whilst marginalising or excluding others; about securing powerful interests and containing dissent. Democracy has therefore been a historic site of struggle between those trying to retain power and those who have challenged it. Where rights have been extended it has always been because they have first been demanded. In this sense, democracy has never simply been something to be handed down from above through government fiat, but something which has had to be struggled over from below, a truth which needs to be learnt afresh by each new generation.

Democracy can simply be regarded as an end in itself – a set of institutions, a devolved parliament, various youth forums – which is concerned with achieving conformity and consensus and in which the role of the state is a managerial one. Or democracy can be regarded as a continuous process of political negotiation and deliberation in which difference and dissent is regarded as an asset through which society is collectively or communally enhanced. This also means that democracy cannot simply be prescribed as a managerial procedure but, rather, must be enacted as a political process through which people form their identity as much as express it (see Fyfe, 2003). One fundamental consequence of an inclusive participatory democracy is the presence of different and, inevitably, sometimes conflicting interests. Historically, politics has expressed the recognition and negotiation of competing interests. That sense of politics needs urgently to be revived.

This is especially fruitful territory for those who work with young people to create opportunities to try and open up some of what has become closed. If policy is formulated through deficit categories like the socially excluded, anti-social behaviour, and so on, young people may not have the opportunity to express their own identities and experience, if necessary in opposition to those identities which are thrust upon them (increasingly by the market). Ellis's (2004) findings in relation to young people's perceptions of their responsibilities for others' human rights are instructive. This study showed that the sense of responsibility for others' rights was contingent on identification with those others, and was generally viewed as 'somebody else's responsibility', particularly that of government. Perhaps, most revealingly, the same study showed that a key obstacle to seeing oneself as personally responsible was the sense of being relatively powerless to effect change. It could be said, therefore, that one of the first lessons of political citizenship is the necessity to challenge and resist both negative definitions and the material conditions which produce them. Education for democracy should equip people to say 'no' when they need to; to assert themselves as a social and political force.

Barham (2004) has shown that young people do assert themselves as individuals or groups in a variety of ways. The problem is, arguably, that they have become disconnected from contributing to any communal or collective public expression because they see wider politics as not for them. And whilst they may be prepared to campaign around single issues, this is largely reactive, dealing with society's problems rather than 'dreaming of a new society.' For that, there is a need to revive the 'sociological imagination' – the capacity to see the

critical relationship between personal troubles and public issues (Wright Mills, 1970) – to see themselves in society. Britain is a deeply unequal society and inequality is not something which can be remedied by the behaviour of individuals. The only way it can be addressed is structurally, through major redistribution of wealth and power. What individuals can do however is to contribute to the creation of a political culture which might challenge the way in which power is exercised to sustain inequality. For this task, young people need to develop a critique and analysis of the world around them. Whether contemporary youth work can provide such political space is an urgent question. Recent research into the everyday practice of youth workers conducted by Durham University and Weston Spirit (Spence et al, 2007), found that the emphasis on managerial forms of evaluation ‘in terms of “impact” does not account for the importance of silence and listening in the work.’ In other words, the clamour for measurement drowns out opportunities to really listen – and to hear. This is to treat democracy as essentially a one way process, and citizens as conforming consumers, a trend to be firmly resisted.

Thinking more critically about citizenship

Citizenship can be thought about in different ways depending on how you understand the meaning of democracy and the role of politics in society. In the liberal tradition, citizenship is regarded as an individually ascribed status – to be a citizen – with rights and responsibilities. In this version, young people are regarded as citizens in the making; as ‘becoming’ rather than being, which doesn’t occur until the age of legal franchise. Education for citizenship here is characteristically based on how the political system works and how to use it responsibly. However, the balance between rights and responsibilities is not by any means static. Thirty years ago the rights of citizenship were guaranteed and protected by a welfare state which was intended to reduce risk for individuals. In current times, the balance has changed so that rights are not an absolute entitlement, but rather are dependent on fulfilment of obligations, a reward for conformity, particularly the obligation to act in the job market and to become ‘employable’. Citizenship here is bound up with economic participation either as worker or customer. Alongside this, claiming benefits is presented as unwelcome dependency and those who claim them are derided as ‘spongers’ or burdens on society. Those who are not economically active (including many young people) are not regarded as good citizens in these terms. In summary, this approach prioritises the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens over those of social obligation.

The civic republican tradition, on the other hand, constructs citizenship as a collectively asserted social and political practice, in which people act as citizens. This approach opens citizenship up so that the interests of the wider society are prioritised. In other words, it is what people bring to the table in their distinctive relationships with each other which is the vital essence of citizenship. In this approach, citizenship is not simply something which is an end product but it is also a process through which people have an opportunity to be active social and political agents in their own right – in which individuals and groups actively participate in their community or act outside of the existing political system in an attempt to influence the wider external environment. Such participation can be limited to conformity or it can mean dissent; dissenting from acceptance of those conditions which produce and reinforce inequality and presenting alternatives. In the face of injustice, exploitation or

inequality, it could be argued that dissenting is the only responsible thing to do. Witness the protests against the continuing occupation of Iraq, or for a more equitable and sustainable world as seen in the membership of environmental and anti-capitalist groupings.

Such an approach allows for the presence of dissent as a potentially positive and maybe even necessary ingredient for the development of a just and equal society and may, critically, affect how young people behave when they are legally political citizens. In other words, these two approaches should be regarded as symbiotic, because it is often through action outside of the political system, that rights are demanded and eventually extended. It is crucial that rights are extended and defended through citizenship, but it is also important to question exactly what rights people have and who has them. For example, what about the right to interfere, as Bauman (2001) puts it, as much as 'the right to liberty without interference'?

Creative citizenship in practice

The generation of an active and engaged political culture requires the possibility of 'interfering' creatively, of expressing oneself whilst also contributing to the creation of a vocabulary of communal values. We need young people to show us what political citizenship should mean through the prism of their own experience, particularly as exiles driven out of their own society.

John Dewey (1958) the educational philosopher, argued that human beings are subject to what he called 'impulsions', a kind of transformational energy which comes from the accumulation of their experience of the world. However, if people are hindered or not encouraged (through the wider social and economic arrangements, education, biography, family, personal motivation and so on) to develop their expressive side positively, then the potential for these 'impulsions' can wither away or become distorted through lack of opportunities for fulfilment into negative, abusive or harmful behaviour. This is why, in work with young people, activities which engage their expressive side are so effective in redirecting creative energy. Following Dewey, we would argue that an essential feature of human beings is the need to express themselves not just artistically and emotionally, but also politically. Without the possibility of doing so in a serious way, the capacity to do so becomes diminished or diverted into less socially useful activities. Dewey puts it thus:

There is no expression without excitement, without turmoil. An inner agitation that is discharged at once in a laugh or a cry, passes away with its utterance. To discharge is to get rid of, to dismiss; to express is to stay by, to carry forward in development, to work out to completion. A gush of tears may bring relief, a spasm of destruction may give outlet to inward rage.... What is sometimes called an act of self-expression might better be termed one of self-exposure ... in itself, it is only spewing forth (Dewey, 1958:78).

In other words, there can be an inner urge, but nothing exciting to express. The significance of what Dewey says here for educators is that if we are interested in the potential for young people to express their experience of the world in ways which re-create or challenge that world, then we must be interested in expression rather than simply emotional discharge –

though outburst may provide a good starting point. In other words, young people have to have something significant to express – and that is an educational challenge which needs to be developed, nurtured and informed as a collective enterprise.

If democracy is to be regarded as a political process in which citizens engage with each other and significant institutions about political priorities, then those most removed from power must be able to imagine democracy; to imagine a different world. People need to be able to envisage a democratic society in order to be committed to one. In a profound way, marginalised groups participate in bringing democracy into being through their own struggles to be heard, and the energy and new insights they bring. Such engaged insights are what should inform what is meant by inclusion and participation. Nancy Fraser (2005), in her groundbreaking work on social justice, addresses what she sees as the fundamental problem with the way in which it is currently framed in democratic discourse: 'It is not only the substance of justice, but also the frame which is in dispute.' In developing her argument, she reprises her familiar distinction between economic and cultural dimensions of justice – referred to as the 'politics of redistribution' and the 'politics of recognition' respectively. To this she adds a third dimension which is crucial to the argument of this paper: representation. This concerns 'the procedures that structure public processes of contestation ... the terms on which those included in the political community air their claims and adjudicate their disputes'. This brings into sharp focus the problem of misrepresentation which comes about through what Fraser calls 'mis-framing' – the way in which certain interests and potential claims are left out of the frame of justice altogether. The 'politics of framing', expressed in this way, draws our attention to what and who is missing from the sphere of political influence. As Fraser puts it:

For those denied the chance to press their claims, struggles against maldistribution and misrecognition cannot proceed ... no redistribution or recognition without representation (2005:78)

This goes to the heart of the contemporary problem of citizenship for young people; because if they are framed in ways which reinforce their powerlessness they have no way in which to articulate, challenge or change their position. And if this kind of vicious cycle of marginalisation is further reinforced, or at least insufficiently addressed in democratic life then that is the ultimate irony for the citizenship of young people. The range of potential participatory spaces needs to be expanded to take into account the consequences of mis-framing.

There is a useful distinction to be made between participatory spaces or opportunities made available by the powerful (provided spaces – crudely, top down) and spaces which are chosen by those who are marginalised from power (demanded spaces – bottom up) (Cornwall, 2002). Provided spaces may be organised and operationalised in ways which permit only limited influence, framing the problem, setting the agenda and the rules and cultivating consent. These spaces for citizenship participation only give meaningful opportunities to citizens when they are open spaces, and when those who issue the invitation are held to account. Such spaces may offer opportunities for critical involvement, for although they may be produced by the powerful, they can be filled by those with alternative visions whose involvement transforms their possibilities, in the process pushing

the boundaries. In other words, they 'may be created with one purpose in mind and used by those who engage [in them] for something quite different'. In this case, the unintended consequences of such participation may be more significant than the intended ones. However, making the most of the invitation relies on a responsive state and an aware and organised citizenry with a highly developed reflexive capacity to look beyond the established 'frame.'

In order to engage with progressive social change, youth work needs to foster and support the potential for young people to develop a voice outside the formal officially sanctioned structures for participation: to demand to be heard on their own terms in spaces of their own choosing or in solidarity with others. Of course the two are not unconnected. If young people are going to be involved in the 'provided spaces' of representative structures, they must have something and somebody to represent – something to express.

There is a need for political spaces at different levels, some of which provide autonomous unmediated opportunities for people to express themselves politically. In any case, young people will take spaces if they are not given to them, and they will not always be productive for themselves or the wider society. Through engaging young people in programmes which seek to develop their sociological imagination and, collectively, to act on the world around them, they may come to feel they have a stake in changing it for the benefit of all. The licensed irresponsibility peddled by the market as it preys on young people is part of the problem. Through the kind of sustained and committed engagement to young people characterised by the best kind of youth work, so-called hooligans can perhaps be turned into active, committed and productive rebels. What is disastrous for young people and for democracy is when potential rebels are turned into real hooligans.

Note

1. The title comes from Humphries, S (1981) *Hooligans or Rebels?: An Oral History of Working Class Childhood, 1889-1939* Oxford; Blackwell Publishers.

References

- Barham, N. (2004) *Dis/connected: Why our kids are turning their backs on everything we thought we knew*, London: Ebury Press.
- Bauman, Z.(2001) *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Burt, C. (1925) *The Young Delinquent*, London; University of London Press.
- Cornwall, A. (2002) 'Locating citizen participation' *IDS Bulletin* 33 (2), 49-58.
- Dewey, J. (1958) *Art as Experience*, New York, Capricorn Books.
- Electoral Commission (2002) *Voter engagement and young people*. London, The Electoral Commission.
- Ellis, S. J. (2004) 'Young people and social action: Who is taking Responsibility for Positive Social Change?' *Journal of Youth Studies*, 7 (1) pp 89-102.
- Ferguson, I. and Lavelette, M. (2004) 'Beyond power discourse: alienation and social work',

- British Journal of Social Work*, 34, 297-312.
- Fraser, N. (2005) 'Reframing justice in a globalizing world', *New Left Review*, 36, 69-88.
- Furlong, A. Cartmel, F. 1997 *Young People and Social Change: Individualisation and Risk in Late Modernity* Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Fyfe, I. (2003) 'Young Scots' in J. Crowther, I. Martin, and M. Shaw, (eds.) *Renewing Democracy in Scotland* Leicester: NIACE.
- Gilling, D. and Barton, A. (1997) 'Crime prevention and community safety: A new home for social policy?' *Critical Social Policy*, 17(3) 63-83.
- Holloway, R. (2002) 'Bringing the exiles home', *Concept* 12 (3) 7-15.
- Langan, M. (1998) 'Radical social work', in (eds.) , R. Adams, L. Dominelli, and M. Payne, *Social Work: Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Miliband, R. (1994) *Socialism for a Sceptical Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mills, C. W. (1970) *The Sociological Imagination*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- MORI (2005) *Being Young in Scotland 2005: Young People's Participation in Youth Work, Arts, Culture and Sport* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Education Department.
- Observer* (5.12.2004) 'The kids aren't all right', Maureen Rice-Knight.
- Russell, A. (2004) 'The Truth About Youth? Media Portrayals of Young People and Politics in Britain' *Journal of Public Affairs* 4 (4) pp.347-354.
- Sivanandan, A. (2006) 'Race, terror and civil society', *Race and Class*, 47 (3) 1-8.
- Smith, N., Lister, R., Middleton, S., and Cox, L. (2005) 'Young People as Real Citizens: Towards an Inclusionary Understanding of Citizenship' *Journal of Youth Studies* 8 (4) pp 425-443.
- Spence, J., Devanney, C. and Noonan, K. (2007) *Youth Work: Voices of Practice*, Leicester: The National Youth Agency.
- Taylor, T. (2008) 'From social education to social engineering' Unpublished conference presentation, *Youth and Policy* Symposium Leeds, March. *Young People Now* www.ypnmagazine.com/campaign/index.cfm

Exploring the spatiality of participation: Teenagers' experiences in an English secondary school

Susie Weller

Schools constitute one of the most significant spaces in which children and teenagers learn about and experience participation in decision-making. Drawing on a three-year study this paper explores young teenagers' understandings and experiences of participation particularly in light of policy measures such as the introduction of statutory citizenship education in English secondary schools in 2002. In order to explore teenagers' opportunities for participation within different aspects of school life the paper places specific emphasis on the spatiality of participation examining informal, everyday engagements alongside the efficacy of more formal structures.

Keywords: *citizenship, participation, school, sense of place, teenage*

Introducing the spatiality of teenagers' participation

Opportunities for teenagers¹ to participate within the lives of their schools and neighbourhoods are a relatively recent phenomenon. The past two decades have witnessed a plethora of important drives, which have promoted children's rights and participation, most notably the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1990). In England, policy initiatives such as the *2004 Children Act* (OPSI, 2004) and the *Every Child Matters Green paper* (DfES, 2003) have elevated the role of children and young people in decision-making (Whitty and Whisby, 2007). Accordingly, such foci have infiltrated broader policy agendas that seek to tackle social exclusion (Hill et al, 2004), as well as, the work of practitioners in a range of arenas including, but not limited to, children's services, community development, education, health and social care. Whilst wholly worthy, the push towards developing youth-centred spaces of participation has resulted in the development of a distinct set of political institutions, which generally operate outside of the adult realm. In these terms children and teenagers are merely afforded the status of 'taking part' as full participation is reserved for adult citizens (Hart, 1992; Wellard et al, 1997).

Schools constitute one of the most significant spaces in which teenagers learn about and experience citizenship, democracy and participation. This paper draws on some of the findings from a three-year study² that explored teenagers' understandings and experiences of participation in light of the introduction of statutory citizenship education in English secondary schools in 2002. Focus, therefore, centres on the lives of young teenagers; the group most likely to be affected by compulsory citizenship education (for further discussion of teenagers' societal positioning or participation in arenas outside school please see Weller, 2006a; 2007). In this paper, particular emphasis is placed on the spatiality of participation. Arguably, space is fundamental in moulding political actions, rights, duties and a sense of belonging (Painter and Philo, 1995; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2004). By adopting a spatial analysis I seek to highlight the ways in which inclusion in, and exclusion from participation

in decision-making within schools is manifested spatially, as well as, the alternative and often hidden understandings and acts of citizenship and participation in which many teenagers engage. The paper draws upon McGregor's (2003) understandings of space as dynamic and recursively reconstituted in addition to Gordon et al's (2000) distinction between the official school, the informal school and the physical school. In doing so, teenagers' opportunities for *meaningful* participation, in which their voices are heard and valued, are explored within different spatial contexts, such as the school council, citizenship classes and the playground.

I begin with a brief exploration of participation within schools both in terms of theoretical approaches to democracy in education, as well as, recent policy initiatives. Subsequently I outline the study from which the paper stems, before exploring teenagers' opportunities for, and experiences of participation in both formal and informal arenas. I will reflect critically on the extent to which the recent plethora of policy measures has afforded teenagers' spaces of participation, which they regard as meaningful and effective in promoting their experiences and opinions.

Contextualising education, democracy and participation

In line with a growing international focus on children's rights, England has witnessed a raft of policies and pedagogic initiatives, which have seemingly sought to develop and support young people's opportunities for participation (May, 2005; Whitty and Whisby, 2007). Within secondary schools such measures have predominantly centred on promoting 'student voice', encouraging the development of school councils and legislating for the provision of citizenship education. Nevertheless, these initiatives are couched within a quasi-market system that prioritises competition and individual achievement, as measured in terms of qualifications (see Ward, 2004). Arguably, this leaves little room for practising democracy. Moreover, the 'western' conceptualisation of youth as a 'becoming process' means that teenagers' schooling is predominantly evaluated in terms of its advantages for the future (Cockburn, 1998; Prout, 2000).

Participation and democracy in education is by no means a new phenomenon and it is beyond the realms of this paper to engage fully with the development of such 'alternative' and often radical perspectives (see Hicks, 2004). Nevertheless, it is fruitful to note the influential work of John Dewey (1916, 1938) who challenged traditional approaches to education describing them as future-oriented, encompassing external impositions and lacking in opportunities for participation. Conversely, democratic approaches include elements such as participation, collaboration, shared and experiential learning and importantly, democratic practices. In these terms democracy transcends a form of governance and instead becomes part of everyday life (Starkey, 2005). There are a number of examples of both independent and progressive state schools that held central the notion of 'student voice' and democracy in the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006). At the heart of such schools was the recognition that students should be given space to make their own decisions and develop their identities. One such school was St George-in-the-East Secondary Modern; a state school in East London, which between 1945 and 1955 witnessed some of the most radical approaches to 'student voice'

under the leadership of head teacher Alex Bloom (see Fielding, 2005).

The notion of democracy in education has not, however, been uncontroversial. Writing in the late 1980s Mary-Anne Raywid questioned the suitability of applying political terminology to education. Part of her critique centred on the conflict she saw between fostering democracy within the classroom and the demands placed on teachers (Raywid, 1987). Taking a more collaborative view of staff-student relations, Michael Fielding provides a valuable critical perspective on more contemporary 'student voice' movements. He advocates a 'person-centred learning community' approach in which schools foster meaningful inter-generational dialogue and 'radical collegiality' between staff and students (Fielding, 2006, 2007).

Within contemporary England anxieties about teenage apathy, anti-social behaviour and a more general decline in interest in formal politics have undoubtedly fuelled concerns about engagement in democratic institutions and processes, exacerbating the need for a more coherent and solid foundation for the teaching of democracy in schools (Weller, 2007). The 'democratic deficit' describes 'western' governments' concerns about the impact of more widespread political disengagement (Kerr, 1999; Cunningham and Lavalette, 2004). Many have argued that the current government's fervour for citizenship education is part of an international resurgence following the 'democratisation' of former communist states, and a general decrease in engagement in formal politics in more liberal states (Halpern et al., 2002; Biesta and Lawy, 2006).

In many respects such policy drives focus upon formal spaces of participation, for as much as anything these are the arenas in which the State has most influence. Moreover, the principles underpinning, for example the citizenship curriculum, speak volumes about the way in which young people's status as non/semi-citizens is construed in contemporary society. The curriculum is founded on conventional notions of citizenship associated with the primacy of the nation-state; formal participation; and with age boundaries demarcating who constitutes a full citizen. In these terms those under 18 are not regarded as competent and instead are viewed as citizens-in-the-making; empty vessels in need of training in the ways of democracy, social and moral responsibility and community involvement. Policy emphasis therefore centres on developing citizens-of-the-future rather than valuing teenagers' roles in the here-and-now. In contrast this paper takes a more holistic view, focusing on the way opportunities or struggles for participation (and the spaces in which they are enacted) form part of everyday life at school. Accordingly, what follows is influenced by the work of progressive thinkers such as Rudolph Steiner and Maria Montessori who recognised the value of children's lives in the here-and-now (Avison, 1998; Rudel, 1998; Standing, 1962; Hicks, 2004) and contemporary research that explores participation in young people's everyday lives (see, for example, Percy-Smith and Malone, 2001; Clark and Percy-Smith, 2006; Percy-Smith, 2006; Weller, 2007).

Introducing the study

The doctoral study, from which this paper stems, explored teenagers' spaces of citizenship within a number of 'communities' on the Isle of Wight: a rural county located off the south

coast of England. The research focused on teenagers' exclusion from local governance in rural areas, the influence of citizenship education on the political actions of teenagers, and the extent to which teenagers shape their schools and neighbourhoods through their own interpretations and acts of citizenship. In total around 600 participants contributed to the research via one or a number of mixed methods.

The study was framed conceptually by the New Social Studies of Childhood (NSSC) which promotes a number of key values that seek to challenge past understandings of childhood (Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Morrow, 2000). In short, the NSSC advocates research that is conducted *with* rather than *on* children. Secondly, the NSSC regards childhood as a social construction. Thirdly, the NSSC denounces the notion that childhood is a universal category and instead recognises diversity in children's lives in terms of their societal backgrounds and the period in history in which they live. Finally, the NSSC challenges past conceptions by acknowledging that children are social actors in their own right. This is not to say that children's agency is not controlled or limited by external factors.

Fieldwork was conducted in two key arenas between 2000 and 2004. Firstly, in order to gather teenagers' views and experiences over a sustained period of time one co-educational secondary school was recruited. Many of the teenagers attending the school live in some of the most economically disadvantaged wards in South-East England. Within the school setting a number of 'children'-centred techniques were used. Firstly, an exploratory survey, administered prior to the introduction of compulsory citizenship education, was completed by 425 willing respondents aged 13-16 (85 per cent response rate). The survey explored teenagers' understandings of citizenship and citizenship education in addition to their own lived experiences of participation. Five months after the introduction of compulsory citizenship education a follow-up survey was completed by 172 teenagers aged 14-15 (54 per cent response rate). Respondents were invited to evaluate citizenship education with reference to their present and future lives. Over a period of eighteen months 20 teenagers, aged 13-14, worked on a number of participatory methods including diary writing, photography and individual interviews/discussions in friendship groups, as well as informal chats and e-mail exchange. In addition, observational work in citizenship lessons, teaching planning meetings and policy-orientated conferences was completed.

Fieldwork was also conducted in the wider communities surrounding the school. Two key methods were developed in conjunction with participants' suggestions and were used to explore teenagers' exclusion and participation within their local communities from the perspectives of the wider population. Local residents were invited to engage with substantive issues from the research via a local web forum and a community radio phone-in discussion (please see Weller, 2006b). Participants were informed of the nature of the research and potential outcomes and in total 50 councillors, parents, local residents and teenagers contributed to such broader debate. This data provided valuable contextual material whilst simultaneously promoting teenagers' often unheard voices.

Throughout the research considerable attention was afforded to the ethical and methodological issues inherent in research with young teenagers, not least issues of power (please see Barker and Weller, 2003a; 2003b; Weller, 2006b). In attempting to go some way to (re)address power relations between researcher and participant two processes of

negotiation were developed to ensure teenagers were actively involved in the research process. In the first instance, two advisors, aged 13 and 16, were recruited to shape the direction of the research, particularly during the initial stages. Neither were involved in the project as participants and instead acted as consultants providing invaluable advice and guidance. The second process of negotiation concerned the active involvement of project participants in all aspects of the research process from suggesting techniques to providing new avenues for investigation.

At the outset consent was sought from the Local Education Authority, staff within the school and parents. Potential participants were provided with comprehensive 'young people-friendly' information sheets and verbal explanations. Consent from participants was sought continuously throughout the process both with respect to their involvement in different activities and the dissemination of material. Several chose to opt in and out of different elements. Participants elected either to be identified by a pseudonym or by their real name³.

'It's a good school ... it does listen': **Formal spaces of participation**

The first set of findings with which this paper engages relate to teenagers' experiences of more formal spaces of participation. Citizenship education and the school council are used as illustrative examples.

Citizenship in the classroom

In September 2002 citizenship education became a compulsory element of the secondary school curriculum in England. Prior to its introduction there was a degree of optimism that the subject would challenge dominant representations of childhood (Wyness, 2000). Indeed, the final report of the *Advisory Group on Citizenship Education* brought to the fore a number of key issues relating to children's competency, not least the importance of making citizenship relevant both to young people's present lives and future roles (QCA, 1998). Since September 2002 several authors have been far more critical with regard to the influence of citizenship education as young teenagers continue to be viewed as non-citizens (James and James, 2004; Weller, 2007). In this study, citizenship education did appear to raise teenagers' awareness of many issues. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of respondents were not interested in the subject for two fundamental reasons: the lack of attention paid to teenagers' present lives and a shortage of *meaningful* and inspiring opportunities for participation.

Five months after the subject became compulsory 58 per cent (n=172) stated that they were not enjoying citizenship lessons. For many, relevancy was imperative to their attitudes towards the subject. The majority (63%) of participants believed citizenship education would be useful both now and in the future. A minority (16%) believed that it would be of direct relevance to them now, whilst 21 per cent believed such lessons would only be of value for the future. For a significant proportion the subject matter was often equated with adult-oriented participation and of perceived limited relevance since there were few opportunities for citizenship education to be reflected in practice. Janna highlighted this point:

[... it would be useful] ...more in the future. Now 'cos I don't really care about voting or anything or who's the Prime Minister 'cos I don't really know much about it. As soon as I get to 18 where I can vote, I mean I'll start getting interested in it but it's just ... it's something I don't need to know at the moment ...

Teenagers' exclusion from formal spaces of participation does little to encourage engagement in citizenship at school. Moreover, there was a statistical relationship (95 per cent level of significance) between participants' interest in citizenship education and their involvement in a local campaign or project (for example, helping to develop local facilities such as skate parks). Teenagers who had already participated in some form were more likely to be enjoying citizenship lessons (55%). A pre-existing interest in the 'community' appears to aid engagement in the subject. Yet many of the activities in which participants were involved, such as developing their own skate parks, fall outside more conventional understandings of participation and were seldom drawn upon in the classroom. Blaug (2002) distinguishes between 'incumbent' and 'critical' democracy whereby 'incumbent' democracy refers to compliance, whilst 'critical' democracy refers to alternative forms of citizenship such as struggle and protest (Faulks, 2006). The citizenship curriculum appears to endorse a more incumbent notion based on '*helpful involvement*', whilst the actions of many teenagers reflect a more critical understanding of democracy with respect to the alternative (and perhaps more controversial) acts of engagement in which many participate (further examples are detailed in Weller, 2003; 2007). Arguably, the government's mission to counter teenage apathy is cautious of the potentially opposing and/or conflicting outcomes. Perhaps then, citizenship education is not only about creating future citizens but also about institutionalising, controlling and shaping the kind of participation in which teenagers may legitimately engage.

Citizenship education, as an arena for fostering teenagers' participation, also has shortcomings in the way it is presented for it is embedded in an education system that affords few opportunities for students to participate in decision-making over learning. In the study those most likely to be disinterested in citizenship education described non-participatory or uninspiring teaching styles as one boy discussed:

I dislike the subject immensely as we are not allowed to discuss any of our own views ... we simply copy laws from a textbook.

The majority of survey participants favoured more participatory and innovative methods of teaching and learning including: the internet (mentioned by 52 per cent of respondents) and videos/DVDs (mentioned by 47 per cent of respondents). Several teenagers cited practical participation and discussion as a favourable method. Nevertheless, traditional and didactic approaches appear common (Kerr et al, 2004; Ireland et al, 2006). In this study, several participants discussed with great enthusiasm examples of lessons where they could contribute their own thoughts and where they believed teaching staff welcomed and respected their opinions. Funda and Nikki drew upon experiences in their science lessons to highlight the differences between teachers' and students' preferences over teaching and learning:

Funda: *Our teacher he ... 'cos we only have him for one lesson a week he actually sits*

there and says 'what do you want to do next lesson as long as it's scientific' ... so we get to choose what we do and he'll make it scientific for us

Susie: *Do you think you learn more doing it that way?*

Funda: *Yeah. It's more fun. It sits in your head more as well*

Nikki: *'cos when you're bored in a lesson ...*

Funda: *It goes in one ear ...*

Nikki: *... you don't pay as much attention. Yeah it just goes in one ear and out the other. But if you're enjoying it you remember it.*

Nikki and Funda highlight not only differentials in teenagers' learning experiences but also in the deployment of authority and power. Affording teenagers some power over their learning appears to have positive outcomes on their engagement (Weller, 2003).

Citizenship education should (and has the potential to) be at the heart of fostering democratic principles within schools. Nevertheless, a number of fundamental problems exist with the current curriculum (for a more in-depth analysis please see Weller, 2007). Firstly, the very rigid and conventional notions of 'citizenship' adopted do not appear to recognise less conventional forms of participation or provide teenagers with the space to challenge the status quo. Secondly, the underlying assumption that young people are merely citizens-in-the-making undermines the active contributions that many already make to their schools and communities. Within classrooms, emphasis still appears to be placed on didactic techniques and there is little evidence to suggest that teenagers' own experiences are incorporated into the curriculum (Weller, 2007). For many teenagers citizenship education falls short of being a *meaningful* space of participation.

The school council

Over the past few years policy measures, such as the *2002 Education Act*, have seemingly recognised the importance of consulting young people (OPSI, 2002). As a result school councils have come to be regarded as the epicentre of student voice and democracy: important arenas for fostering more effective learning environments and shaping students' behaviour (Alderson, 2000; McColloch, 2000; Crick, 2002; James and James, 2004). Several evaluations of the efficacy of such councils have been undertaken. For example, in 1999 the *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children* (NSPCC) conducted a sample evaluation of schools in England and Wales concluding that whilst in just over half of the schools restrictions were placed on the subject matter discussed, in the majority of cases students were able to shape the agenda of meetings (Baginsky and Hannam, 1999). Other research also highlights examples of good practice (OFSTED, 2003; James and James, 2004; Hudson, 2005). Nevertheless, a number of studies have also shown that school councils can be tokenistic and ineffective (Lister et al, 2001; Hine et al, 2004). Priscilla Alderson's (2000) comprehensive survey, for example, found that less than one fifth of young people considered the forum effective.

In this study, whilst the school council was regarded ideologically as good practice, there was some degree of ambivalence over whether it constituted a *meaningful* space of participation. For those who viewed it in a positive light the school council provided a much needed arena in which teenagers could voice their opinions, raise awareness of their perspectives and provide a space in which they could be taken seriously. School councils,

therefore, have the potential to help (re)establish relationships between staff and students as well as providing important insights into the thoughts and experiences of teenagers today. Referring to the case study school Janna said:

It's a good ... good school. It's um ... It does listen to young people even though most people wouldn't think it does, but it does do it.

Several participants cited examples of how the school council had brought about very real and tangible outcomes, as Loki and Agnuz discussed:

Loki: *We did ask for some pool tables, didn't we?*

Agnuz: *Oh yeah*

Loki: *We asked the teachers um ... the student council asked the teachers if we could have some pool tables er ... we got them!*

Not only did Loki and Agnuz highlight their positive experience of the school council but Loki also inferred that the student population had ownership of the school council, quite distinct from being a partnership between staff and students (Weller, 2007). Many participants had not, however, used the school council. Some simply had had no reason to raise an issue or request, whilst others, such as Kat and Kimbo, were more cynical about the likely outcomes:

Susie: *Do you use the school council or anything like that?*

Kimbo: *No I don't use the school council*

Kat: *No*

Kimbo: *No 'cos teachers never listen!*

One further reason for such scepticism was that some felt other teenagers did not take the school council seriously and instead made 'silly' requests. As schools are so rigidly structured and teenagers are rarely consulted, it is not unremarkable that some doubt the effectiveness of the school council. As a result of these 'silly' requests some felt that teachers would not take other issues seriously, as Gumdrop suggested:

People do ask for really stupid things. So they're not always sure whether you're being serious or something.

Fostering *meaningful* spaces of participation within a school is challenging. Indeed, different teenagers have opposing ideas of what is legitimate to discuss. There was no evidence to suggest that those who made 'silly' requests were those more likely to feel excluded from participatory practices (Weller, 2007).

Jean Rudduck and Michael Fielding outline earlier examples of school democracy. For instance, amongst the plethora of forums, committees and opportunities for active involvement at St George-in-the-East School (1945-1955) was the school council; a body comprising staff, student and joint panels that engaged in regular dialogue and partnership (Fielding, 2005; Rudduck and Fielding, 2006). Today, the efficacy of a school council relies heavily upon student representatives, which raises questions about its effectiveness as a

meaningful space of participation for the wider student population. In this study, class representative Janna lacked motivation:

Susie: *Are you involved in the school council?*

Janna: *I am yeah. I don't go though (Laughs). I'm meant to go every Tuesday or something but I just forget. They don't put any reminders up or anything. Umm so ...*

Susie: *What have the meetings that you have been to been like?*

Janna: *I've been to one. A whole year at school and I've only been to one council meeting! (Laughs). Not very good!*

As class representative Janna felt she needed more guidance and support. Sporadic organisation meant that she was not always aware when meetings were scheduled. Janna's disengagement with the school council is, therefore, likely to impact upon the attitudes and perceptions of her peers (Weller, 2003; 2007). Nevertheless, the potential of the school council was broadly recognised.

Participation within school is subject to barriers and complexities ingrained in the contemporary education system, which relate to the construction of power relations between staff and students. Mechanisms such as school councils have done much to foster participatory practices but the extent to which meaningful spaces of participation can be developed throughout the whole school rests on the presumption of a broader democratic ethos as the following section illustrates.

'You can't be trusted without a teacher': participation in the informal school

Formal opportunities for participation within school predominantly take place within specific spaces, for example, lessons or school council meetings. Yet students frequently engage in smaller scale elements of democracy, many of which take place within more informal arenas and include everyday encounters and dialogue with staff and peers.

Staff-student power relations

The view that teenagers are merely 'citizens-in-the making' is nowhere more fervently upheld than within school. Whilst attention has been given to more formal opportunities for participation the everyday relationships and encounters between staff and students have been relatively neglected. With reference to democratic approaches to education Kaplan (2000) argues:

The relationship of teacher and student is democratic when both are confronting problems that are meaningful to them (p. 379).

Opportunities to engage with teaching staff are dependent upon the ethos of individual schools. One limitation of the study was that direct comparisons could not be made between different schools, although participants were able to draw upon their experiences at primary and middle school⁴. Many felt the school set a better example of good

participatory practice than they had encountered in other institutions. Nonetheless, it is important to note that participation is constructed and understood in a plethora of ways. Within any relatively large school opportunities for participation and exerting student voice varied between individuals. Some felt that teachers often lacked time to consider everyone's point of view, as Rammstein Nut discussed:

Our teachers try to listen to our views on certain things but sometimes they just have too many people to deal with.

There were also inevitable instances where teenagers believed that specific teachers were not good at listening to their views, as Bob detailed:

Like in [Mr. A's] lesson ... he like ... he doesn't listen to you. If you ask a question he tells you to put your hand up and when you put your hand up he tells you to put your hand down and stuff, and then he just chucks you out even if you haven't done anything and that's just not funny 'cos you have to stand outside.

Bob's comments echo the work of Ruth Lister and colleagues who suggested that students' opportunities for effecting change through consultation with staff varied as different teachers favoured the voices of particular students (Lister et al., 2001). Participants Funda and Nikki reinforced this point:

Funda: *I've got favourite teachers ...*

Nikki: *Yeah so have I*

Funda: *They listen to you. Miss [Teacher] does. She's definitely the best teacher but some of the teachers ...*

Nikki: *If they don't like you from the beginning of the year they won't like you at the end ... they don't change their opinion of you. They just keep it*

Funda: *And I don't think that's fair. They all say ... the teachers think they're always right and if you try and say 'no' and give your opinion it's like 'don't talk back to me ... blah, blah, blah'. You just get shouted at when you don't exactly set off to talk back to them you try and say something*

Nikki: *Yeah. They like say you should treat teachers how you want to be treated but they don't treat you the same no matter how you treat them*

Funda: *It needs to work both ways.*

Funda and Nikki draw attention to the fundamental need for mutual respect and egalitarianism within schools, where there are few opportunities for freethinking and discussion (Weller, 2007). Both Funda and Nikki felt that as 'louder' teenagers, they were less likely to be listened to and often were seen in a derogatory light. Holland (2001) also found that greater weight was often afforded to the voices of 'sensible' children in the research scenario. Funda and Nikki believed that the listening ethos upheld by some teachers was not always put into practice. Exerting student voice and being heard is, therefore, performed and experienced differently within and across schools.

Within the study participants were asked to describe how they felt teachers treated them in citizenship lessons in order to gauge their perceptions about status. Most (72%; n = 144)

of those surveyed felt that they were treated either as 'young people' or 'adults' in such classes, with only 12 per cent feeling that they were seen as children. Fundamentally, there was a statistical relationship (99% level of significance) between participant's perceptions of the status teachers afforded them and their engagement with the subject. All those who felt they were treated like children stated that they did not like the subject. When teenagers feel they are treated like adults or when deficit models of childhood (and citizenship) were disregarded in the classroom, this has a positive effect on their engagement with the subject.

Amongst participants there was a general ambivalence about whether they felt listened to by teachers at school, suggesting that opportunities for dialogue and participation rested very much on the practices of individual teaching staff rather than something upheld within the ethos of the school or nationwide education culture (Weller, 2007).

Participants in Hine et al's (2004) study advocated pro-social modelling; an approach in which staff act as positive role models who, by their own example, promote pro- rather than anti-social behaviour. A number of valuable lessons can be drawn from pro-social modelling, not least the development of mutually respectful relationships, equitable rules and responsibilities for staff and students and equal opportunities for participation. Nonetheless, there is an inherent danger with such an approach that alternative or less conventional understandings of participation may be deemed anti-social. Democratic processes need to be engrained within the ethos and everyday life of the school, allowing staff and students alike to share and engage with different understandings of participation.

Lessons from the informal school

Teenagers' use of time and space within school is heavily structured and controlled by adults, and this is reflected in Chris Jenks' (2001) work which viewed the school timetable as a metaphor for modernity in the way it regulates children's bodies in time and space. In this project, teachers patrolled the school during lessons seeking out truants. To some degree control was lessened at break times when students were afforded a little more choice over their use of space (see also Christensen et al, 2000; Mayall, 2000). Such freedoms only related to outdoor space for, except in bad weather, students had to spend break times outside. Janna did not agree with such regulation:

At break we all bundled inside 'cos it was very cold and windy but most of the teachers tell us to go outside, which is really cruel! (Extract from Janna's diary).

As Holloway and Valentine (2000) describe, teaching areas are often designated as 'out-of-bounds' during break times. Arguably this does little to foster a sense of belonging amongst students.

Everyday encounters in the informal school can equip teenagers with relative freedom to learn about and practice participation. Within the playground, for example, participants often engaged in and learnt about: power relations; conflict and negotiation; teamwork; and the shaping of spaces and relationships (Weller, 2007). For instance, there were a number of examples where students negotiated with their peers over the use of particular spaces in which to 'hang out' during break times. The rationale for the kinds of spaces

participants chose reflected, for some, the desire to spend time away from the gaze of adults; particularly applicable within a school setting where surveillance is ever present. Kaz, Kat and Kimbo discussed the areas that they hang out in to escape scrutiny:

Susie: *Do you hang out in particular places around the school as well?*

All: *Yeah*

Kat: *Do you know where the big bench is and the wall goes like that. That's where all of our friends sit and that*

Kimbo: *We either go down the field or down the green room. Just down by the tracks. Sit down and have a talk so no teachers can bother us.*

Whilst many teenagers carve out specific places, away from the gaze of staff, their freedom to use spaces within the school remains limited. Nonetheless, teenagers are not simply subjects of control and regulation. Bob and his friend, for example, persistently challenged the school rules by trying to socialise within the school building:

Bob: *... normally we come up the history, maths block or down the drama studio or hang out in the library and like ... umm ... they said that I was going to be suspended for ten days if I went in the library at lunchtime.*

Susie: *Why is that?*

Bob: *Because ... umm ... I got chucked out and kept going in there every day and asking if I was allowed back in there.*

The period between the end of break or lunch times and the start of lessons represents a challenging time in teenagers' use of space within the school. For, having left their 'free time' spaces, they enter the more highly regulated space of the classroom (Weller, 2007). This control, Katie believed, was bound to issues of trust and status:

When we are waiting to go into class at the end of lunch he [teacher] just locks the door and says: 'you can't go in because you all can't be trusted without a teacher'. That's more or less what he says. It gets on my nerves.

Some teenagers challenge teachers' authority by questioning their use of space in and around the school during break times. Such contestations highlight a number of participation-related issues, including those of trust and respect in the staff-student relationship and, moreover, teenagers' spatial autonomy, agency and decision-making abilities (Weller, 2007). Teenagers' informal encounters shape their perceptions of democracy in school to the same extent as their experiences of more formal arenas. Indeed, what was particularly apparent in participants' narratives was that informal spaces within the school were often sites of contestation between staff and students. There was little evidence to suggest that participants felt any real sense of shared 'ownership' or 'intergenerational collegiality' (see Fielding, 2006; 2007). Further attention needs to be afforded to the lessons teenagers learn about participation through their everyday encounters with peers and staff in the informal school. Such emphasis would undoubtedly make a valuable contribution to the citizenship curriculum, as well as, helping to foster a more democratic ethos within schools.

Fostering participatory places

My aim, in this paper, has been to explore the spatiality of teenagers' participation in an English secondary school. In doing so, it is apparent that whilst some spatial arenas are more conducive to fostering participatory practices a number of factors, which centre more broadly on teenagers' sense of belonging within school (and arguably within wider society), can curtail such opportunities. In this final section I propose a focus on participatory places. Place, as distinguished from space, is imbued with meaning and represents the realm in which identities and social relations are constructed (see Johnston et al., 2000). The proposed emphasis on place or more specifically a sense of place highlights the significance of belonging to discourses on participation. On this basis I now present some recommendations for fostering a more participatory agenda in schools.

Firstly, in spaces such as classrooms and playgrounds, a sense of place appears essential in establishing participatory practices. Fundamentally, a sense of place can be fostered by elevating teenagers' status within the classroom to ensure that adequate value is afforded to their *present* lives. The inclusion of teenagers' experiences, such as informal encounters in the playground and outside school, into the curriculum is vital to this process. At the same time, a move away from classroom practices based on a child-deficit model appear to have a positive effect on teenagers' engagement at a number of levels. Extending such an approach to permit dialogue between staff and students over the use of space particularly during break-times is also likely to be beneficial. Finally, inspiring and participatory teaching methods are significant in demonstrating participation in practice within classrooms. Citizenship education is an ideal arena in which this work could be firmly established.

Secondly, teenagers need to feel that the whole school is a democratic place. Accordingly, genuinely collaborative relationships between staff and students need to be forged. It is possible that staff may also lack places or forums in which to voice their views, concerns and ideas. School councils, therefore, need to be regarded as vital to the function of a school and much can be learnt from earlier, perhaps more radical approaches such as those used at St George-in-the-East School sixty years ago. Regular school council meetings have the potential to nurture ongoing dialogue and negotiation between students, teachers and other staff alike. In addition to such formal arenas, much work can be done in everyday informal places to establish a whole school ethos of participation where all members of the school feel their views and experiences are important. In this respect, drawing on some aspects of pro-social modelling may be fruitful. For example, the development of school rules and responsibilities that are equitable for students and staff alike could be established through dialogue across the whole school. Much can also be deemed from Fielding's (2006, 2007) work which promotes collaboration and intergenerational engagement to foster a sense of place in which all members of the school are working together.

Finally, whilst the challenge for schools is great, all such moves need to be supported by wider policy-shifts that recognise and value teenagers' needs, concerns and ideas in the here-and-now. As I have argued elsewhere, the notion that children and young teenagers' are merely citizens-in-the-making is damaging (Weller, 2007). Rather, I advocate a notion of citizenship where children, teenagers and adults alike are all regarded as full citizens who, throughout their lives, learn, develop and exert different forms of citizenship in different

spaces. Such an approach, I believe, goes some way to counter the challenges facing those seeking to establish a participatory ethos in schools.

Conclusions

A spatial perspective undoubtedly provides a more nuanced lens through which to explore different understandings and experiences of participation. Whilst recent policy measures have increased teenagers' formal opportunities for participation in school, a 'sense of place' appears fundamental in developing a participatory ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. Importantly, teenagers need to feel they belong and that their experiences and views are valued. Promoting a holistic approach to participation is challenging given the inherent engrained hierarchies and power relations. Findings from this research illuminate the role (and value) of everyday, informal encounters in fostering constructive and meaningful dialogue across the whole school.

Further challenges are presented by the broader education system. In many respects, there is an inherent conflict between the current quasi-market system founded on competition and driven by targets and an approach which seeks to nurture collaboration and dialogue within, and perhaps across schools. Important lessons from the past innovators, such as Alex Bloom, challenge the merit of such a system and add tremendous insights into the development of a holistic participatory ethos within schools. An approach which draws on the principles of the NSSC would be beneficial to schools in understanding the diverse needs and interests of teenagers. Much can also be deemed from participation initiatives such as those successfully implemented by youth-centred charities and services and by a variety of national and international organisations.

An arguably greater challenge lies at the heart of fostering participatory practices within schools. Broader societal views that present children and young teenagers as citizens-in-the-making are likely to result in resentment and do little to promote participation. Fundamentally, teenagers need to be viewed as competent social and political actors who are able to participate in and effectively shape their schools and communities. Finally, building on the work of authors such as Clark and Percy-Smith (2006), this area of research would benefit greatly from a 'whole school' approach that explores connections and disparities between the participation experiences of children, teenagers, teachers and other staff alike.

Acknowledgments

With thanks to Barry Percy-Smith and the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable comments and suggestions.

Notes

- 1 Participants wished to be referred to as 'teenagers' rather than 'young people', which many saw as an adult term.

- 2 The author's doctoral research – *Teenage Citizenship Geographies: Rural Spaces of Exclusion*, Education and Creativity, Brunel University, June 2004.
- 3 The purpose and potential outcomes of the project were discussed with participants throughout the research process. Initially, participants were asked to choose pseudonyms but as the research progressed, a number wished to be identified by their real (first) name as they felt it would add greater validity to the work. To disregard such requests would not have fostered a process built on the empowerment of participants.
- 4 The area operates a three-school system comprising primary (those aged 5-9), middle (those aged 9-13) and high schools (those aged 13-16).

References

- Alderson, P. (2000) 'School students' views on school councils and daily life', *Children & Society*, Vol. 14, pp.121-134.
- Avison, K. (1998) 'Waldorf Education– A schooling for the future', in Committee for Steiner Special Education (eds) *Balance in Education*, Launceston, Cornwall: The Lanthorn Press.
- Baginsky, M. and Hannam, D. (1999) *School Councils: The Views of Students and Teachers*, www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/Research/Findings/010.asp – accessed 29th May 2003.
- Barker, J. and Weller, S. (2003a) 'Is it fun? Developing children centred research methods', *International Journal of Sociology & Social Policy*, Vol. 23 No. 1 pp.33-58.
- Barker, J. and Weller, S. (2003b) 'Never work with children? The geography of methodological issues in research with children', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 3(2), pp. 207-227.
- Biesta, G. and Lawy, R. (2006) 'From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: Overcoming individualism in research, policy and practice', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 36 (1), pp. 63-79.
- Blaug, R. (2002) 'Engineering democracy', *Political Studies*, Vol. 50(1), pp. 102-116.
- Christensen, P. James, A. and Jenks, C. (2000) Changing Times: Children's Understandings of the Social Organisation of Time, *Children 5-16 Research Briefing*, No. 15, Swindon: ESRC.
- Clark, A. and Percy-Smith, B. (2006) 'Beyond consultation: Participatory practices in everyday spaces', *Children, Youth and Environments*, Vol. 16(2), pp. 1-16.
- Cockburn, T. (1998) 'Children and citizenship in Britain: A case for a socially independent model of citizenship', *Childhood*, 5(1) pp.99-117.
- Crick, B. (2002) 'Education for citizenship: The Citizenship Order', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 55(3), pp. 488-504.
- Cunningham, S. and Lavalette, M. (2004) ' 'Active citizens' or 'irresponsible truants'? School student strikes against the war', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 24(2), pp. 255-269.
- Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education*, 1966 edition, New York: Free Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*, 1963 edition, New York: Macmillan.
- DfES (2003) *Every Child Matters*, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/> – accessed 1st April 2004.
- Faulks, K. (2006) 'Education for citizenship in England's secondary schools: a critique of current principle and practice', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 21(1), pp. 59-74.
- Fielding, M. (2005) 'Alex Bloom: Pioneer of radical state education', *Forum*, 47, pp. 119-134.

- Fielding, M. (2006) 'Leadership, radical student engagement and the necessity of person-centred education', *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, Vol. 9(4), pp. 299-313.
- Fielding, M. (2007) 'Beyond "voice": New roles, relations, and contexts in researching with young people', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, Vol. 28 (3), pp. 301-310.
- Gordon, T., Holland, J. and Lehelma, E. (2000) *Making Spaces: Citizenship and difference in schools*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Halpern, D., John, P. and Morris, Z. (2002) 'Before the Citizenship Order: a survey of citizenship education practice in England', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol.17(2), pp. 217-228.
- Hart, R. (1992) 'Children's participation: From tokenism to participation', *Innocenti Essays*, No. 4, Florence: UNICEF.
- Hicks, D. (2004) 'Radical Education', In Ward, S. (ed) *Education Studies: A Student's Guide*, London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp. 134-148.
- Hill, M., Davis, J., Prout, A. and Tisdall, K. (2004) 'Moving the participation agenda forward', *Children & Society*, Vol. 18, pp. 77-96.
- Hine, J., Lemetti, F. and Trikha, S. (2004) 'Citizenship: young people's perspectives', *Home Office Development and Practice Report 10*, London: Home Office.
- Holland, S. (2001) 'Representing children in child protection assessments', *Childhood*, Vol. 8(3), pp. 322-339.
- Holloway, S.L. and Valentine, G. (2000) 'Spatiality and the new social studies of childhood', *Sociology*, Vol. 34(4), pp.763-783.
- Hudson, A. (2005) 'Citizenship education and students' identities: A school-based action research project', in Osler, A. (ed.) *Teachers, Human Rights and Diversity*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham, pp.115-132.
- Ireland, E., Kerr, D., Lopes, J. and Nelson, J. with Cleaver, E. (2006) 'Active citizenship and young people: Opportunities, experiences and challenges in and beyond school', *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study: Fourth Annual Report – DfES Research Report RR732*, Nottingham: DfES, Nottingham.
- James, A. and James, A.L. (2004) *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jenks, C. (2001) 'The pacing and timing of children's bodies', in Hultqvist, K. and Dahlberg, G. (eds.) *Governing the Child in the New Millennium*, London: Routledge Falmer, pp. 68-84.
- Johnston, R.J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G. and Watts, M. (2000) *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kaplan, A. (2000) 'Teacher and student: designing a democratic relationship', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 32(3), pp. 377-402.
- Kerr, D. (1999) 'Changing the political culture: the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools', *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 25 (1&2), pp. 275-284.
- Kerr, D., Ireland, E., Lopes, J. and Graig, R. with Cleaver, E. (2004) *Making citizenship real: citizenship education longitudinal study second annual report*, London: DfES.
- Lister, R., Middleton, S. and Smith, N. (2001) *Young People's Voices: Citizenship Education*, Leicester: NYA, Leicester.
- May, H. (2005) 'Whose participation is it anyway? Examining the context of pupil

- participation in the UK', *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 32(1), pp. 29-34.
- Mayall, B. (2000) *Negotiating Childhoods, Children 5-16 Research Briefing No. 13*, Swindon: ESRC.
- McCulloch, K. (2000) 'Young citizens: Youth work, civic participation and the renewal of democracy', *Youth & Policy*, No. 68, pp. 34-45.
- McGregor, J. (2003) 'Making spaces: teacher workplace typologies', *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, Vol. 11 (3), pp. 353-378.
- Morrow, V. (2000) ' 'Dirty looks' and 'trampy places' in young people's accounts of community and neighbourhood: Implications for health inequalities', *Critical Public Health*, Vol. 10(2), pp.141-152.
- OFSTED (2003) *National Curriculum Citizenship: Planning & Implementation 2002/3*, June 2003, London: OFSTED.
- OPSI (2002) *Education Act 2002*, July 2002, http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_1 – accessed 2nd September 2008.
- OPSI (2004) *Children Act 2004*, November 2004, http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040031_en_1 – accessed 2nd September 2008.
- Painter, J. and Philo, C. (1995) 'Spaces of citizenship: an introduction', *Political Geography*, Vol. 14(2), pp. 107-120.
- Percy-Smith, B. and Malone, K. (2001) 'Making children's participation in neighbourhood settings relevant to the everyday lives of young people', *PLA Notes*, Issue 42, London: IIED, pp. 18-22.
- Percy-Smith, B. (2006) 'From consultation to social learning in community participation with young people', *Children, Youth and Environments*, Vol. 16(2), pp. 1-24.
- Prout, A. (2000) 'Children's participation: Control and self-realisation in British late modernity', *Children & Society*, Vol.14, pp.304-315.
- QCA (1998) *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: Final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship*, 22nd September, London: QCA.
- Raywid, M-A. (1987) 'The democratic classroom: mistake or misnomer', *Theory into Practice*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 480-489.
- Rudduck, J. and Fielding, M. (2006) 'Student voice and the perils of popularity', *Educational Review*, Vol. 58 (2), pp. 219-231.
- Rudel, S. (1998) 'Rudolph Steiner, in Committee for Steiner Special Education' (eds) *Balance in Education*, Launceston, Cornwall: The Lanthorn Press.
- Staehele, L.A. and Mitchell, D. (2004) 'Spaces of public and private: Locating politics', in Barnett, C. and Low, M. (eds.) *Spaces of Democracy: Geographical Perspectives on Citizenship, Participation and Representation*, London: Sage, pp. 147- 160.
- Standing, E.M. (1962) *Maria Montessori: Her life and work*, New York: Mentor.
- Starkey, H. (2005) 'Democratic education and learning', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 26(2), pp. 299-308.
- United Nations (1990) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, New York: United Nations.
- Ward, S. (2004) 'Government Policy on Education in England', In Ward, S. (ed) *Education Studies: A Student's Guide*, London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp. 81-91.
- Wellard, S., Tearse, M. and West, A. (1997) *All Together Now: Community Participation for Children and Young People*, London: Save the Children.
- Weller, S. (2003) 'Teach us something useful: Contested spaces of teenagers citizenship', *Space and Polity*, Vol.7(2), pp. 153-172.
- Weller, S. (2006a) 'Situating (young) teenagers in geographies of children and youth',

Children's Geographies, Vol. 4 (1), pp. 97-108.

Weller, S. (2006b) 'Tuning-in to teenagers! Using radio phone-in discussions in research with young people', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 9(4), pp. 303-315.

Weller, S. (2007) *Teenagers' Citizenship: Experiences and Education*, Oxford: Routledge.

Whitty, G. and Whisby, E. (2007) *Real decision making? School councils in action*, *Research Report DCSF- RR001*, Nottingham: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Wyness, M.G. (2000) *Contesting Childhood*, London: Falmer Press.

Full-time UK-based volunteering and the gap year

Sue Heath

The pre-university gap year has been invoked in recent debates on youth and citizenship as a key opportunity for young people to engage in UK-based full-time volunteering. This paper traces the background to the appropriation of the gap year in this way, before considering some potential obstacles to persuading increasing numbers of young people to undertake UK-based voluntary activity as part of a gap year. Despite an expectation that many full-time volunteers will be recruited via this route, it is contended that UK-based placements are unlikely to be sufficiently attractive for many young people, given competing gap year options and priorities: the popularity of overseas experiences for those with the financial wherewithal, and the need of increasing numbers of students to earn an income during their year out.

Keywords: gap years, volunteering, students, citizenship

In recent years, there has been a sustained focus in youth policy debate on the themes of civic engagement and responsible citizenship. Much of this debate is underpinned by a widespread popular assumption that young people – despite evidence to the contrary (Roker et al, 2001; Gaskin, 2004; Attwood et al, 2003) – are disengaged from democratic processes and the civic realm, and are largely disconnected from their local communities. As a consequence, successive UK governments have over the last fifteen years focused on the promotion of ‘active citizenship’ amongst young people, including through citizenship education in schools and through various schemes to promote both full-time and part-time youth volunteering.¹

In March 2005, the Government-appointed Russell Commission on youth action and engagement published its recommendations (Russell, 2005). The Commission’s remit was to achieve ‘a step change in the diversity, quality, and quantity of young people’s volunteering,’ and ‘to help to establish a pattern of lifelong engagement which would be to the benefit of the individual, the local community, and the UK as a whole’ (Russell, 2005:3). Its recommendations were extremely ambitious, calling for the creation of an army of one million new volunteers aged 16 to 25 over a five year period, including 12,000 new full-time UK-based placements ranging from between three and nine months duration. A dedicated implementation body, ‘v,’ was formally launched in May 2006 to take forward the Russell agenda.

The proposed expansion of *full-time* opportunities raises a considerable recruitment challenge, not least because Jones (2004) suggests that supply already tends to outstrip demand for full-time voluntary placements amongst young people from the UK. Where then will ‘v’ turn to find a supply of young people willing and able to take on a full-time commitment of this nature? An important element of v’s remit is to work with disengaged

young people and with groups who tend to be under-represented in formal volunteering. However, the Commission's report makes frequent reference to the possibility of young people engaging in full-time UK-based volunteering as part of an extended 'gap year' experience, indicating that the full-time recruitment base is also expected to include young people who are taking structured time out from full-time commitments in the spheres of education, permanent employment and training.

The potential engagement in UK-based volunteering of young people from the growing gap year population, and more specifically those who embark upon a pre-university 'year out', provides the focus for this paper. It traces the background to the appropriation of the gap year in recent debates on youth volunteering, before considering some potential obstacles to the Russell Commission's mission to persuade increasing numbers of young people to undertake UK-based full-time voluntary activity as part of a pre-university gap year. Despite an expectation that many full-time volunteers will be recruited via this route, it is contended that a UK-based placement is unlikely to be sufficiently attractive for many young people, given competing gap year options and priorities: the popularity of overseas experiences for those with the financial wherewithal, and the need of increasing numbers of students to earn an income during their year out. It is concluded that the 'something for something' offered by a UK-based placement is unlikely to provide sufficient incentive for many young people.

The gap year in recent youth policy debate

In a review of gap year provision commissioned by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Jones (2004) estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 Britons aged 16 to 25 participate in formal time out from education, training and the workplace at any given time. This figure includes approximately 45,000 young people specifically pursuing a pre-university gap year (gapyear.com, 2001), comprised of around 24,000 young people per annum who formally defer university entry through the UCAS system and around 20,000 who defer formal application until the year after gaining their results. A much larger group of 16 to 25 year olds take at least three months of structured time out either during or after their university studies or as a career break after having entered the labour market (Jones, 2004), but it is the rather more distinct group of pre-university gap year students which forms the primary focus of this paper. In seeking to fill the 12,000 new placements of three to nine months duration envisaged in the Russell Commission recommendations, gap year students are clearly a very important source of potential recruitment.

Until relatively recently, the gap year has been perceived as an essentially private pursuit of relatively privileged young people (Heath, 2007). Whilst taking a year out between school and university has in the past been encouraged in very general terms by the former DfES,² the precise nature of young people's gap year experiences had barely registered as a serious policy concern of central government. However, the gap year has more recently been invoked in debates on youth volunteering and citizenship. In a House of Lords debate on voluntary service for young people held in July 2000, for example, Baroness Warwick, then Chair of Voluntary Service Overseas, enquired whether the government intended to take steps to increase awareness among employers and young people of 'the case for taking gap

years and undertaking voluntary service,' a case which included benefits 'for community development and citizenship awareness here at home' (Hansard, 2000). Her particular concern was that too few young people were aware of the opportunities and advantages of taking a gap year, especially 'those young people who come from disadvantaged homes,' and she challenged the Government to 'encourag(e) a framework that supports gap year activity for all who want to take it up as a contribution not only to the "access" debate but as a means to help deliver the lifelong learning and active citizenship agendas' (ibid).

This debate, particularly with its gap year 'widening participation' agenda, paved the way for the 2003 launch in England of the Young Volunteer Challenge (YVC), a £5 million pilot scheme designed to provide gap year opportunities to Level 3 qualified students³ from low income families.⁴ YVC consisted of full-time voluntary placements on UK-based community projects, in exchange for a £45 weekly allowance, and a lump sum of £750 on completion of a full nine month placement. A similar scheme, Scotcorps, was launched in Scotland. In addition to giving students from disadvantaged backgrounds opportunities to engage in an activity more commonly experienced by their more privileged peers, it was envisaged that participation in YVC would increase their social capital and the likelihood of their progression into higher education. However, this latter hope was only partially realised, as in practice only around half of YVC recruits had been in full-time education prior to starting the scheme. Of these, only half were qualified to Level 3, and only a fifth of these progressed into HE immediately on leaving the scheme (GHK Consulting Ltd, 2006).

YVC reflected New Labour's broader interest in promoting voluntary activity amongst young people, which had already led to the enhancement of part-time volunteering options through the introduction of the Millennium Volunteers scheme. In May 2004, the Russell Commission was established by the Chancellor and the Home Secretary, tasked with developing 'a new national framework for youth action and engagement' in the UK which would achieve 'a step change in youth volunteering.' As noted above, the Commission's eventual recommendations set an ambitious target to recruit one million new volunteers over the first five years of the framework's implementation – equivalent to more than half of the 16 to 25-year-old age group. Key proposals included the creation of 12,000 new UK-based full-time opportunities, alongside 300,000 new 'taster' and short-term volunteering opportunities, and 80,000 new part-time opportunities. The Commission regarded the opportunities afforded by full-time volunteering as particularly critical to the success of the proposed framework as a whole, envisaging that full-time volunteers would act as local 'champions' for the benefits of voluntary activity, working alongside part-time volunteers in a galvanising role.

Importantly, the Russell Commission's recommendations were strongly endorsed by *Youth Matters* and *Youth Matters: Next Steps*, with both documents highlighting increased participation in volunteering as key challenges to the reform of the UK's youth services (DfES, 2005 and 2006). The Commission's implementation body 'v' was launched in May 2006 and by March 2007 had already announced the creation of 21,000 new voluntary opportunities, including 12,000 placements targeted specifically at 'hard to reach' young people. The most significant milestone to date was the June 2007 launch of the first element of what is now known as the National Youth Volunteering Programme (NYVP), a £70 million fund targeted at the development and delivery of further innovative volunteering opportunities across the UK.

Youth volunteering and citizenship

The Russell Commission's emphasis on the role of voluntary activity in promoting social cohesion reflects wider debate concerning young people and citizenship. Young people's citizenship status has long attracted attention. Academic debate has largely centred on its contested nature, and the extent to which young people continue to be constructed, after T. H. Marshall (1950), as 'citizens in the making' (Jones and Wallace, 1992; Aapola et al, 2005; Hall and Coffey, 2007). The consequence of this construction is that young people's citizenship status is widely understood as 'ambiguous or lacking' (Smith et al, 2005: 426), necessitating active preparation. Moreover, young people are increasingly expected to prove their entitlement to citizenship status through participation in various forms of civic and political engagement (Hall et al, 1998). This includes volunteering, which is deemed to promote civic renewal within the communities within which young people live and/or volunteer (Gaskin, 2004; Stanley, 2004). Accordingly, the Russell Commission seeks 'to embed a culture of volunteering among the young which will continue to pay dividends, for them and their communities, in later life' (Russell, 2005: 5).

Urging young people to volunteer in their communities is part of a broader shift in public discourse and social policy away from an emphasis on social rights and entitlements towards a responsibility-based conceptualisation of citizenship: David Blunkett's 'something for something society'. Clarke (2005) describes this shift as a process by which 'moralised, choice-making, self-directing subjects' are constructed through government policies on citizenship. By such means, he argues, citizens come to understand themselves as responsible and independent subjects, capable of making 'reasonable choices' and engaging in 'responsible behaviour' (ibid: 451). Indeed, understandings of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship are often prominent in young people's own understandings of citizenship. Smith et al (2005) found, for example, that notions of 'constructive social participation' were widely shared amongst their research participants, with voluntary work widely equated with good citizenship.

This emphasis on responsible decision-making presents particular challenges to young people who are considering a pre-university gap year. Their options include not only voluntary activity, but also the opportunity to travel or to earn money through paid employment (possibly to subsidise the costs of higher education). None of these are mutually exclusive, and many 'gappers' engage in more than one of these activities. However, the current focus on the community benefits of UK-based volunteering implies that there are better or worse ways – or more or less responsible ways – in which a young person can spend their year out (Heath, 2007).

Hustinx (2001) has highlighted the emergence of 'new volunteerism' amongst contemporary young adults, marked by temporary affiliation to a cause, by choosiness and calculation on the part of volunteers, and by a desire to receive something in return for one's voluntary efforts. Decisions concerning youth volunteering may then be informed less by altruism and a desire to be a good citizen than by self-interest (Brooks, 2007). Accordingly, Hustinx argues that the main challenge for voluntary placement providers lies in reconciling the traditional ethos of volunteering with new volunteerism, and in developing styles of volunteering which reflect this shift. The Russell Commission has, for example,

considered ways in which UK-based volunteering might receive formal accreditation through a national awards and recognition scheme. Similarly, Gordon Brown has raised the possibility of reducing university fees for students who engage in gap year volunteering (Henke, 2005). The ethos of 'new volunteerism' appears then to sit comfortably with the 'something for something' approach to citizenship, underpinned by assumptions that young people will be persuaded of the merits of responsible citizenship through the promise of receiving something in return.

Nonetheless, despite an expectation that increasing numbers of full-time volunteers will be recruited from amongst the gap year population, there are grounds for pessimism concerning the likely degree of success. In particular, it is contended that UK-based placements are unlikely to be sufficiently attractive given competing gap year options and priorities: the popularity of overseas experiences (including overseas volunteering) for those with the financial wherewithal, and the need of increasing numbers of students to save money during their year out.

i. Overseas alternatives

For many young people, overseas opportunities will always be more attractive than UK-based volunteering opportunities. A survey of 2,600 young people responding to an on-line questionnaire on the gap year website 'gapyear.com,' for example, found that only 15 per cent of respondents considered the UK as an ideal gap year location (gapyear.com, 2001). Data from the Youth Cohort Study provides a more reliable source and further supports the popularity of overseas experience amongst those considering a pre-university gap year: 47 per cent of those respondents who intended to take a pre-university gap year in 2001–02 planned to work or travel overseas, although in practice only 37 per cent of those who actually took a pre-university gap year achieved their goal.⁵ Nonetheless, young Britons who venture overseas during structured periods of time out account for an increasingly significant proportion of the international backpacker community (Richards and Wilson, 2004). Indeed, Desforges (1998) argues that world travel as a source of personal development and identity transformation is now part of a 'standard narrative' amongst many young people.

The rapidly growing commercial gap year industry is well attuned to this narrative, and to the values underpinning new volunteerism. It is adept at promoting the message that overseas gap year experiences (especially those including direct engagement with local indigenous communities) are not only more exciting and potentially 'life changing' than domestic experiences, but will far more effectively demonstrate to employers and university admissions tutors evidence of independence and initiative (Simpson, 2005). The UK voluntary sector is then in direct competition with a diverse range of gap year providers catering for young people who wish to see the world and gain new experiences within a structured environment. Most of the eighty-plus UK-based organisations providing placements specifically targeted at gap year participants, for example, are primarily concerned with arranging overseas placements. In addition, hundreds of overseas organisations offer volunteering opportunities which are available to young Britons, whilst around thirty organisations with UK offices offer paid overseas work placements in areas

such as au pairing and teaching English (Jones, 2004).

The Russell Commission is not unaware of the rival appeal of overseas opportunities. Whilst prioritising UK-based placements, it has acknowledged the importance of a global dimension to the framework. In particular, it envisages the creation of around a thousand overseas placements specifically for young people who have demonstrated a prior commitment to UK-based volunteering. This might provide sufficient incentive to persuade some young people to include a period of domestic volunteering as part of their year out, and in particular could open up overseas gap years and their associated benefits to young people who could not otherwise afford to go overseas⁶. The Commission nonetheless acknowledges that any overseas placements provided under the Russell framework would have to reinforce or encourage participation in domestic volunteering, which is after all its main objective.

ii. UK-based alternatives

It was noted above that around two thirds of pre-university gap year students remain within the UK during their year out, which might seem to be a buoyant population from which to recruit additional full-time volunteers. However, the limited evidence that is available suggests that most young people who remain in the UK during their gap year tend to do so chiefly in order to gain paid employment. The Youth Cohort Study found that 36 per cent of students intending to take a pre-university gap year in 2001/2 were motivated to do so at least in part to earn money, and that 90 per cent of cohort members who actually took a pre-university gap year included a period of UK-based employment as part of their year out. This could be for a number of reasons, including in order to finance overseas travel and/or to raise the sponsorship required for overseas volunteering, but increasingly in order to raise money towards the costs of continuing into higher education. Indeed, one industry survey has suggested that at least a quarter of students take a year out specifically to raise finances towards the costs of university (gapyear.com, 2002). Jones (2004) also notes a recent trend towards shorter periods of overseas travel and volunteering amongst gap year participants, and suggests that this reflects the need for a greater proportion of their gap year to be spent earning money through paid work.

The Russell Commission's own research found that three quarters of young people regarded financial barriers as the main obstacle to embarking on a full-time voluntary placement (Russell, 2005). The Commission has therefore proposed a £60 weekly allowance for full-time volunteers, plus free accommodation. This is a welcome measure for those who do wish to volunteer in the UK, yet it is extremely unlikely that it will be sufficient to attract individuals who might otherwise be seeking to use their year out to finance their way through university, or even to finance a pre-university period of overseas travel. It is instructive to consider evidence on this point from the evaluation of the Young Volunteer Challenge pilot (GHK Consulting Ltd, 2006). Three quarters of YVC volunteers said that they would have been unable to participate in YVC without the £45 weekly allowance. However, the evaluation also revealed that many volunteers took part-time jobs alongside their full-time placements in order to make the experience financially viable. It is also worth noting that YVC under-recruited, achieving only two thirds of its overall target (ibid). For many

young people, then, a UK-based voluntary placement which will net them only £60 per week is unlikely to be an appealing proposition as part of a year out.

Conclusion

The Russell Commission has set itself an extremely ambitious goal in aiming to fill 12,000 new full-time placements as part of its broader target of recruiting 500,000 new volunteers. Setting this target at a time when taking a gap year has become so popular amongst young people is to its advantage given that placement providers, in addition to other potential target audiences, will be able to capitalise on the large number of young people looking for year out activities. However, this timing also presents a major challenge, given the rapid expansion and active promotion of a wide range of alternative options on the part of the gap year industry. UK-based volunteering options are likely to be low down on most young people's priorities given the alternatives open to them. In particular, currently available evidence (albeit limited) suggests that those with the financial wherewithal are more likely to want to travel overseas than stay at home, whilst those with few financial resources are more likely to want to earn a decent wage than be in receipt of a limited weekly allowance. It should also be noted that formal deferred entries to university in 2007 actually fell for the first time in recent years, from 6.4 per cent of applicants in 2006 to 5.8 per cent in 2007, a reduction in absolute terms of just under 700 students (UCAS, 2007). The supply of placements might then be increasing alongside a decline in demand amongst a key target audience.

Of course, many pre-university gap year students do engage in UK-based volunteering, working with organisations such as Community Service Volunteers, but it remains the case that there is very little reliable evidence currently available on the specific numbers involved across the voluntary sector. Indeed, there is very little reliable evidence available on many aspects of the gap year, despite the numbers of young people involved and the size of the gap year industry. There is, however, a small but growing body of gap year researchers who are contributing to a better understanding of young people's choices and the factors that influence them (see gapyearresearch.org for further details). For the moment, though, it appears that the 'something for something' offered by a UK-based placement is unlikely to provide sufficient incentive for many young people.

Notes

- 1 These include John Major's Young Volunteers Development Programme, the volunteering option under New Labour's New Deal for Young People, the Millennium Volunteers Scheme, and the Young Volunteer Challenge in England, alongside its Scottish equivalent, ScotCorps. Conservative Party Leader David Cameron also announced plans for a Youth Community Action Programme in January 2006, with further details of his ideas for 'national citizen service' unveiled in September 2007.
- 2 Until early 2006 the DfES had a named Minister with specific responsibility for gap year related issues, and convened a Gap Year Consultation Group. The TeacherNet website currently includes a rather vague statement on the role of teachers in advising

students about gap year opportunities: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atozg/gapyearpolicy/

- 3 Level 3 qualifications include A-Levels, A/S Levels and Level 3 NVQs.
- 4 The scheme was initially only open to young people eligible for a full Education Maintenance Allowance (ie, those with an annual parental income less than £13,000)
- 5 Cohort 10, Sweeps 2 and 3, conducted late 2000/early 2001 and Spring 2002 respectively. Author's own analysis.
- 6 Overseas gap year placements in the voluntary and commercial sector invariably require a young person to raise several thousand pounds in sponsorship.

References

- Aapola, S., Gonick, M. and Harris, A. (2005) *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Attwood, C., Singh, G. Prime, D. and Creasey, R. (2003) *2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey: People, Families and Communities*, Home Office Research Study 270, London: Home Office.
- Brooks, R. (2007) 'Young people's Extra-curricular Activities: Critical Social Engagement – or "Something for the CV"?' *Social Policy and Society*, 417-434.
- Clarke, J. (2005) 'New Labour's Citizens: Activated, Empowered, Responsibilized, Abandoned?' *Critical Social Policy*, 25, 4, 447-463.
- Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Youth Matters*, Cm6629, Norwich: The Stationery Office.
- Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Youth Matters: Next Steps*, Norwich: The Stationery Office.
- Desforges, L. (1998) 'Checking out the planet: Global representations/local identities and youth travel,' in T.Skelton and G.Valentine (eds.) *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*, London: Routledge.
- gapyear.com (2001) *The 2001 UK Gap Year Report*, Norwich: The Gap Year Company.
- gapyear.com (2002) *2002 UK Gap Year Report*, Norwich: The Gap Year Company.
- Gaskin, K. (2004) *Young People, Volunteering and Civic Society: A Review of the Literature*, London: Institute for Volunteering Research.
- GHK Consulting Ltd (2006) *Evaluation of the Young Volunteer Challenge Pilot Programme, Research Report RR733*, Nottingham: DfES Publications.
- Hall, T. and Coffey, A. (2007) 'Learning Selves and Citizenship: Gender and Youth Transitions,' *Journal of Social Policy*, 36, 2, 279-296.
- Hall, T., Williamson, H. and Coffey, A. (1998) 'Conceptualising Citizenship: Young People and the Transition to Adulthood,' *Journal of Education Policy*, 13, 3, 301-315.
- Hansard (2000) *Debate on 'Voluntary Service for Young People,'* 5th July 2000, Columns 1572-1594.
- Heath, S. (2007) 'Widening the Gap: Pre-university Gap Years and the 'Economy of Experience',' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28, 1, 89-103.
- Henke, D. (2005) Brown pledge to pay gap year volunteers, *Guardian*, 31st January 2005.
- Hustinx, L. (2001) 'Individualism and New Styles of Youth Volunteering: An Empirical Exploration,' *Voluntary Action*, 3, 2, 57-76.
- Jones, A. (2004) *Review of Gap Year Provision*, London, DfES.

- Jones, G. and Wallace, C. (1992) *Youth, Family and Citizenship*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Marshall, T.H. (1950) *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, G. and Wilson, J. (2004) 'The International Student Travel Market: Travel Style, Motivations and Activities,' *Tourism Review International*, 8, 2, 57-67.
- Roker, D., Player, K. and Coleman, J. (2001) *Challenging the Image: Young People as Volunteers and Campaigners*, Leicester: Youth Work Press.
- Russell, I. (2005) *A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement: Report of the Russell Commission*, Norwich: HMSO.
- Simpson, K. (2005) 'Dropping Out or Signing Up? The Professionalisation of Youth Travel,' *Antipode*, 37, 3, 447-469.
- Smith, N., Lister, R., Middleton, S. and Cox, L. (2005) 'Young People as Real Citizens: Towards an Inclusionary Understanding of Citizenship,' *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8, 4, 425-423.
- Stanley, K. (2004) 'More than a numbers game: A UK perspective on youth volunteering and active citizenship,' paper presented at Council of Europe and European Commission seminar: 'How does the voluntary engagement of young people enhance their active citizenship and solidarity?,' Budapest, July 2004.
- UCAS (2007) 'University and college applicants up 6.4 per cent for 2007,' UCAS News Release, 14 February 2007, <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/new/press/news140207.html>, accessed May 23rd 2007.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

To take out a subscription to *Youth & Policy* please fill in the form below, or a photocopy of it, and return by post or fax to The National Youth Agency.

Or subscribe online at www.nya.org.uk/shop

Annual subscription (four issues)

Individuals, Youth and Community Organisations, Voluntary Agencies, Academic Institutions, Statutory Organisations and Libraries in the United Kingdom

£28.00

(Special student offer – £14.00)

(Price includes UK second class postage)

Overseas – Europe Add £10.00 postage

– Elsewhere Add £12.00 postage

Single issues and back issues

Available @ £9.00 per issue (price includes UK second class postage)

Overseas – Europe Add £2.50 postage

– Elsewhere Add £3.00 postage

I wish to subscribe to *Youth & Policy*

Name

Organisation

Address

Postcode

I confirm I am a student and qualify for the discounted offer rate

I enclose a cheque made payable to The National Youth Agency

Please charge my VISA Mastercard

Card number

Expiry date

Name on card

Back issue nos.

Postage (overseas only)

I require a receipt

**Please make cheques payable to The National Youth Agency.
Send or fax forms to The National Youth Agency, Eastgate House,
19–23 Humberstone Road, Leicester LE5 3GJ. Fax: 0116 242 7444.**

Can child employment legislation work?

*Jim McKechnie, Sandy Hobbs
and Seonaid Anderson*

Research has shown the existing legislation on child employment in Britain is ineffective. This paper reports on the first study to investigate whether compliance with the present regulatory framework could be improved. A programme was devised consisting of two proactive interventions and one control condition. The target groups were school students, employers and parents. The primary aim of the study was to increase the number of young employees registering for the required work permit. A significant increase in permit levels was found in the two proactive conditions. However, questions remain about the efficacy of the interventions. A large percentage of young workers still did not have work permits and it is unclear whether the beneficial effects of the interventions will persist over time. The findings are discussed in the context of current local authority policy and practice and the resources available to support this legislation. The wider implications for the national legislation on child employment are also considered.

Keywords: *Child employment, legislation, work permits, child protection, local authority*

The Children and Young Persons Act (1933) allows young people, before they reach the end of the period of compulsory education, to have a part-time job whilst still at school. This legislation has been updated at various times but the essential elements have remained largely unchanged. Local authorities are charged with the day-to-day application of this policy and generally interpret their responsibilities as requiring school-aged students to obtain a work permit from them.

A number of recent studies into local authority policy and practice on child employment have highlighted the ineffectiveness of the legislation in this area and the failure of the permit system (Hamilton, 2002; Murray, 2005; McKechnie, Hobbs, Anderson, Howieson and Semple, 2007). Researchers are not the only group who argue that the legislation is ineffective. In 1998 the government set up an interdepartmental review of the issue. The final report, which was never made public, has been obtained by the present writers under the Freedom of Information Act. It recognised the inefficacy of the present system and made a number of recommendations. One of these acknowledged the failings of the permit system and proposed abandoning the system in favour of one that relied upon employers informing local authorities of any school-aged employees (Hobbs, McKechnie and Anderson, 2007). In 2004 the Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) reviewed the legislation in this area, concluding that current legislation is largely ignored. This body recommended that the work permit system should be abolished and replaced by one where employers of school-aged children are licensed.

The government's response to the recommendations from the interdepartmental review and the 2004 BRTF review has been the same, namely that no action has been taken. However, some local authorities have shown an awareness of the need to take action in this field. A number of authorities have appointed Child Employment and Entertainment Officers (CEEOs). Such posts mean that within these authorities there are individuals clearly identified as having responsibility for child employment issues. They are also responsible for implementing the specific legislation that applies to children involved in performances, hence the reference to 'entertainment' in their job title. This strategy has not been applied throughout the whole of Britain. For example, in Scotland where similar employment legislation exists, no Scottish local authorities have appointed CEEOs.

In some cases authorities have been involved in specific initiatives. For example, in 2005 West Yorkshire Police and local authority workers in Leeds combined forces to patrol the city centre with the aim of highlighting the child employment regulations for employees and employers (West Yorkshire Police, 2005). Other authorities have been proactive in the sense that they have been prosecuting employers who breach the child employment regulations. Surrey County Council is one such case where child employment officers have prosecuted a number of employers including large companies such as McDonald's and Tesco (Spear, 2004). However, these examples are exceptions to the rule. In most areas the system is largely reactive rather than proactive and is under-resourced. Given the relative inaction of central government on the issue, the fact that local government action is severely limited is not surprising.

Two questions arise. First, why should we be concerned about this? Second, what can be done to move the discussion forward? We shall deal with each in turn.

There are a number of reasons why this issue should concern us. Research has shown that nationally having a part-time job is a majority experience for young people (Hobbs and McKechnie, 1997; Howieson, McKechnie and Semple, 2006). However, at present this labour force remains largely invisible. By ignoring this group of employees what message are we sending to young workers about their first job, their rights as employees and their contribution to the economy?

By failing to acknowledge this group of employees we also ignore their health and safety needs. There is a growing body of research on accidental injuries suffered by young workers, both in the United States (for example, Runyan, 2007) and in the United Kingdom (for example, O'Neill, 2006). As it is currently set out, a primary aim of the legislation is to protect young people in the workplace. At present we are failing to meet this aim. The issue of protection goes beyond concerns about accidental injury and needs to address 'safety' in a number of different contexts.

Finally, it is sometimes argued that part-time employment can be a beneficial experience for young people (Hobbs and McKechnie, 1997). However, there is a need to ensure that the balance between potential costs and benefits is weighted in favour of the benefits. If we are not aware of the types of jobs and experiences of young employees then this task becomes highly problematic.

Our second question relates to how we might move the discussion forward. Responding to the present situation, researchers have made a number of suggestions (see, for example, Whitney, 1999, and McKechnie and Hobbs, 2000). A common idea that emerges is that the current legislative structures are failing and that a root and branch review is needed. Before we adopt such an approach, one question needs to be addressed. Is the present system failing to work because of a lack of attention and resources or because the mechanisms underpinning the legislation are unworkable?

This study sets out to consider whether the effectiveness of the present system can be improved at the local authority level. Research has shown that the majority of child employees work illegally because they did not have these permits (McKechnie, Hobbs, Anderson and Simpson, 2005). Yet there has been no attempt to consider why this is the case. A number of explanations are possible. It could be that the widespread ignorance of the legislation amongst young people and employers results in a lack of awareness of the permit system. Alternatively it may be that local authorities have not invested the necessary resources in this area. A third possibility is that the system fails to work because it is outdated and unsuited for the modern world.

The Study

The aim of this project was to evaluate an intervention strategy designed to increase compliance to the existing child employment legislation. Given the central importance of the work permit as a means of monitoring child employment, we took this as our main measure of compliance. This raises a methodological issue, namely the source of information on permit levels. We utilised two sources in this study, information from the employees themselves (self-report) and from the local authorities. We have followed existing research practice in this area and use employees self-report on work permits throughout this paper. The data trends that we report using this measure are mirrored in the local authority data.

A before-and-after design was used to compare work permit levels pre- and post-intervention. In 2004 a survey on paid part-time employment was carried out in five schools across Cumbria. Students were asked about their part-time employment status, hours worked, type of job, rates of pay, work permits etc. This provided base level data which would allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

The intervention programme was implemented in the school year 2005-06. It was designed to heighten awareness of child employment legislation and to increase levels of compliance through increased work permit registration. At the end of the academic year the 2004 survey was replicated in all five schools. The procedures for the surveys were comparable in both time periods.

The surveys were administered by researchers from the Child Employment Research Group at the University of Paisley. The intervention activities were delivered by Child Employment and Entertainment Officers (CEEOs) employed by Cumbria County Council and Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) employed by South Lakeland District Council.

The Schools and the Interventions

The five participating schools were drawn from different parts of Cumbria representing different aspects of the county's economy. In one school a particular intervention strategy was employed (Condition I), in another school a second strategy was employed (Condition II). In the other three schools, no special intervention was undertaken (Condition III), thus allowing us to evaluate the effectiveness of Conditions I and II. Previous studies had shown that child employment levels varied across these different local economies (Hobbs and McKechnie, 1997).

The study targeted the Year 10 (14/15 years of age) cohort of students. The intervention programmes were delivered in two stages. Stage one took place in the first part of the school term while stage two was delivered in the second school term. A description of the interventions is provided below:

Stage 1:

Condition I intervention activities (School, Family and Employer based)

- Posters were placed in the school highlighting the issue.
- CEEOs provided a short presentation (approximately 10 minutes) to Year 10 students in assembly on the legislation pertaining to child employment.
- All Year 10 students were provided with a copy of an information flyer incorporating a permit request form.
- Letters were sent to all parents or guardians of Year 10 students outlining the issue and containing a copy of the flyer and permit request form.
- Local employers in a dominant employment sector, hotel and catering, were contacted. Employers in this sector, approximately 300, were identified through existing databases held by EHOs and sent a letter outlining child employment legislation. The leaflet included a copy of the work permit request form.

Condition II intervention activities (School and Family based)

- These were the same as for Condition I except that local employers were not contacted.

Condition III (Non-intervention).

- No special measures were undertaken.

Stage 2:

Condition I intervention activities replicated some of the activities in Stage 2 and expanded upon others:

- Posters were placed in the school highlighting the issue.
- CEEOs ran a workshop session for all Year 10 students on child employment; this was carried out in small groups within a class time period.
- All Year 10 students were provided with a copy of an information flyer incorporating a permit request form.
- Letters sent to all parents of Year 10 students outlining the issue and containing a copy of the flyer and permit request form.
- Hotel and catering employers were sent an additional round of new information on child employment, drawing attention to health and safety issues. Permit request

forms were included with this information. In addition EHOs visited catering employers in the area surrounding the school. A total of 20 premises were visited, during which the EHOs completed a short questionnaire with the help of the employer. The questionnaire established whether any under 16s were employed, if so how many, if they had work permits, what activities they were undertaking and whether a risk assessment had been carried out. The EHOs left information about work permits and application forms with the employers. The premises visited were selected at random.

Condition II intervention activities again mirrored those in Condition I except that there were no activities targeted at employers.

Condition III again involved no special measures.

Research Findings

Table I provides information on the employment status of participants across the three Conditions. For the comparisons in this paper we have combined the three non-intervention schools (Condition III). Our primary focus is those working at the time of the study (Current workers), and their work permit status.

Table I: Work Status and the Intervention Condition

Intervention Group	Year	Current Workers N (%)	Former Workers N (%)	Never Worked N (%)	Total no.
Condition I	2004	88 (78)	13 (12)	12 (11)	113
	2006	69 (65)	15 (14)	23 (22)	107
Condition II	2004	65 (42)	35 (23)	55 (36)	155
	2006	68 (29)	52 (22)	115 (49)	235
Condition III	2004	82 (31)	52 (19)	134 (50)	268
	2006	85 (24)	65 (19)	198 (57)	348

Across all of the schools in 2004 only 15 per cent of current workers had a work permit; in 2006 this has risen to 52 per cent. This constitutes a significant rise in the number of current workers reporting permits ($\chi^2 = 55.99$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$). If the intervention programmes were effective, the schools receiving the pro-active interventions (Conditions I and II) should have a higher number of permits than the non-intervention Condition III. Table II shows the permit levels across each of the intervention conditions and demonstrates that the increase in permit levels is in line with our predictions. In 2006 the rise in permit levels for Conditions I and II is significantly greater ($\chi^2 = 6.24$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$) than Condition III.

Table II: Current Workers: Percentage with Permits Pre- and Post-Intervention

Year	Permit	Condition I	Condition II	Condition III
2004	Yes	7%	27%	18%
	No	93%	73%	82%
2006	Yes	57%	59%	39%
	No	43%	41%	61%

However, it should be noted that there was a rise in permits in Condition III where no special intervention took place. There are two possible explanations for this increase. First, during the time of the study the CEOs were carrying out their normal duties in the region. The increase in permits in Condition III may reflect this general level of background activity. If this is the case, then the proactive interventions have managed to increase permit levels beyond this background level.

An alternative explanation emerged when we look at the three schools in Condition III separately. For each school we compared the number of current workers with and without permits in 2004 and 2006. In two of the schools we found no significant change in permit levels. In the third school there was a significant increase in permits in 2006 ($\chi^2 = 5.36$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore the increase in permits in Condition III can be attributed to a change in only one of the three schools. This school was geographically close to the school in Condition II and we may be witnessing a spill-over effect of the proactive intervention in this school.

Comparing Condition I and II

The schools in Condition I and II received proactive interventions. Condition I included an additional unique element where a specific group of employers (hotel and catering sector) were targeted with specific information on child employment. Our analysis of this material was constrained by the low numbers employed in some sectors. Nevertheless, the data trends are worth noting (see Table III).

Table III: Percentage of Current Workers within Job Sectors with Permits

Intervention	Year	Delivery	Retail	Hotel/Catering	Other
Condition I	2004	0%	9%	11%	0%
	2006	0%	75%	67%	29%
Condition II	2004	27%	0%	33%	33%
	2006	73%	50%	33%	47%

In Condition I the increase in work permits is found in retail, hotel and catering and the 'other' category. In Condition II the increase in work permits is associated with changes in delivery and retail sectors with no change in hotel and catering. This could be interpreted as suggesting that the employer targeting strategy may have had some impact. However, it is evident that this is not the sole cause of permit increases in Condition I.

A short or long term effect?

While we have shown that the pro-active interventions have had an impact on work permit levels it is possible that any effect is short lived. To investigate this we returned to the schools and surveyed the same cohort of students at the start of the new school term when they were now in Year 11, approximately five months after the first post-intervention survey.

A comparison of the overall number of permits reported for the whole sample found that there was a drop in permit levels from 52 per cent to 44 per cent. This overall decline was not significant ($\chi^2 = 2.02, df = 1, p > 0.05$). Table IV shows the change in permit levels over this time period for each of the intervention conditions.

Table IV: Current Workers Post-Intervention: Permit in Year 10 and Year 11 (%)

School Year	Permit	Condition I	Condition II	Condition III
Year 10	Yes	53	59	39
	No	47	41	61
Year 11	Yes	44	60	32
	No	56	40	68

The largest decrease in permit levels is found in Conditions I and III, while permit levels in Condition II remained stable. None of the changes in permit levels were found to be significant. However, there is some indication that the impact of the interventions may diminish over time. One possible explanation for this is linked to the nature of child employment. School students move in and out of employment and new employees, entering employment sometime after the intervention programme, may not register for work permits. This dynamic aspect of school students' employment would need to be incorporated into any intervention programme and would have implications for policy makers.

Indirect effects of the Intervention Programme

Our primary focus has been on the impact of the interventions on work permits. However, it could be argued that the activities we introduced could have impacted upon other aspects of school students' employment. We consider two such areas, the numbers working and the hours that are worked.

As Table I shows, between the 2004 and 2006 surveys of Year 10 students there was a decline in the percentage working. Across all schools in the study there was a decline in the percentage of students who had ever worked (current and former workers) from 63 per cent in 2004 to 51 per cent in 2006. This decline was significant ($\chi^2 = 19.69, df = 2, p < 0.01$).

Closer inspection of the change within each of the Conditions showed that the reduction in Condition III was not significant ($\chi^2 = 3.50, df = 2, p > 0.05$). However, the change in the percentage of current workers was significant in Condition II ($\chi^2 = 8.51, df = 2, p < 0.02$) and approached significance in Condition I ($\chi^2 = 5.74, df = 2, p = 0.057$).

This pattern might suggest that the proactive intervention conditions have helped to reduce the number of students who have part-time jobs. We would argue that we need to be cautious about accepting this argument at face value. Although it is possible that the proactive intervention strategies have resulted in some students deciding not to take part-time jobs, it is also possible that our strategy of increasing awareness of the issues surrounding employment may have had another effect. Some students may be less likely to self-report their part-time jobs, producing the observed decline in part-time employees in the second survey.

An alternative explanation may lie in the dynamic of the local economy. Balakrishnan (2007) reports that across Cumbria the number of migrant workers has been rising and now accounts for 25 per cent of the tourism workforce. It is possible that the decline in the number of student employees is explained by this new labour force competing with students for jobs in the service sector. This explanation gains some support when we remember that the schools in Condition I and II are in major tourist centres within Cumbria.

The second indirect effect we considered was the impact of the interventions on the number of hours worked. It is possible that the information provided in the intervention programme led some students to reduce the number of hours they committed to their part-time employment. There was some evidence across all schools in the study that current workers were committing fewer hours on average per week in 2006 compared to 2004 (6.35 hours per week and 7.95 hours per week, respectively). This reduction in average hours was significant ($t(400.6) = 3.17, p < 0.01$).

Across the three intervention conditions the pattern varied. In the case of Condition III there was no significant difference ($t(110.14) = 0.69, p > 0.05$). In the proactive interventions a significant reduction was found for Condition II ($t(116.37) = 3.04, p < 0.01$) while the reduction in average hours approached significant levels in Condition I ($t(144) = 1.84, p = 0.068$).

This pattern could mean that the interventions helped to reduce the average number of hours worked. However, other factors influence the number of hours worked. Hours worked may differ between different types of job. To examine this in more detail we ran an Analysis of Variance taking account of year of study, intervention conditions and job type. We found significant differences between workers according to year of study ($F(1,389) = 5.13, p < 0.03$) and job type ($F(3,389) = 5.15, p < 0.01$). For example, with respect to job type those employed in Delivery worked a significantly lower number of hours than those employed in Hotel and Catering. However, there was no significant difference in hours worked between the three intervention conditions ($F(2,389) = 0.58, p > 0.05$) nor was there any evidence of any significant interaction effects between the three variables. This suggests that the reduction in hours over the two surveys is not linked to the intervention programme.

Discussion

Our findings demonstrate that adopting a proactive approach to this area can result in a

significant increase in work permit levels. We should temper this generally positive picture by acknowledging that over 40 per cent of current workers in Condition I and II still did not have work permits. We also found that the largest increase in permits occurred in Condition I, the area where we targeted hotel and catering employers (7 per cent vs. 57 per cent). However, we cannot be sure how exactly this increase came about and further, more detailed, research is required to be sure of the value of this particular approach.

It is possible that our findings are an indirect effect of the interventions. The increase in permit levels may be the result of the increased awareness of this issue amongst working students, leading them to self-report that they have a permit. As we noted earlier in this study we had access to the local authorities work permit database and we were able to confirm that the trends identified in the students' self-report data are mirrored in the local authority database. This supports the argument that permit levels increased in both of our proactive Conditions.

Comparing post-intervention permit levels for Year 10 and 11 students we found some evidence of a decline in permit levels, although the analysis showed that this decline was not significant, the downward trend raises questions about the long term efficacy of one-off interventions.

A key issue that we need to address is the dynamic aspect of school students' employment, with students moving in and out of employment. Any intervention is most salient for those currently working and this means that as new employees take up jobs they need to be exposed to the interventions. This would imply that policy makers would need to budget for an ongoing programme of interventions or alternatively find ways to embed the interventions into the school system. For example, if the intervention was included in the school curriculum or as part of PSE classes or careers counselling sessions then we would be ensured that the message would be repeated to each new cohort.

This conclusion would have major implications for local authorities. The majority of authorities have what might be classified as a largely reactive system, responding to requests for work permits (McKechnie et al, 2007). Moving to a proactive system would have implications for staffing levels and the additional costs of sustaining activities comparable to the interventions used in this project.

Would it be practical to apply the intervention activities that we used in this project to all schools within an authority? In designing this project we devised activities that were low cost and that could in theory be generalised across a region. However, the interventions were delivered by staff who are extremely knowledgeable about child employment legislation and related issues, namely the CEEOs. In the region that we carried out this project there are two CEEOs and it is unlikely that they could sustain the activities outlined in this project across all of the schools in the region, particularly since these would have to be repeated at regular intervals.

One possibility that we referred to earlier is the idea of embedding the intervention activities within schools. While this may help to reduce costs, once the teaching materials had been prepared, there are some potential issues with such a plan. As we have already indicated,

staff would need a good working knowledge of the existing legislation and would need to be offered training in this area. An additional complexity is that students may respond to the intervention activities differently if they were delivered by their teachers. Research in Scotland has shown that many teachers have a negative attitude towards part-time work viewing it as an activity that competes with school (Howieson et al, 2006). School students may suspect the motivation of their school teachers in raising these issues and this in turn may impact on the effectiveness of the strategies.

What does the study tell us about current resource levels for child employment? Central government has argued that local authorities are currently funded to carry out their duties in this area. It is unclear to us what assumptions lie behind the current funding model. It has been shown that government assumptions prior to the 1990s were based upon the understanding that 'few' children worked (Lavalette et al, 1995). This premise has been undermined by the post 1990 research evidence which has shown that many school students combine full-time education with part-time work (Hobbs and McKechnie, 1997). Has funding to local authorities been increased to accommodate this new evidence? Similarly local authorities appear to have put in place systems that are largely reactive (McKechnie et al, 2007). As this study shows there is a need for proactive systems if compliance with the current system is to be achieved. Funding would need to be made available to support such a change in strategy.

Would the additional costs be merited? The answer to this question is dependent on a number of other factors. If we are to assume that the existing legislation will remain in place and if we are to believe the rhetoric of 'Every Child Matters' (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk) then clearly the cost would be merited. The aim of the legislation is to protect child employees and it is difficult to conceive of the argument that would be put in place to suggest that this is one area where every child does not matter.

However, the cost may be questioned if we take a different stance. Is it worth putting resources into a system in which few people have confidence and that some would argue is not compatible with the demands of contemporary society? For example, in the present study, even though we were able to demonstrate an increase in permit levels, a large percentage of current workers still did not have permits. An alternative approach would be to resource a fundamental overhaul of the child employment legislation, encouraging a debate about the nature of childhood, school and work and to develop policy and practice that has meaning in contemporary society (Whitney, 1999; McKechnie and Hobbs, 2000).

Both approaches have cost implications. In that respect the present study has shown that moving this issue forward is not cost neutral. The only 'cost neutral' option is if we ignore all of the existing evidence and turn a blind eye to the fact that current child employment policy and practice is ineffective.

Notes

1. We would like to thank the school students for their participation in this study and all of the schools and staff for their help and cooperation. We would also like to extend our

thanks to the CEEOs and EHOs in the area for their help.

2. This study was funded by Cumbria County Council, NSPCC and the Child Employment Research Group.

References

- Balakrishnan, A. (2007, 13th March) 'Migrants keep the hotel fires burning amid the rainy Lakeland fells'. *Guardian*.
- Better Regulation Task Force (2004) *The regulation of child employment*. London: Better Regulation Task Force
- Hamilton, C. (2002) *Too much too young: Sorting out the law on teenagers at work*. Children's Legal Centre, University of Essex.
- H.M. Government, *The Children and Young Persons Act 1933*, 23 Geo.5, Chapter 12. London. HMSO.
- H.M. Government, (2003) *Every Child Matters*, London: The Stationery Office. www.everychildmatters.gov.uk Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- Hobbs, S. and McKechnie, J. (1997) *Child Employment in Britain: A social and psychological analysis*. Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.
- Hobbs, S., McKechnie, J. and Anderson, S. (2007) 'Making child employment more visible', *Critical Social Policy*, 27, 415-425.
- Howieson, C., McKechnie, J. and Semple, S. (2006) *The nature and implications of the part-time employment of secondary school pupils*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive. www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/11/10143236
- Lavalette, M., Hobbs, S., Lindsay, S. and McKechnie, J. (1995) 'Child employment in Britain: Policy, myth and reality', *Youth and Policy*, 47, 1-15.
- McKechnie, J. and Hobbs, S. (2000) 'Child employment in Britain: Filling the research gaps', *Youth and Policy*, 66, 19-33.
- McKechnie, J., Hobbs, S., Anderson, S., Howieson, C. and Semple, S. (2007) 'Child employment: Policy and practice in Scotland', *Youth and Policy*, 96, 51-63.
- McKechnie, J., Hobbs, S., Anderson, S. and Simpson, A. (2005) *Cumbria's working youngsters: A 2004 update*. *Child Employment Research Group*, University of Paisley. www.cumbria.gov.uk/library/viewtext.asp?file=/eLibrary/Content/Internet/537/689/3866093856.pdf
- Murray, C. (2005) 'Child employment law in Scotland', *SCOLAG Journal*, 327, 5-24.
- O'Neill, R. (2006) 'Too young to die', *Hazards Magazine: Workers Health International News*, www.hazards.org/2young2die
- Runyan, C. W. (2007) 'Advocating the inclusion of adolescent work experience as part of routine preventive care', *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, 221-223.
- Spear, S. (2004) Children at risk, *Environmental Health Journal*. www.ehj-online.uk/archive/2000/march2004/march1.html
- West Yorkshire Police (2005) 'Police bid to tackle underage employment', www.westyorkshire.police.uk/section-item.asp?sid=12&iid=2025
- Whitney, B. (1999) 'Unenforced or unenforceable? A view from the professions', In M. Lavalatte (ed) *A thing of the past? Child labour in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Conference Notification and Call for Papers

"All Change for Young People"?
Mobility, Markets, Media, Models of
Practice

An international youth studies conference
at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM)

Thursday 25th – Sunday 28th June, 2009

hosted by the Department of Applied Social Studies, NUIM

in association with the

Research Committee on Youth of the International Sociological
Association (RC34)

and

Youth Studies Ireland

Contributions are invited on all of the conference's sub-themes (mobility, markets, media, models of practice) as they relate to young people. Diversity of cultural, disciplinary and professional perspectives is welcome, as are approaches which interrogate the key terms and concepts. Contributions which make links between theory, research, policy and practice are particularly welcome.

Deadline for submission of abstracts (no more than 200 words):
27th February, 2009

A conference website will be available shortly.
In the meantime for further information contact:
maurice.devlin@nuim.ie
(Maynooth is less than an hour from Dublin airport.)

Contested spaces, young people and canals

John Holmes

This article comes out of participant observation (as a narrow boater) during 2001–7, and analyses the dynamics of interaction between users of the canal system in England and Wales. It is argued that the diverse users of the canals eg boaters, walkers, cyclists, anglers etc. contest the strictly limited public space in a way that normally avoids conflict and bad feeling. This is explained in relation to the common respect that the various 'players' have of the canals, and that a sense of community emerges from this. A crucial part of engendering this sense of community is seen as deriving from the friendly acknowledging of other canal users, despite the fact that these other users are normally not known to each other. The exception to these rules of canal etiquette would seem to be in the lack of overt communication with groups of young people who meet on the towpaths. Theories related to social interaction are drawn on to explain the meanings involved in acknowledging or ignoring others. It is argued that the social exclusion of young people is damaging to the community of canal users and is resulting in a vicious circle of increasing social distance, labelling and anti social behaviour by some of these young people. Policies to address social inclusion are critically examined and the conclusion reached that the intervention by professionals may be less effective than actions by other canal users. Canals are seen as an example of the deteriorating relationship between young people and adults in society as a whole, and the declining number of public spaces available to young people that are seen as legitimate places for them to associate.

Keywords: *Contested spaces, interaction, canals, social exclusion, play*

It is getting late on a fine summer's day as a family make their slow way in their hired narrow boat along a canal as it enters a town. The parents are looking for a mooring, indicated on their guide, so they can cook their evening meal, visit the local pub, get their children in bed, and in the morning go shopping. They have noted the increasing amount of rubbish both in the canal and on the banks as they get closer to their planned mooring. They also see the graffiti under the bridges and on the walls of factories, many now unused. As they approach the mooring they are pleased to see rings for mooring provided by British Waterways, which are more secure than bollards from which ropes can easily be pulled by anybody passing. However they also see a group of young people talking and laughing together right by the mooring and so decide to carry on to find a mooring that appears safer. They pass within 6 feet of the group of young people, and the two groups look at each other but there are no words spoken, nor is there acknowledgement of the existence of each other. By the time another mooring is found by some other moored boats the children are tired and fractious, the parents irritable and in conversation with other boaters

they reinforce the view that the previous mooring they passed was unsafe, and that young people are a problem on the canals.

Such encounters are unremarkable on the canals in that they probably happen every day in the summer months somewhere on the extensive network ('2,000 miles visited by over 10 million people a year' – British Waterways Newsroom). Yet such encounters are remarkable in terms of their illustration of the contested space that canals are, and in terms of the implications for the relationship between young people who 'hang out' by the canals and other canal users. As a boater myself I know that the 'towpath telegraph' between boaters is normally hostile to groups of young people by the canals, and that the consequences of this resentment, and often fear, is self-perpetuating for future relationships. W. I. Thomas in his work on the 'definition of the situation' recognised that social situations that are perceived to be real are real in their consequences (Berger, 1963) and it is well known that the fear of crime has a somewhat independent life of actual levels of crime. In terms of the canals the major consequence is that whole stretches of canals are becoming known by most boaters as places where you do not moor at night. Even those independent-minded boaters sceptical of others' fears are much less likely to moor when no other boaters are there. There is safety in numbers. In 2005 I travelled through Leicester on the River Soar and despite rings being provided along the 'straight mile' near the city centre no boats were moored there. The only boats moored were on the non-towpath side on a pontoon with British Waterways key access to a local park. Leicester is perhaps an extreme case but even in Birmingham, with its major recent development of the Gas Street basin, boaters are reassured by statements about security guards and CCTV cameras. In Manchester I am told boaters can ask for a police escort as they often fear they are likely to be attacked even when moving.

Negotiating use of space in public places

It could also be said that such encounters are unremarkable in that people avoid groups of young people in many settings other than canal towpaths – on the street, by shops, in parks, etc. This is true and canals are only one example of contested spaces between young people and other people and it is to be argued below that the spaces available to young people to meet and socialise together have been significantly reduced in modern British society. Canals are just one of a number of public spaces that are both contested and often avoided as places of potential threat (Watson, 2006: 169-170). However, canals do represent an interesting case study in that the physical space is normally particularly limited at the side of a canal (normally below 3 metres between the water and the boundary of the British Waterways property). It is not possible to cross the street to avoid situations perceived as threatening on the towpath and even if on a boat, steering to the non-towpath side makes little difference. Also, despite this limited space most canal users do normally successfully negotiate use of this contested space, because the culture of the canals is one of acknowledgement of other users and good manners. It can be argued that canals represent an arena where 'social capital' is being built in contrast to leisure being based indoors and in individual activity, and the 'social privatism' that results from this. (Abercrombie, 2004: 53). Canals contrast with other public spaces in modern British society where the trend towards individuation has developed to such an extent that people, whilst

being aware of the presence of unacquainted others, usually ignore each other. In 1963 Erving Goffman argued that in Anglo-American society there existed a kind of 'nod line' which could be drawn at a particular point through a rank order of communities according to size (p132). Smaller communities required adults, whether they are acquainted or not, to give each other mutual greetings. This 'nod line' would appear to have shifted so that even fairly small communities in the UK come above it resulting in studied inattention. This is influenced by factors other than size of community and is complex as recognised by Goffman. Those with higher 'sacred value' may be shown greater respect for their space and not engaged with, but this varies according to cultural norms; those 'out of role' (e.g. in fancy dress in a carnival or slipping in the street) may be engaged with (p126-7). Even in cities the expectation in closer knit communities (e.g. Asian) is to greet each other and often individuals will greet each other in settings where their otherness is what they have in common. Also in spaces where it is rare to meet others, such as walking on remote hills, strangers acknowledge each other. In towns and cities non-recognition of others, whether verbally or non-verbally, is the norm and recognition only comes with common identity (e.g. parents waiting for a child outside school, or dog walkers in park) or when these barriers are challenged (e.g. by groups of young people) or reduced through drunkenness. When non-recognition of others is impossible then it is often to contest the use of the space in an aggressive manner (e.g. road rage).

Sophie Watson (2006) in her book *City Publics: The (dis)enchantments of urban encounters* celebrates a range of ordinary public spaces in British cities where cultural differences (of race, ethnicity, class, age, and sexualities) can be negotiated such as street markets, ponds, city farms, allotments, 'eruv', municipal baths, Turkish baths, etc. Yet she also, as the title suggests, identifies how antagonism, fear and exclusion are threatening the potential of public spaces and how people are retreating into private spaces and resisting the challenges of otherness. It is the increasing rarity of public spaces that are not closely controlled by commercial or public authorities that makes these spaces both enchanting and marginal to mainstream society. Canals, with the exception of Camden Lock in London, do not figure in Watson's book. Maybe this reflects the often rural nature of canals although most British cities have them, and these are often being developed, and controlled as desirable urban settings. Yet waterfront developments are a very small part of urban canals, even in cities such as Birmingham, which prides itself as being at the heart of Britain's canal network. Most encounters take place in non-controlled settings along the towpath and at bridges and locks. Also the diversity of users of canals is impressive and I would argue, with the exception of young people, so is the ability of these users to successfully negotiate with each other the use of this strictly limited space. This reflects the sense of commonality from being canal users.

The difference in negotiating space around canals

What makes canals particularly interesting in terms of negotiating difference is that the users of the space usually are competing for this strictly limited space despite the common attraction of the water. Boaters are not the main users of canals, as the following breakdown of visits to canals in 2005 shows:

Visits

– to a specific attraction	6.5 million
– from anglers	4.8 million
– to use a boat with an engine	7.3 million
– to use a boat without an engine	1.6 million
– to walk, ramble, run for leisure	116.1 million
– to walk dogs	90.0 million
– to get somewhere else	41.3 million
– from cyclists	24.7 million
– for other purpose	4.9 million
– Total Visits	297.2 million

(British Waterways figures, published by Inland Waterways Association)

Many are attracted to canals but each group need to be mindful of other visitors. Boaters need to be mindful of their speed and position when passing anglers, anglers need to be mindful of their rods (and other equipment) for walkers and cyclists, and cyclists and walkers have to be mindful of each other. Sometimes space is closely contested with anglers removing their rods at the very last second, or cyclists steering round walkers at speed even when the walker is not aware of their presence. This type of behaviour can lead to conflict. I was informed (in a private communication) of some recent community development work required in London to agree appropriate behaviour by speeding cyclists upsetting other canal users. Yet this is unusual. Normally canal users successfully negotiate use of this space without outside intervention.

How can we explain both the relatively successful negotiation of limited space on the canals, compared to other public spaces, and the etiquette of acknowledging others and friendliness? The importance of canals for pursuing a range of leisure pursuits, and that the canal space is one that many people are choosing to visit, and would not be visiting without their leisure interest, would seem to be important in this respect. Despite the functional industrial origins of canals in the late eighteenth century in Britain the canals are mainly today a place for many types of play, if play is defined broadly. Industrial uses remain in terms of the supply of water (for farmers, factories and fire fighters) and towpaths are used for piping gas, electricity and modern communications but the revival of commercial barge traffic is strictly limited since its demise in the 1960s. The new lease of life is through leisure, with cruising craft increasing by about 2 per cent per annum in recent years (www.waterscape.com), large marinas built to accommodate these boats, about 300 million visits to canals annually, access being made easier, and waterfront developments becoming desirable for both business and housing. Canals are an increasingly important part of the leisure and life style industry, and British Waterways aims to double usage by visitors of all kinds between 2002 and 2012, and thereby generate more income and create a self-sufficient waterway network (www.britishwaterways.co.uk). Whilst visitors to the canals do spend large amounts of money, estimated at £1.5 billion a year, it is deeper values that can explain the current relatively successful negotiating of this space, and these will need to underpin future communication between users especially if numbers do double by 2012. Pat Kane (2004: 12-15) draws on Brian Sutton-Smith's 'seven rhetorics of play' to expand the importance of play, and to challenge the centrality of the puritan work ethic. Ancient rhetorics of play are identified around play as power, identity and fate and chaos.

Canals can be identified as sites for some of these, in particular the power from winning contests around angling, from being seen as having the smartest boat, and in terms of identity from attending waterways festivals. More important are the ways canals are used to meet the modern rhetorics of play, around progress, imagination and selfhood. Many are looking to the canals as an alternative to the limitations of being workers and consumers: by seeking a healthier lifestyle through walking and cycling, by learning about nature and the environment, and for an increasing number seeking happiness and an escape from living in houses by becoming modern 'gypsies' by living and travelling on the water. Many are seeking new possibilities in their lives, and an escape from constraints and routines. For many of these canal users, particularly the boaters, they wish to share their happiness in this environment and acknowledge the commonality of their interests. So it is normal for boaters to greet other boaters passing in the other direction even if they are unknown to them, and despite the fact that another meeting is unlikely. Not to exchange a few words of greeting is seen as bad manners. This applies to a lesser extent to other users of the canal such as walkers, cyclists and anglers.

Another way of explaining the relatively high levels of friendly communication on the canals is to say there is a strong sense of community or high levels of 'social capital'. Canals could be seen as strange locations for community in that the elongated physical nature of them makes them an unlikely basis for territorial community. Even in terms of subcultures or communities of interest there are low levels of regular social interaction and, as has been noted, distinct sub groups (boaters, anglers, walkers, etc.) have competing interests. The strong and extensive social networks required by high levels of social capital (Field: 2003, 44-71) only really exist in some boatyards and marinas and in bodies such as the Inland Waterways Association, Anglers Associations, etc. Most communication tends to be strictly limited in that people are passing each other and have not met each other before. However it would appear that canals represent a modern, or post-modern, trend in which people are seeking identities and a spirit of community in an increasingly individualised and privatised world. Whilst it could be argued this is more imagined than based in the reality of strong social networks such seeking of community has consequences in terms of trust and reciprocity. One example is that boaters will normally help each other if there is an engine failure or if a boat goes aground. This can be contrasted with the behaviour of passing car drivers to a broken down car by the roadside. The current main analyst of social capital, Robert Putnam, has noted that public spaces in high social capital areas are cleaner, people are friendlier, and the streets are safer (Putnam, 2000: 307-318). Higher crime rates are not just linked to poorer more deprived areas in the USA but exist where people do not participate in community organisations, do not supervise young people, and are not linked to a network of friends. Putnam analysed social capital mainly in terms of geographical localities, which cannot be directly transferred to British canals. In terms of cleanliness, safety and friendliness the canals are quite diverse. It would seem that there are tendencies towards higher levels of social capital but there are also people who do not respect the environment nor see the community of canal users as a basis for developing social networks.

The common experience of being attracted to the canal, and of play, in a wide range of ways and senses, only partly explains the etiquette of acknowledging others. Erving Goffman has done much work to uncover the rituals and etiquette of everyday social interaction (in particular *Encounters*, 1961, and *Interaction Ritual*, 1967). His work

emphasises the playful aspects of even 'serious' encounters (1961: 17-18) and that social interactions involve 'face-work' which can involve loss of face, which sometimes results in avoidance of interaction. Even just to greet others in a friendly acknowledgement risks being ignored and this is important on the canal in terms of initiating greetings, and may be a factor in the lower levels of greeting of groups of young people by other canal users. Most of Goffman's work is looking at 'focussed' as opposed to 'unfocussed' interactions by which he means the distinction between agreeing to engage in a sustained encounter versus interpersonal communication resulting from being in the presence of another. Canal communication in terms of passing others in boats or on the towpath are initially unfocussed interactions and are likely to remain so as people are passing each other and only rarely stop to talk. These interactions are interesting in terms of personal space. Closer physical proximity of strangers generally makes it more likely to acknowledge others in public spaces. Unwritten rules exist, which vary in different cultures, about how close one can go to a stranger before it will be seen as 'invading their space'. If the physical space is more limited then acknowledgement is more likely to indicate that there is no intention to dominate the use of the limited space. This has to be carefully negotiated by not being over familiar and in some places requiring very close physical proximity, for example trains, buses, and lifts, it may require careful positioning and ignoring to avoid being seen as over familiar. On the canals the space is strictly limited but does not usually involve physical contact. Both passing on the towpath and boaters passing on the canals inevitably leads to close proximity, as does boaters to those on the towpath especially if people on the towpath are under bridges or by locks. In Goffman's terms canals are 'open regions' (1963, p132) in being:

physically bounded places where 'any' two persons, acquainted or not, have a right to initiate face engagement with each other for the purpose of extending salutations.

Close proximity leads to an increased expectation that acknowledgement of others will take place and greater likely perception of what Goffman calls the 'cut' (1963: 114-116) when individuals feel they have been excluded from acknowledgement. Goffman refers to etiquette between cowboys on the American prairie which required exchanging a word and not to do so was seen as a flagrant insult (1963: 133). This partly resulted from fears of attack in a violent society but also from not showing respect for others.

The position of young people

Why is it that this courtesy is not normally extended to young people on the canals? Young people often 'hang out' by bridges and locks so passing walkers, cyclists and boaters necessarily are in close proximity. Are young people not seen as part of the diverse community who use the canals? It would seem that for many canal users, groups of young people are less legitimate than other canal users. Even though most, but not all, visitors to canals are there choosing to use their 'free' leisure time in this way and so are similar to young people in this respect, many would not see 'hanging out' as a legitimate use of the canals. Most visitors to canals see they have a purpose in visiting, related to their chosen leisure activity, which legitimates their visit. It is as if a sense of ownership comes from boating, angling, exercising their dog or themselves and that just 'being there' is

insufficient reason, and worse, likely to be a cover for more dubious activities. In as much as young people do congregate in smaller or larger groups by the canal, there is a purpose. The purpose is to be with young people of their own age, their peer group, preferably away from parents and other adult authority figures. This association is the same reason that young people congregate on street corners, in youth clubs, parks, playing fields, bus shelters and represents a common role in identity formation in adolescence. Yet this 'purpose' is often questioned, and in youth clubs more purposeful activity in the form of specific measurable developmental outcomes are required to secure funding. The 'purpose' of meeting with one's peers does not, of course, preclude other activities and it is true that young people are sometimes meeting on canal towpaths because their relatively secluded nature allows for activities they wish to hide from others. Under age drinking, drug taking, solvent abuse, sexual activity, fighting, ambushing of passing boats and other passers-by all occur on the towpath by groups of young people. This sort of play challenges many social norms and forms of authority but is highly risky both for the young people, especially with the closeness of water where it is possible to drown, and for passers-by if they are ambushed in some way. Such activities are forms of play but are illegitimate in our society. Yet young people also engage in other forms of play, which may also be attractive because it involves some risk but cannot be seen as inevitably damaging to self or others. Such activities include noisy gatherings, putting graffiti on bridges, locks and walls, jumping into the water (usually in hot weather in rural areas!), skimming stones, launching tyres and other home-made boats, riding motor bikes on the towpath, and frightening the ducks and other wildlife. These activities are often disapproved of by British Waterways and other canal users but can be seen as attractive forms of play to young people. It needs to be remembered that:

... much of what looks to adults like bad behaviour is simply children practising, getting the hang of these skills (including social skills related to power, conflict, peer pressure, loyalty, trust, etc. and crucially taking risks). So if we stop children from being able to meet with their friends and peers, or if we watch them so closely and jump in so often that they never have the chance to see social situations through, we will severely limit their ability to pick up these skills. (Gill, 2007: 16)

The prevalence of graffiti around canals in urban areas emphasises a claim for legitimacy in using the canal space other than purpose. Nearly all the graffiti is simply 'tagging'; indicating a claim to ownership of this space. It is well known that groups of young people are territorial, and that conflict can develop from this. The most dangerous forms involve gang warfare, using guns and knives. Canals are fortunately not the centre for this but it is important to remember that canal spaces are often part of a territory, usually close to where the young people live. Many canal users by the nature of their activity are passing through these territories but need to be aware that local young people may have a strong sense of ownership as this is their 'patch'. It is difficult for boaters to recognise this and more difficult to identify the particular bridges or other features where young people regularly congregate. Mooring too close to such meeting places may not be advisable simply because the young people may see their space as being invaded.

Many would challenge the right of young people to see any meeting place as 'their space'. Why do young people meet on canals at all? It has already been suggested that

the secluded and sheltered nature of canal spaces are attractive to young people but they remain risky places, that are often cold and wet. The attraction of canal spaces needs to be put in the context of a declining number of public spaces generally where young people can congregate with their peers. If it is accepted that young people in their teens need some spaces that are not overseen or controlled by adults then this excludes spaces in the family home (or care home) and in schools. Outdoor spaces whether in the street, waste ground, parks, fields, or woods have become more problematic as cars have colonised roads, as shops have moved into security patrolled shopping malls, as unused urban land has been built on, sold off and/or security patrolled, and as parents forbid their children to go into areas they fear they may be abused, bullied or robbed. Those young people who still do congregate outside are feared by adults, who contest their use of these spaces, and increasingly have the power of the law to make their claim with the use of ASBOs, curfews and dispersal orders. It is possible that canals are places that young people are retreating to, as places where they are less likely to be challenged, especially young people already with ASBOs.

It must be a cause for concern if the scenario sketched here is close to reality. On the one hand are young people who have few places to meet up together, and are using canal towpaths for this purpose. On the other hand are growing numbers of other canal users such as boaters, walkers, cyclists and anglers who see the canal as their space, are prepared to negotiate use of this space with other users but do not see young people as legitimate canal users. Rather they see them as invaders of the canal space whose intentions are seen as suspect. This is a dynamic process in which ongoing communication, or lack of it, is likely to reinforce prejudice and stereotypes on both sides. The prevalence of acknowledgement of others on the canal, the friendliness that is institutionalised in canal etiquette, is admirable but also a cause for concern if it excludes any group, such as young people. Whilst on the streets it is often clear to young people they are seen as a threat by adults, whether they are or not, on the canals this is made abundantly obvious in that they are the group who are ignored whilst others are not. Such behaviour by other canal users, and observation of such by young people, is likely to lead to young people living up to the label that has been given to them as troublemakers and a downward spiral of worsening relationships. More research would be needed to see to what extent young people are aware of the different way they are treated compared to other canal users and are sensitive to the 'cut'. However young people generally are sensitive to recognition by others, to being blanked, or to their space being invaded. Conflict between gangs is often sparked off by such perceptions.

Policy Implications

There is nothing inevitable about this downward spiral and in this concluding section the aim will be to identify actions already being taken, and other possible actions, that could enable young people to be seen as legitimate users of the canal space. The aim must be to enable communication to occur between all canal users to successfully negotiate use of this strictly limited space. British Waterways are, as noted above, keen to increase visitors to the canals and see this as a crucial part of their strategy to maintain government funding which is planned to be cut back as part of general reductions in government expenditure on public services, and more immediately as part of a DEFRA overspend. British Waterways is a

'self-funding public corporation', alongside the few nationalised industries not to have been privatised. Like the Royal Mint, British Nuclear Fuels, and the Royal Mail they are struggling to be commercially viable and as a result, although partly self-funded, could not continue without Government subsidy. In this context British Waterways not only have to show the value of canals and other waterways to an increasing number of people but also that they are part of the Government's social inclusion agenda.

In 2001 the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council produced a report, at the request of government, called *The Inland Waterways: towards greater social inclusion*. The group clearly found it difficult to define social exclusion from the statistical evidence available. They relied mainly on evidence of lower usage of inland waterways by particular social groups, and identified families and others excluded by low incomes, disabled people, older people, black and other minority ethnic (especially Asian) communities, and women as those most excluded (p.8-9). The potential benefits to the excluded included better health, increased confidence, reducing 'at risk' behaviour, education and economic development, and appreciation of the local environment (p9). Whilst young people, especially those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, were not included in the lower usage definition of social exclusion (despite some evidence suggesting young people are under-represented, compared to older people, p.26-27), they are a group who are consistently identified as requiring the potential benefits identified above. The problem for this working group would seem to be that the activities of some young people was part of the reason for low usage by the groups identified as excluded. Fears for personal security were a major reason for not using canals and the perceived threatening activities of young people in terms of drug use, drinking alcohol, stone throwing and graffiti were given as evidence (p.14-15). This led to calls for greater security by more wardens, CCTV, better lighting, and clearing or blocking off areas that are secluded (p32-33). The report does not directly address the issue of whether to encourage greater usage by young people even if this sometimes leads to problems for other canal users. Tackling fears for personal security and developing greater ownership of local stretches of canals suggests that the problem is as much in the perception of others as it is in the actual behaviour of young people. But clarity is needed as to whether young people who use canals as meeting places are seen as legitimate, compared to other users. Another report (Parker, 2000) on *Safer Spaces and Places* that specifically looked at London canals argues for a wide range of urban design measures, and includes in his checklist of the likely levels of safety in areas, whether there are venues that attract large numbers of adolescents. Identifying young men as the main perpetrators of crime, meeting places are to be avoided but where can even small groups of young people meet with some degree of privacy?

Some measures are being taken to work with children and young people to involve them more in canals. There are a number of initiatives to get young people afloat often involving local authority Youth Services or voluntary youth organisations arranging narrow boat trips, recognising the attraction of the canals and using the group work potential of boats. In Birmingham the *Ellen Gee* and *Youthful Venturer* are two boats taking on this role. Often disadvantaged young people or young offenders are targeted. The YMCA in Bridgewater, Somerset is the only youth work agency I am aware of targeting young people on the towpath although in some areas graffiti projects have clearly taken place. In Birmingham detached youth workers did include canal towpaths in their patch but increased concerns

about the health and safety of the workers have stopped this (Harris, 2006). The main initiative sponsored by British Waterways to involve children in the canals is 'Wild over Waterways' (WOW) but this targets 7-11 year olds, rather than older young people, and is closely linked to the school national curriculum. It is argued by WOW that this is because of limited resources and that 'children under 12 years old are still forming their views and opinions and tend to engage with external agencies more openly' (Butterly, 2007). This is true but as with other areas of policy related to children and young people can be seen to 'write off' older young people, and leads to scarce resources being shifted to younger age groups. There would seem to be a role for detached youth workers to intervene with groups of young people not only to reduce anti-social behaviour but also to educate young people about the wider potential of canals. However the main thrust of this paper is that it is the role of other canal users to accept the legitimacy of groups of young people on the towpath and simply to acknowledge them in the same way as they do other canal users. If all canal users could recognise that they are all at play, even if the form of play differs, it would be a big step to recognise commonality rather than difference.

Conclusion

Michael Wyness (2006) argues a western, and in particular USA influenced view of childhood, is based on a 'care and control' model (p94) which is limited in terms of seeing children primarily as objects and ignores the degree of agency children have to make decisions to lead their own lives. This would seem to be even more true for older young people but they are increasingly being subsumed in policy terms with children, with *Every Child Matters* being the dominant agenda, and young people are targeted who are perceived as being in trouble or troublesome. There is a real danger that young people who are struggling to find an identity beyond childhood, but also want to emphasise their difference from adults, are seen as deviant rather than another group wanting to express themselves in their own way in their own time. The Institute for Public Policy recently reported (IPPR, 2006) that 1.5 million Britons thought of moving away from their local area due to young people hanging around, and Britons were less likely to intervene than their European counterparts to stop teenagers committing anti-social behaviour. On the canals it is much easier to move away but it is to be hoped that other canal users will recognise their responsibilities as members of this community to at least acknowledge young people as canal users like themselves.

Bibliography

- Abercrombie, N. (2004) 'Who do we talk to?' in *Sociology: Short Introductions*, Polity: Cambridge.
- Berger, P. (1963) *Invitation to Sociology*, Garden City, NY: Anchor books
- Bennett, T. and Watson, D (eds.) (2002) *Understanding Everyday Life*, Blackwell: Oxford.
- Butterly, J. (2007) Personal Communication from National Education Manager, British Waterways.
- Field, J. (2003) *Social Capital*, Routledge: London.
- Gill, T. (2007) 'Everyday Morality and Childhood Freedoms' in eds. Waiton, S and Baird, S.

- Cotton Wool Kids? Generation: Youth Issues*, Glasgow.
- Goffman, E (1963) *Behaviour in Public Places*, Free Press: NY
- Goffman, E (1972) *Encounters*, Allen Lane: London
- Goffman, E (1972) *Interaction Ritual*, Penguin: Harmondsworth
- Goffman, E (1971) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday life*, Penguin: Harmondsworth
- Harris P. (2006) Personal communication from Chairperson of Detached Youth Workers Group
- Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (2001) *The Inland Waterways: towards greater social inclusion*. IWAAC: London
- Kane P. (2004) *The Play Ethic: A Manifesto for a different way of living*, Macmillan: London
- Parker, J. (2000) 'Safer Spaces and Places: Reducing Crime by Urban Design' for Council of Europe International Conference, Szczecin, Poland
- Putnam R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of American community*, Simon and Schuster: NY
- Watson, S. (2006) *City Publics: The (dis)enchantments of urban encounters*, Routledge: London
- Wyness, M. (2006) *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood*, Palgrave Macmillan: London.
- www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Youth & Policy



Did you get your copy of the 100th anniversary issue of *Youth and Policy*?

To mark the publication of the 100th edition of *Youth and Policy* 30 individuals were invited to reflect on aspects of youth policy and youth work practice during the last 25 years. A special commemorative issue containing 25 articles to celebrate 25 years of publishing resulted.

Contributors included Bernard Davies, John Rose, Howard Williamson, Tom Wylie, Tim Burke, Bob Coles, Tony Jeffs, John Pitts, Keith Popple, Tracey Shildrick, Tony Taylor and Mark K. Smith in an issue running to over 300 pages and capturing some of the finest thinking and writing on youth affairs, youth policy and youth work.

If you missed out copies are still available for the standard back issue price of £9, including UK postage.

To order contact NYA Sales on 0116 242 7427 or e-mail sales@nya.org.uk. Or visit our website at www.nya.org.uk to take out an annual subscription to *Youth and Policy*.

The 'Lens Model': A practical tool for developing and understanding gender conscious practice

Susan Morgan and Ken Harland

This paper attempts to add to the ongoing debate about the role of gender within youth work by presenting a 'Lens Model' which links the processing of information to the complex relationship between gender and young people's everyday lives. It aims to assist practitioners and trainers to develop a more gender conscious approach to practice through a five-stage interconnected conceptual framework. The model is underpinned by clear value based principles that are complementary to core youth work principles such as valuing young people, empowerment, participation, inclusion, promoting equality and the challenging of oppression and restrictive stereotypes.

Keywords: *Lens model, gender conscious practice, youth work*

Youth work in the UK and Ireland has a long history of attempting to understand how gender connects and impacts upon the lives of young people (see for example, Carpenter and Young, 1986; Youth Council for Northern Ireland, 1994; Tett, 1996/97; Lloyd, 1997; Spence, 1990; 2001; Harland and Morgan, 2003). Whilst there has also been acknowledgement of the need to bring clarity to our understanding of femininity and masculinity (Batsleer, 2006), to date, a framework for gender conscious practice has been notably missing (YouthAction Northern Ireland, 2006). This article is not intended to provide an analysis of gender; rather it focuses on gender as a lens to promote the development of a more gender conscious practice within youth work.

Introduction – Youth and Gender

Gender is a fundamental principle that shapes social behaviour and social institutions (Marsh and Keating, 2006). Prior to the 1970s social divisions of class were considered central to sociological theory with no indication that gender might be an important aspect of stratification. In recent years however it is acknowledged that gender has become embedded as one of the primary ways in which social life is organised (West and Zimmerman, 2002). There have been enormous transformations in the understanding of how gender pervades all aspects of society including language, relationships, social institutions, academic debate, the construction of personal and political, public and private spheres and the gendered use of space and place (Imray and Middleton, 2002; Monro, 2005). One of the key themes about gender is the way in which 'other differences – i.e. race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, all shape and modify our definitions of gender' (Kimmel, 2000: 89), as well as shaping the distribution of resources at macro level, organisation level and individual level (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). Central to contemporary narratives of sociological and political change are two interconnected trends of deindustrialisation and the movement of women into the workforce.

Henderson et al 2007, argue that these two processes of change have altered public and private life and what it means to be young. Wider forces such as globalisation, migration and culture also impact upon the context within which young people's lives need to be understood. Globalisation has decreased predictability and introduced new risks that previous generations have not had to face and created transformations of young women's and young men's lives in the context of larger global events (Giddens, 2005).

Young women

In the 1970s and 1980s feminism became an influential force in understanding the roles, identities, subordination and marginalisation of women's experiences. The women's movement resulted in a powerful body of sociological theory connected to understanding persistent gender inequalities and to advancing agendas for overcoming them, therefore becoming influential and largely responsible for increased opportunities for women in many spheres of society. However in the 1990s feminist thinking was progressively contested. The resulting 'backlash' to feminist ideology and actions along with the growing hostility to feminism in popular culture gave the impression that feminism was no longer necessary as either it had gone too far or had achieved what it set out to do (Fauldi, 1992).

Whilst it is clear that women have made advances in many spheres of society (Padovic and Reskin, 2002) there is still a long way to go in both the pursuit of equality and the challenge to differences in status, power and prestige enjoyed by women and men in various contexts (Walter, 1998; Greer, 2000; Whelehan, 2000). There are more women in work, girls are achieving better than boys at school and some women have reached positions of great power and status (Walter, 1998). However, in contrast to the above Budgeon (2001) highlighted areas appearing to be resistant to gender equality. These include, stereotyping in careers, unequal pay, access to opportunities for advancement in the workplace, sex stereotyping in domestic roles and double standards relating to sexual practices. Evidently gender continues to be an important feature in shaping young people's lives. Henderson et al in their longitudinal study (2007) found that the pull of tradition remains an influential force and is experienced more substantially by young women who are more willing to accommodate their careers for family demands than young men. Whilst suicide is more common among young males, deliberate self harm is significantly more common among females with much higher rate of depression and eating disorders (Mental Health Foundation, 2004). Other research (e.g. Trust for the Study of Adolescence, 2000) states that despite the notion of 'girl power,' young women still have lower self esteem in early adolescence, are unsatisfied with their bodies and find it problematic to say 'no' to sex. Despite the wide media coverage that girls are more successful academically, their achievements are not necessarily reflected in the labour market (Thompson et al, 2002). Young women continue to be marginalised within their communities and feel no sense of belonging to wider society (Geraghty et al, 1998).

Young Men

Living up to dominant images of masculinity can place immense pressure on men. Connell (1995) identifies what he calls 'protest masculinity' – a process whereby boys make claims

to power when there are no real resources for doing so. In Northern Ireland particular attention has been given to the consequences for young males who adhere to narrow and unrealistic interpretation of masculinities. Powerful links have been made between how young males express their masculinity and wider societal issues such as violence, risk-taking behaviour, suicide, emotional intelligence and educational attainment. For example, the adolescent males in Harland's (2000) inner city Belfast study presented two intrinsically complex realms of public and private experience. The public sphere was the space where they felt pressure to 'be cool' and appear confident and macho, believing it was primarily by 'acting tough' that men received status and respect. They believed that males affirm their masculine identity by being dismissive of their emotional pain – often to the extent that they appeared 'unemotional' and intimidating to others. By withholding certain feelings and emotions in public these adolescent males believed they were expressing an important aspect of their masculinity – namely that men do not need support from others. Such emotional mis-education facilitates the suppression of emotions such as pain, fear, hurt, anger and frustration which can be detrimental to positive mental and emotional well being. The private sphere was where they thought about their anxieties and learned to cope with their inner feelings and emotions. This synthesis on the construction of masculinity raises questions about the extent to which young males play a passive, rather than active role, in the making of their own masculinities.

The evolution of gender conscious practice in Northern Ireland

Gender based youth work practice emerged in Northern Ireland during the 1970s (Harland and Morgan, 2003). Initially this began with young women within the context of a Youth Service that was being further resourced in reaction to the political conflict that had been prevalent since 1969 (Geraghty et al, 1998). A major increase in funding designed to redress the political conflict resourced a youth service that largely focused on sport and recreation. One outcome of this was the formation of a youth service responding to the 'assumed' needs and interests of young men to remove them from conflict situations, subsequently rendering young women invisible (Harland and Morgan, 2003). Simultaneously, the civil rights movement and the emergence of second wave feminism resulted in activism aimed at engaging young women and challenging inequality. In response to this, youth work with young women in Northern Ireland developed in the voluntary sector in agencies such as YouthAction Northern Ireland where the environment was more open and encouraging to the development of practice underpinned by feminist principles such as empowerment, participation, and challenging gender inequalities within wider society.

Conversely, from the late 1980s literature identified the need for more effective approaches to work with young men. This had a direct influence on the thinking and development of work within Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK (Davidson, 1988; Cousins, 1988; Lloyd, 1997; Harland, 1997; 2001; Harland and Morgan, 2003). Central to developmental work with young men was a response to contradictions inherent within traditional notions of masculinity. There was a move away from a recreational focus and more attention was given to the mental health and emotional needs of young men (Trimble 1990, Harland and Morgan, 2003).

Within Northern Ireland work with young women continued to develop and influence not only the youth service but also the impetus of work with young men. One key example of this was the establishment of a Work with Young Men Unit in 2000 to supplement gender focused practice within the Gender Equality Unit of YouthAction Northern Ireland. While these developments were largely complementary, the focus of work with young women and young men evolved separately and at times became competitive in regard to the priorities given to funding, policy and youth work practice.

Defining Gender Conscious Practice

YouthAction's (2006) paper presents gender conscious practice as a cognisant attempt to engage young men and young women through processes that proactively address societal issues such as inequality and oppression, and challenge restrictions they may encounter in their lives as a result of gender. The practice can take place with young men and young women in single sex or mixed sex groups with a gender specific focus. There are a variety of approaches and interventions utilised that directly challenge social norms about how young men and young women should live their lives. These interventions may include providing space for young people to explore and learn about their gender socialisation as well as their perceptions and attitudes; educating young people about historical impacts such as feminism and patriarchy; addressing the reality of young women's and young men's lives in preparing them emotionally and practically for a changing world in terms of female and male roles. Gender conscious practice challenges the status quo and systems which undermine the role and position of young men and young women. Whilst challenging the historical disadvantage experienced by women in the economic, social, political sphere and the continued inequality of women in society, gender conscious practice also acknowledges the changing role of young men in contemporary society and challenges the gendered expectations they continually face. The practice is confrontational as it disputes the validity of gender roles and stereotypes. It is painstaking as it deconstructs all that is known about femininity and masculinity. It is reflective as it continually promotes and challenges restrictive and harmful gender messages that perpetuate a culture whereby one person has advantage over another simply because of their gender

A Model for Gender Conscious Practice

Despite the fact that gender conscious practice has shown many benefits to young women and young men (YouthAction Northern Ireland, 2006), there still appears to be reluctance within the Northern Ireland Youth Service to take gender seriously as an important aspect of the youth work curriculum. The Youth Work Strategy (2005-2008) is the most significant co-ordinated and strategic framework the youth sector has seen to date. It refers to the development, implementation and review of particular strategies for encouraging participation by excluded and traditionally under-represented groups. The operationalisation of this strategy may have more explicit directed targets and action that specifically address equality issues relating to young men and young women.

At a recent gender conscious practice seminar in Northern Ireland, practitioners reported

difficulties in understanding the purpose of gender based practice (YouthAction Seminars, 2005). They struggled with understanding the principles underpinning gender conscious work and were also uncomfortable with aspects of practice that could appear contentious, threatening and divisive. They believed that 'certain aspects of gender based practice were confusing' and struggled to 'identify differences between underpinning principles in relation to work with young women and work with young men.' There was also a lack of understanding about approaches to gender specific work and ambiguity in regard to whether or not this work should be single or mixed sex. Emerging noticeably from these seminars was the need for a clearer definition of gender based work with underpinning theory and practice elements.

Recommendations identified:

- the need for a clear vision and strategic action plan for gender conscious work with young people;
- the production of academic literature, research and recording of gender conscious practice;
- the need for a team of trained workers demonstrating knowledge and experience to guide the strategic development of gender conscious practice;
- the need to incorporate gender conscious practice into all levels of youth work training;
- the need for available resources to develop gender conscious practice within the Northern Ireland Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work Theme: Participation and Inclusive Youth Work.

The Lens Model

The Lens model presented in this paper has been shaped and influenced by many years of gender based practice developed through YouthAction Northern Ireland's evolving work with young women and young men, training and research at the University of Ulster Community Youth Work department and feedback from gender specific seminars with experienced practitioners jointly organised by the Northern Ireland Curriculum Development Unit, the University of Ulster Community Youth Work department and YouthAction Northern Ireland (2005).

The Lens Model aims to be flexible and utilitarian. It is a five-stage interconnected framework with continuous interaction between each level which links the processing of information to the complex relationship between gender and young people's everyday lives. The model provides a lens through which practitioners and trainers can gain more clarity towards a holistic understanding of gender conscious practice. The model underpins clear value based principles that are complementary to core youth work principles such as valuing young people, empowerment, participation, inclusion, promoting equality, and challenging oppression and narrow gender stereotypes.

Starting points

The Lens Model is a means for practitioners to possess, or acquire, specific gender based knowledge and be open to reflect and draw upon personal experience. Personal experience

provides practitioners with the wisdom, self awareness and skills to engage young people and develop appropriate intervention techniques and strategies. Gender conscious practice can bring to the surface a range of emotions that practitioners may not have previously processed. Therefore increased self awareness enables practitioners and trainers to better understand the impact that their own attitudes and values can have upon themselves and others. Being reflective also enables practitioners to have greater empathy and insight towards young people and their issues and support them to work towards more specific outcomes in regard to facilitating personal, social and political transformation amongst young people.

The Lens Model



1. **Level One** requires practitioners to sharpen their vision towards a better understanding the multi-complex issues associated with living in a gendered society.
2. **Level Two** encourages practitioners to appreciate and see more clearly the ways in which a gendered society impacts upon the lived experiences of young women and young men in terms of identity, territoriality and culture.

3. **Level Three** cultivates a deeper understanding of the 'gendered self' – that is gaining clarity as to how our attitudes and values have been shaped and influenced by gender and how this affects how we relate to others.
4. **Level Four** focuses in on how practitioners and trainers can purposefully engage young people through gender conscious practice.
5. **Level Five** is the core of the model as it orientates practitioners towards focusing more sharply on outcomes that result in personal, social and political transformation amongst young people.

Each level is inextricably linked to the next and enables practitioners to see clearly at which stage of the model they are functioning at any given time. It allows for a movement from surface learning to a deeper understanding within each level. Whilst the model requires that practitioners possess certain level of expertise, knowledge and skills, it accommodates the fact that practitioners and trainers may be at different stages in their personal development. The following discourse on the Lens Model is not meant to be a critique of theoretical debate on gender, rather it aims to highlight themes that may emerge or need to be understood and appreciated when addressing gender related issues with young people.

Level 1: Understanding a gendered society

The first stage of the model encourages practitioners to focus on the complexities that coexist within key theoretical concepts of gender and how this impacts upon the construction of femininities and masculinities. This encompasses how gender roles have been determined by the systems and cultures in which we live. It includes exploration of power and powerlessness and how these can be manifested – i.e. through patriarchy, sexism, dominance and subservience and the public and private domains. Whilst women and men experience power and powerlessness in very different ways, both are inextricably linked to each other. Feminist critique has had a powerful influence in academic thinking. Feminists have formulated theoretical frameworks for understanding power and powerlessness and challenged the assumption that the social roles of men and women are given by biological reproduction. Feminism has also contributed significantly to the re-examination by men, and women, of studies focusing on men and masculinity.

Whilst the oppression of women through male dominance in both public and private arenas continues to be widely studied and challenged through feminist critique, more recently arguments focusing on the negative consequences of male experience of power and powerlessness have come to the forefront of gender literature. Level one of the model is a means for those delivering gender conscious practice to be aware of these debates and provide a more focused context of their work with young people.

Level Two: Appreciation of the public and private worlds of young people: Identity, Territoriality and Culture

How a young person culturally learns about gender is a major informant of identity formation and social construction of what it means to be female or male. Understanding how individuals are socialised into accepting norms, values and behaviour are a central feature in level two of the model. This includes supporting young people to understand how the process of growing up transforms them into social beings whereby societal expectations become an intricate part of their identity formation. Consideration is given to

the fact that young men and young women are given culturally assigned gender roles that are consistently reinforced throughout their lives. Negative consequences of this can be manifested in a variety of different ways for young women and young men and seriously affects the way in which young people present themselves to others in terms of identity, territory and culture.

Level two of the model gives clarity to how narrow stereotypical gender expectations affect ways in which young men and young women present themselves in public and private spheres. This may mean challenging stereotypical beliefs such as 'men shouldn't show their emotions in public' or 'women are emotionally stronger than men.' The main focus of this level is to elucidate how men and women have traditionally used public and private spheres and how this impacts upon youth culture, values and beliefs.

Level Three: The 'Gendered Self'

Level three of the model provides a tool for continuous self reflection and exploration of aspects of personal learning and development. Increased awareness of the gendered self lays the foundation for gender conscious practice and underpins and complements the generic skills used in working with young people. It can be extremely useful for practitioners to reflect upon areas such as growing up female and male and how the influences of family, church, education, employment, peers and community help shape your gendered self. Reflective gender-conscious practice can happen in any setting and therefore seizes naturally-arising moments to encourage reflection. Reflection helps practitioners to better understand and challenge their own values and beliefs and relate this to their work with young women and young men. A gender-conscious worker, having already worked through their own gender socialisation and its influence upon their attitudes and values is in a stronger position to articulate their own gendered experience with young people. More importantly however, practitioners who bear these out in their own life and in their interactions with others have more congruence and empathy towards young people.

The gender-conscious practitioner is therefore deliberate in their work with young people. They are conscious of how they present themselves to others, their values and beliefs, how they plan their programmes and their interactions. This is not to say that they are not 'being themselves'. On the contrary, because they choose not to adhere to the stereotypes and gender norms established by society, they are possibly more 'like themselves' and demonstrate greater congruence. A conscious use of self can be either direct or indirect. Direct use of self refers to an explicit challenge to the behaviours and language of others who promote gender stereotypes or gender inequalities. The indirect use of self calls on workers to live a gender-conscious life which questions the 'gender norms' of our society. These behaviours can act as a role model to young people who are in contact with the worker over a sustained period of time. They can articulate their experience and their own values when necessary or appropriate. Personal reflection is not prescriptive. It can be generated through artificial situations (programmes designed with this purpose) or through organic situations naturally arising throughout regular discussions or activities.

Level Four: Purposeful Engagement

Purposeful engagement incorporates reflection on the individual, family, community and wider society. This is no different from educators who engage young people in reflective

processes except that the reflections are gender specific and encourage exploration and challenges to societal gender norms. This necessitates a re-evaluation of how people, places, experiences, systems and institutions impact upon gender formation and gender expectations of others. Reflection as part of the process enables structural inequalities to be challenged and promotes life opportunities for young women and young men that they may not have chosen for themselves.

Gender conscious practice or purposeful engagement takes place to a great extent within a single sex environment. We live in a society where there is constant interaction between young women and young men through family life, friendships, relationships, school, work and socialising. The purpose of single sex work is to acknowledge that young women and young men have specific needs and issues that can be best explored in a single gender setting. This is not to be divisive; rather it aims to support young women and young men to reflect on and challenge their experiences within a relatively safe environment. Whilst recognising the single sex approach we do not intend to exclude gender conscious practice within mixed sex environments.

Regardless of whichever method is employed by the practitioner, purposeful engagement necessitates that, when engaging with young women and young men, the underpinning principles and possible outcomes of the intervention are clear. In other words, it is by design rather than chance, that the engagement with the young person will have some outcome related to personal, social and political transformation.

Level Five: Personal, Social and Political Transformation

Lessons from research and practice have shown that when workers adopt a gender conscious approach, outcomes are much stronger (Lloyd, 1997; Spence, 2001; Harland and Morgan, 2003). Gender-conscious work requires a political, sociological and economic analysis of past and contemporary society. An understanding of the historical development of gendered roles and expectations raises awareness of the depth of issues involved. A further understanding of contemporary society allows workers to understand the changing roles of men and women within economic, social and political life. This gender analysis is required for the gender-conscious worker to provide young people with a clear sense of reality about the society within which they live and to prepare them for the negotiation of future gender relationships, roles and responsibilities.

When gender conscious principles are applied to practice, what emerges is a gender conscious approach towards personal, social and political transformation of young people; capacity building; empowerment; collective action and social justice. Gender-conscious practice involves therefore more than simply an exploration of one's own gender, but consciously moves into the realm of exploring the 'other'. The intention is to challenge the misconceptions of the 'other' that can lead to sexist or discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. It is particularly effective where there are different identities, whereby there is either explicit or implicit rejection by one group of the 'other'. The approach works on separating myth from reality, encouraging understanding of difference and acknowledging common features of both. The next stage of this practice involves translating this into anti-sexist and anti-discriminatory behaviour.

Gender-conscious programmes are devised to address specific issues which arise from gender structural inequalities. Gender-conscious programmes challenge these structural inequalities using a three-pronged approach: Firstly, through raising awareness of the inequality; secondly, through providing young people with the skills to overcome potential barriers arising from the inequality; and thirdly, through motivating them, as individuals and as a group, to take positive action in addressing similar inequalities in their own lives. Agencies who deliver gender conscious practice may develop programmes such as: sexual health; assertiveness; single sex work; gender awareness; pre-vocational programmes for young mothers planning to return to work; programmes focused on young men and violence; young fathers; community development and citizenship; lobbying; consultation, capacity building and advocacy.

There have been many examples of gender conscious practice with young women and young men in Northern Ireland. For example, YouthAction's 'Moving On' programme targeted young mothers on the theme of employability. The programme recognised financial issues for young mothers, employment inequalities for young women and the extra responsibilities involved in caring for their children. The young mothers were engaged in pre-vocational training with employment opportunities that brought them out of the 'benefit trap'. They were enabled to bring their issues to wider arenas and directly influence future practice and policy. Similarly, the Personal and Political Development programme for young women was specifically designed to address the historical under-representation of women within public life and the political arena. The young men's unit delivered programmes that enabled young men to explore their experiences and attitudes towards violence and its impact upon others. The innovative work with young men revealed the extent and complexity of violence within male youth culture and the blur between young men as victims and perpetrators of violence. The programme also had a major impact upon practice development and policy. It influenced future funding priorities in regard to Peace and Reconciliation funding and the establishment of the Centre for Young Men's Studies at the University of Ulster. Participants in all the above programmes were given opportunities to reflect on themselves, the family, community, wider society and the relationship between this and their gender. Regardless of the programme developed the main principle of gender conscious practice remained a consciousness of the impact of gender and a continual move towards personal, social and political transformation.

Conclusion

The Lens Model presented in this paper has evolved directly from gender specific practice, training and research with young people in Northern Ireland during the past fifteen years. The model was conceived by the authors in response to the lack of clarity and residual confusion amongst practitioners in regard to the aims and purpose of gender conscious practice. The model provides a five-stage inter-connected framework which links the processing of information to the complex relationship between gender and young people's everyday lives. It is a flexible and utilitarian model that can embrace historical and emerging gender themes and debates whilst accommodating new and progressive thinking.

The model can be used by trainers to provide a contextual lens for practitioners and

students to explore the concept of gender and the development of gender conscious practice. The model can also be utilised by practitioners to develop a more focused and strategic approach to their own culturally specific practice, whilst orientating towards more tangible and quantifiable outcomes for young people. Finally, and importantly, the Lens Model should not compromise the creativity or unique styles of practitioners, nor prescribe the issues that young people will raise in practice.

The authors would welcome feedback on the model presented in this paper.

The authors would also like to acknowledge the work of YouthAction Northern Ireland, in particular Martin McMullan Assistant Director, Eliz McArdle Team Leader in the Gender Equality Unit and Michael McKenna Team Leader Young Men's Unit. .

References

- Batsleer, J. (2006) 'Every Girl Matters! Young Women Matter! A Feminist Comment,' *Youth and Policy*, 90.
- Brod, H. and Kaufman, M. (1994) *Theorising Masculinities*. London: Sage.
- Budgeon, S. (2001) 'Emergent Feminist Identities Young Women and the Practice of Micro Politics,' *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 8,1,7-28.
- Carpenter, V. Young, K. (1986) *Coming in from the Margins, Youth Work with Girls and Young Women*, Leicester: NAYC.
- Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, (2005) 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,' *Gender and Society*. Vol. 19. 6, p 829-859.
- Fauldi, S (1992) *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women*, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Geraghty, T., Breakey, C., and Keane, T. (1998) *A Sense of Belonging: Young People in rural areas of Northern Ireland speak about their needs, hopes and aspirations*, Youth Action Northern Ireland: Youth Action Publishers.
- Giddens, A. (2005) *Sociology*. (4th. Ed) Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gray, A. M. (1999) *Lifting the Limits: A Community Leadership Programme by Young Mothers*, Youth Action Northern Ireland: Youth Action Publishers.
- Greer, G. (2000) *The Whole Woman*, London: Anchor.
- Harland, K. (1997) *Young Men Talking – Voices from Belfast* London: YouthAction Northern Ireland and Working with Men Publications.
- Harland, K. (2000) *Men and Masculinity: The construction of masculine identities in inner city Belfast*, PhD. submitted to the University of Ulster.
- Harland, K. (2001) 'The Challenges and potential of developing a more effective youth work curriculum with young men,' *Journal of Child Care Practice* Vol 7 No. 4.
- Harland, K., and Morgan, S. (2001) 'Keeping gender on the agenda,' *Action Magazine*, Young Citizens in Action. Voluntary Service Belfast Publication.
- Harland, K., and Morgan, S. (2003) 'Youth work with young men in Northern Ireland: An Advocacy Approach,' *Youth and Policy*, 81.
- Hearn, G. (1987) *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity and the critique of Marxism*, London: Pluto.
- Henderson, S., Holland, J., McGrellis, S., Sharpe, S., and Thompson, R. (2007) *Inventing*

- adulthoods – a biographical approach to youth transitions*, London: Sage Publications.
- Imray, L. and Middleton, A. (2002) 'Public and Private: Marking the Boundaries,' in eds. S. Jackson, and S. Scott, *Gender: A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge
- Jackson, S. and Scott, S. (2002) *Gender: A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge
- Jones, (2002) *The Youth Divide – Diverging paths to Adulthood*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Leonard, M. (1999) *Gender and the Transition from School to work in Belfast* Womens Studies International Forum, 22,6,619-630.
- Lloyd, T. (1996) *Young Men's Health – A Youth Work Concern?* Published jointly by YouthAction Northern Ireland and Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland.
- Lloyd, T. (1997) *Let's get changed lads: Developing work with boys and young men*. London: Working with Men Publications.
- Marsh, I. and Keating, M. (2006) *Sociology: making sense of society*, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Mental Health Foundation Website; www.mentalhealth.org.uk/information/mental-health-a-z/self-harm.
- Monro, S. (2005) *Gender Politics: Citizenship, Activism and Sexual Diversity*, London Pluto Press.
- Nava, M. (1984) 'Youth Service Provision, Social Order and the Question of Girls,' in eds. A. McRobbie and M. Nava, *Gender and Generation*, London: Macmillan.
- Parmar, P. (1998) 'Gender, Race and Power: The Challenge to Youth Work Practice,' in eds P. Cohan and H.S. Bains, *Multi-Racist Britain*, London: Macmillan.
- Padovic, I. and Reskin, B. (2002) *Women and Men at work*, Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Ridgeway, C.L. and Correll, S.J. (2004) 'Unpacking the Gender System: A theoretical perspective on gender beliefs and social relations,' *Gender and Society*. 18, No4, 510-531.
- Spence, J. (1990) 'Youth Work and Gender,' in eds T. Jeffs, and M. Smith, *Young People Inequality and Youth Work*. London: Macmillan Education.
- Spence, J. (2001) 'Feminism in Work With Girls and Young Women,' *Youth and Policy*, 52
- Tett, L. (1996/7) 'Changing masculinities? Single-sex work with boys and young men,' *Youth and Policy*, 55.
- Thompson, R., Bell, R., Holland, J. and Henderson, C. (2002) 'Critical Moments Choice, Chance and Opportunities in Young Peoples Narratives of Transition' *Sociology*, 36, 2, 335-354.
- Trimble, J (1990) 'A Report on Equality of Opportunity – Provision for girls and young women in the full time sector of the Northern Ireland Youth Service' YouthAction Northern Ireland.
- Trust for the Study of Adolescence, (2000) *Young People and Gender: A review of Research*, London: Cabinet Office.
- Walter, N, (1998) *The New Feminism*. London: Little, Brown.
- West, C. and Zimmerman, D. (1987) 'Doing Gender,' in eds. S. Jackson and S. Scott, *Gender: A Sociological Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Whelehan, I. (2000) *Overloaded: Popular Culture and the Future of Feminism*. London: Women's Press.
- YouthAction Northern Ireland (2003) *Everyday Life: young men, violence and developing youth work practice in Northern Ireland*.

- YouthAction Northern Ireland (2006) *Gender Conscious Work with Young People. An occasional youth work practice Paper 2*. YouthAction Northern Ireland in partnership with the University of Ulster and the Curriculum Development Unit.
- YouthAction Northern Ireland (2002) *Everyday Life: young men, violence and developing youth work practice in Northern Ireland*. YouthAction Publications.
- Youth Council for Northern Ireland (1994) *Into the Mainstream. Equality of Opportunity: gender*. Youth Curriculum Guidelines.

Youth & Policy

ADVERTISING RATES AND DATA

CIRCULATION

Youth & Policy is issued quarterly. It has a circulation not only throughout the United Kingdom and Europe, but also as far afield as the USA and Australia. Many academics and professionals subscribe to what has proven to be a valuable contribution to those involved in various forms of youth study and youth work.

RATES

Advertisements

Full page	£225+VAT
Half page (landscape only)	£125+VAT

Inserts £150+VAT for single sheet A5 or A4 (folded)

800 copies circulation. Delivery to The NYA address for the attention of the Media Services Programme Manager.

Other rates by negotiation.

DEADLINES

One month prior to publication of each quarterly issue. Contact NYA Media Services on 0116 242 7480 or e-mail: andyh@nya.org.uk for further details.

Inserts – two weeks prior to publication.

MECHANICAL DATA

Full page	120mm wide x 195mm deep
Half page	120mm wide x 95mm deep

The National Youth Agency will typeset and lay out your advertisement from copy/illustrations supplied. All advertisements will print mono unless otherwise negotiated.

FURTHER DETAILS

Please contact *Youth & Policy*, The National Youth Agency, Eastgate House, 19–23 Humberstone Road, Leicester LE5 3GJ. Tel: 0116 242 7480.
E-mail: andyh@nya.org.uk

Reviews

John Coxhead

The Last Bastion of Racism: Gypsies, Travellers and Policing

Trentham Books 2007

ISBN-10: 1858563909

ISBN-13: 978-1858563909

£15.99

pp106

Brian Belton

Coxhead offers some pertinent material relating to how trainers addressing issues related to Gypsies and Travellers can be abused by groups affected by latent or unrealised prejudice and discrimination. His book also asks useful questions about prejudice towards groups categorised as Gypsies and Travellers. He makes the valuable point that prejudicial and discriminatory expressions that dehumanize, demonize and scapegoat those labelled 'Gypsy' are tolerated far beyond levels that would bring swift action if perpetrated against other groups. However, parts of the book come across like a 'sugar puffs' promotion for National Occupational Standards and outcome orientated work strategies. The 'managerial speak' associated with these increasingly passé doctrines abound; 'standardised competence' and 'outperforming prejudice' are characteristic of the sound-byte genre, while phrases like, 'a flexible approach in coaching to outcomes ensures that individuals are respected and empowered' and 'good coaching is about empowering self coaching', that actually mean very little but sound as if they might, echo slogans like 'work will set you free'.

While NOS and consciousness of desired outcomes might be tools that could prove useful in terms of establishing a straightforward trajectory of practice, to claim that they can provide anything beyond a form of a very general set of aims for practice (for example, 'respect diversity' is a typical of the NOS criteria for diversity) and simplistic gauge of performance, is not convincing.

The same rose-coloured perspective is typified by the championing of 'learning sets', where analysis seems to have been abandoned for the sake of promotion. Whilst these type of forums do have potential in terms of developing sound working practices via the sharing of experience, Coxhead demonstrates naivety in appearing to be unaware that such 'circles' can pool and endorse ignorance or perhaps worse act as venues to reinforce local/cultural prejudices. The 'facilitator' that Coxhead sees as a more effective role than the 'trainer', is, in these relatively closed situations, at least as much at risk of the abuse that he identifies trainers experiencing.

But the most limiting aspect of the book is Coxhead's analysis within the context of racism. Insisting on a 'race discourse' in relation to inequality in social justice experienced by Gypsies and Travellers means that he (like much of the flawed theory surrounding Gypsy issues) does much to perpetuate what Ashley Montagu called 'Man's Most Dangerous Myth'.

The Last Bastion of Racism repeatedly takes society to task about the non-recognition of the relative position of Gypsies and Travellers but fails to even consider the literature that has done much to highlight the huge deficiencies of the likes of Acton and Hancock (who are cited throughout the book) making the case for the social generation of the various groups that are conscripted to (at least questionable) ethnic and racial typologies (Willems, W. 1998; Lewy, G 2001; Mayall, D. 2003; Belton, B.A. Dec 2004; Belton, B.A. Sep 2004; Lucassen, L., Willems, W and Cottaar, A. 1998). This, as has been claimed, does not deny Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity, but argues that the complexity of these groupings is not explained by a crude racialised (biological/genetic/ancestral) analysis.

Railing against stereotyping from the start, Coxhead devotes sizable sections of his book to stereotyping Gypsies and Travellers as racial/ethnic groupings and seems unable to pick up on the repeated clue that Gypsies are (albeit often erroneously) identified by social behavioural traits (p60) rather than distinctive physical racial markers. He (quite rightly) identifies the failure to challenge racism as an action that perpetuates racism, but fails to examine the nature of the label of race, which is also an action that serves help construct barriers based on racial difference. He identifies that others can be 'highly resistant to challenge through discussion' about their perceptions of Gypsies and Travellers, but he does not even begin to consider a discussion about his position with regard to the racialisation of particular groups.

However, not stopping at merely ignoring this relatively new and radical analysis of the Gypsy and Traveller population, Coxhead seems to dismiss any challenge of the blanket labelling of itinerant/caravan dwelling groups as little more than 'antigypsyism'; an attack on the 'Gypsy race' and part of a covert form of ethnic 'extermination'. At the same time he relies on legal definitions as a sort of Plimsoll line in assertion of identity, seemingly unaware that legality is relative to the state that instigates legislation, its agenda and the ambitions of power elites. Gypsies were defined in a certain way by the Nazi state for example, but who would suggest that these in any way represented a 'certainty' or constituted just, reliable, realistic or rational identity markers?

This position leaves Coxhead with nowhere to go but where he ends up; asking for Gypsies and Travellers to be understood as a distinct community (taking these categories to be homogenous ethnic groupings)– this is the fundamental flaw in Coxhead's position in terms of delivering 'rounded services' (p85) rather than watered down forms of apartheid. Coxhead wants service provision of a standard delivered to 'other ethnic groups'. But comprehending particular groups of people as representative of wider (often imagined or socially constructed) ethnic groupings, rather than unique, maybe novel or new members of a local community, with their own distinctive wants and needs, shaped by society but also district level and local considerations, is dehumanising; it replaces who I am with what I might be. The demanding and rewarding part of any community practice is finding out who people are and not pre-defining them (a form of prejudice) even if this predefining includes bizarre statements like,

Gypsies are passive and compassionate ... peaceful and are not aggressive and have not rioted in 600 years. (p64)

This demonstrates the replacement of one set of stereotypes with others. I, as a Gypsy am not passive. In my family to be called 'passive' would be held as an insult (this is not necessarily my position as I have been passively resistant on many an occasion, but of course any form of resistance cannot by definition be passive). I can be compassionate (share in suffering) but know we all (Gypsy and non-Gypsy) can not live as totally compassionate beings. 'Peaceful' for me is to be complacent (that is not a rule I can or want to apply to everyone) and people often mistake (I think) my passion for aggression, but aggression (this is not violence) can also be a creative force. And I have been part of many a protest (some did turn violent) and the odd riot over the last 40 years– I suspect I am not finished with those sorts of things quite yet either. Oh yea...addressing a stereotype perpetrated by Coxhead in his book– as the above might suggest– I'm not an 'academic bystander'; I have the 'wanted' posters from those whose paradigms I've punctured (whoohoo bit aggressive that) to prove it.

This said there is much that is both insightful and commendable in *The Last Bastion of Racism*. The training and strategies Coxhead discusses (although the theoretical foundation of some of these is a tad dated) are informative and might prove a great asset to those moving into the training realm. There are also good suggestions that could be used to bring people and families together to share understandings of each others situations and perceptions of personal and group identity, rather than a means of emphasising lay social psychological interpretations of 'in' and 'out' groups (a somewhat blunt dichotomy favoured by Coxhead) or embedding what Stuart Hall has called the 'weak power' of marginality. Certainly, Coxhead provides comfort for those of us who have been abused in training situations when confronted by deeply held prejudice, by making us aware that we are not alone.

The most valuable contribution of this book is that it shows that the ubiquitous 'two day' training course is ineffective in terms of addressing psychologically deep set and culturally ingrained forms of discrimination and prejudice. Coxhead deserves a deal of credit for alerting us to the need to bring something more than a simple, time-limited, dialogical process to bear on such phenomena; that an ongoing, dynamic dialectic is needed, set in everyday practice and the routines of professional life.

All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated...As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come: so this bell calls us all: but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness...No man is an island, entire of itself...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

References

- Belton, B.A. (Sept 2004) *Gypsy and Traveller Ethnicity: The Social Generation of an Ethnic Phenomenon*: Routledge (30 Sep 2004)
Belton, B.A. (Dec. 2004) Questioning Gypsy Identity: Ethnic Narratives in Britain and

- America: AltaMira Hall, S. 'The Local and the Global' in A.D.King ed. *Culture, Globalisation and the World System* (McMillan p.34)
- Lewy, G. (2001) *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*: Oxford University Press.
- Lucassen, L, Willems, W. and Cottaar, A. (1998) *Gypsies and other itinerant groups. A socio-historical approach*: Macmillan/St Martin's Press
- Mayall, D. (2003) *Gypsy Identities 1500-2000: From Egyptians and Moon-men to the Ethnic Romany*: Routledge (9 Oct 2003)
- Montagu, A. (1998) *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race: Students Edition*: AltaMira Press
- Willems, W. (1998) *In Search of the True Gypsy: From Enlightenment to Final Solution*: Routledge

**Brian Belton, Senior Lecturer, Community and Professional Studies,
YMCA George Williams College**

John Coxhead

The Last Bastion of Racism: Gypsies, Travellers and Policing

Trentham Books 2007

ISBN-10: 1858563909

ISBN-13: 978-1858563909

£15.99

pp 106

Tricia Bowie-Phillips

After the initial excitement of such a bold title, I was slightly concerned to read in the Acknowledgement section that the content of the book was 'based on mostly doctoral research' and had been written 'to inform the development of professional practice in tackling bigotry'. As much as I welcome any kind of comment or writings on this subject, I felt even at this point, the author may have been placing a distance between himself and any kind of personal responsibility for any feelings that this very emotive subject may evoke.

I was intrigued that Peter Mercer even in his foreword says that the book 'may be based on complicated analysis'. Early on, there is an indication that there is a need for institutional level change. It then goes on to state that 'this has to be done via strong leadership'; so we are acknowledging that there is institutional racism in existence here and a need for 'ethical leadership' by way of 'Personal integrity as one of its key issues'. Although I can but agree with the author on this one, I have had a career fraught with bullying, harassment and intimidation by way of my own use of personal integrity and John Coxhead goes on to draw up a whole list of personal accounts of trainers and practitioners that have battled with the same experiences. I think I was waiting at some point to hear how this situation was unacceptable and how we had to dig in, pull together and continue lobbying for change by way of some new piece of legislation that would help support us in every meeting and piece of advocacy that we will go into experiencing overt racism and ignorance. Not only did I not feel a sense of this, I almost felt that John Coxhead keeps a 'respectable distance' from placing responsibility on anyone's doorstep at all.

Although I understand Covey's principles and how valuable these are from a theoretical perspective, it will always be more useful for a frontline practitioner to use hard core legislation instead of a suggestion to a police officer that 'in Covey's view, if two people trust each other, based on the trustworthiness of each other, they can enjoy effective communication'.

On the subject of legislation, there is some attention to the Race Relations Amendment Act, however, in my view, not enough cross referencing and use as a tool for use in the field. I would have welcomed more of an exploration of this.

In the chapter on 'setting the scene', the book states that 'the purpose of this book is to bring to the fore for the general public the historical and contemporary reality'. I felt none of this. The feelings of extreme discrimination, poverty, mortality rates and out of proportion depression and multiple disadvantages that many Gypsy and Traveller families face did not seem to emerge in any meaningful way.

The attention to detail on training experiences made me feel very angry and frustrated. There were multiple references to trainers being intimidated and bullied but no suggestions as to how to deal with these situations and almost a feeling of acceptance that police officers would carry on in this way as no-one felt able to challenge it at any level.

As a practitioner, the constant references to trophy prejudice and related attitudes just made me feel more angry and frustrated as I experienced the comment as one of observation with no message of optimism or, in some ways, acknowledgement of the extreme feelings of anger and powerlessness that run deep into the veins of frontline workers. For myself, there seemed to be an absence of emotion, which, in turn, gives services an opportunity to pretend that this is merely subject matter and not real people at all.

On reflection, I am sorry to write such a negative review, as books on this subject need to be welcomed and I am sure that John Coxhead was genuine in his wish to make a statement and provide some suggestions as to a way forward. I look forward to seeing how this will be received at a more strategic level and will keep looking out for further publications on this subject.

Tricia Bowie-Phillips is the Co-ordinator of Southwark Travellers Action Group

Debi Roker and John Coleman

Working with Parents of Young People

Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2007

ISBN 1 84310 420 2

£18.99 (pbk)

pp.224

Lesley Buckland

This book is a summary of several pieces of research, which look at a variety of initiatives and tools designed to work with the parents of young people, in most instances whilst

working with the young people as well either jointly or in parallel.

The first chapter explores the increased focus on parenting since the 1990s. Initially this was evoked when the Home Office issued the consultation paper 'Supporting Families' in 1998, whilst a significant report by Desforges and Abouchar (2003) on the link between school attainment and parental involvement ensured more attention being paid to supporting parents. 'What works in Parenting Support' (Moran, Ghate and Van der Merwe 2004; Moran and Ghate 2005) was later commissioned by the Home Office, which pulled together current research findings. In this chapter the authors acknowledge that there has been little research done into what has increased public awareness. Is it top down policy? They go on to look at the government policies informed by the Home Office research that have placed emphasis on the parents of young people e.g. the Children's Act 2004.

Later on in the chapter the authors look at how the media introduced a blame culture – blaming parents for young people's behaviour (thereby absolving the young people of any responsibility). They go on to explore the incongruence of a society where it is deemed a young person under the age of 16 is acknowledged as being responsible enough to make decisions about their health e.g. have an abortion without the parent being informed -yet the parent is held responsible if the same child puts a brick through a shop window. The authors make an interesting observation at the end of this chapter that there is still a gap in knowledge between what effects any of these parenting programmes has on a child's behaviour as most of the studies have been on children under the age of 10. This sets the context for this book, as its primary aim is to look at effective parenting programmes with young people of secondary school age.

One of the chapters that I found most interesting was chapter 2, which was a study of 50 young people and their families. This chapter explores the terms 'monitoring' 'supervision' and 'tracking' of young people within the context of the family e.g. how do parents interpret and even implement these things? This chapter also looks at the informal ways that parents receive information from their children and the different degrees of information shared – frequently this information was not given voluntary but often as a means to negotiate an activity such as going out with friends. The research indicates that 'monitoring and supervision' is able to happen because of the trust built in the relationship and that it is most effective when there are conversations with young people as opposed to just giving/receiving of information. This may seem like nothing new to youth workers who use conversation as their most basic tool in working with young people but when reading this book it has to be born in mind that what is being researched is the 'parenting' relationship with the young person not a 'youth work' relationship.

This study reveals how the responsibility of 'monitoring and supervision' does not just lie with the parents but extends to the broader family e.g. grandparents/siblings and how young people welcomed this form of 'emotional' monitoring. Contrary to government belief that parents can and should monitor their children 'more' and 'more effectively' (p.46) this study seems to provide evidence that there is already a lot of monitoring/supervision in place by parents and that it would be an unrealistic expectation that young people could be monitored by their parents all of the time.

Chapter 4 provided an interesting exploration on how parents monitor/supervise their children's alcohol consumption and what family behaviours/role modelling -may have an influence on this. This study provided a useful insight into a complex and often controversial issue. The authors do note the limitations of this research with particular reference to strategies that parents felt were effective in monitoring/supervising their children's alcohol consumption as the research was from the parents' perspective and did not involve young people. Therefore the success of any of these strategies can only be assumed.

A number of parenting programmes involving young people were examined in chapter 10. This research exposed a number of issues when working with both young people and the parents of young people. For example, staff supervision was more complex, there needed to be a variety of approaches e.g. line management, clinical, peer, for workers supporting both young people and their parents (sometimes other families members as well). Issues were raised around confidentiality (especially in group situations e.g. parent support groups/young people support groups and specifically where some workers worked with both groups) and there was evidence of problems around young people and parents feeling they were not able to share openly (particularly in groups) for fear of information being passed to other young people/parents. The study concludes that this emphasises the importance for clear protocols and boundaries – but I wonder whether having protocols in place does really alleviate the fears of both the young people and the parents and enable open dialogue? They conclude that there is still more research needed in this area as there are many unknowns regarding the effectiveness of different models of intervention 'some young people did not find the project interesting or feel understood by the workers' (p.188).

In conclusion this book provides some valuable examples regarding the parent/child relationship for any worker about to embark on working with the parents of young people. It provides an insight into some of the complexities on monitoring and supervising young people that parent's experience (within the child/parent relationship). There were requests from parents, especially around alcohol use, for more information but specifically 'other ideas and strategies that other parents have used to deal with difficult issues' (p.77). On reading this book I felt this research highlighted the difference between the parent/child relationship and the youth worker/young person relationship and made me question whether youth workers should be working with both young people and the parents of young people (which is a direction that many of us are heading towards, if not already engaged in) or should we merely be brokers? There could be a danger of disempowering parents (youth workers should not be viewed as a 'parental' substitute) and damaging the youth work relationship with young people. If there were direct intervention with parents would young people be able to trust you?

This is a well-written book, easy to engage with and provides an illuminating insight into the parent/child relationship during the adolescent years.

References

Desforges, C and Abouchar, A (2003) *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment*. Research Report 443.

- London: Department for Education and Skills
- Moran, P. and Gbate, D (2005) 'The Effectiveness of Parenting Support' *Children and Society*.
- Moran, P., Gbate, D and Van der Merw, A. (2004) *What works in Parenting Support? A Review of International Research Literature*. Research Report RR 574. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Lesley Buckland works at the Aldershot Institute and Social Club, and at the George Williams YMCA College in London.

Craig Winston LeCroy and Joyce Elizabeth Mann (eds)

Handbook of Prevention and Intervention Programs for Adolescent Girls

John Wiley and Sons 2008

ISBN 978-0-471-67796-3

£28.99 (hbk)

pp. 391

Lyvinia Elleschild

It is widely recognised that some girls and young women experience anxiety and depression, and that social pressures contribute to this. The desire to be thin may lead to eating disorders, and difficulties in expressing emotional pain sometimes result in self harm. Young women have to negotiate the meanings of sexual identity, drug and alcohol use and the pleasure, pain and disappointments associated with transgressive activities. Problems at home, in 'care', or at school, in finding employment or dealing with unemployment, youth poverty and debt can also have a damaging impact on transitions to adulthood. The aim of this book is to provide 'an indispensable, hands-on resource' for practitioners in mental health, education and public policy who work with girls and young women. As such it sets out 'the latest research, programs, and approaches that respond to the needs of today's adolescent girls'.

This book consists of an introductory chapter, 'Adolescent Girls and the Pathway to Adulthood', and twelve contributory chapters. These address various projects, such as 'The Go Grrrls Program', 'The Girls Circle Program' and 'The GirlPOWER! Mentorship Program'. Issue based projects addressing HIV prevention, eating disorders, depression, healthy exercise and substance misuse are also described. There is a strong emphasis in this book on 'science-based outcomes', laboratory controlled trials and evaluating the evidence based effectiveness of programmes. Some of the programmes do report marked improvements in self efficacy, body image and in conflict negotiation skills.

There is no contributory chapter dedicated to analysing the context of growing up in an era marked by right-wing politics and structural discrimination. Several chapters do acknowledge racism, and outline programmes that focus on celebrating bicultural experience and ethnic pride. However, unlike the feminist books and training sessions that influenced British youth work in the 1980s, this book does not give detailed attention to the relevance of hetero-sexism, ageism, class or disability discrimination to the lives of girls

and young women. The limited discussion of structural influences in this book blame a 'girl poisoning culture' (p4), a 'dangerous, sexualized and media-saturated culture' (p13), 'an environment that is often toxic to their health development' (p33), and argue that 'one third of girls are estimated to be at risk or very high risk' (p17). An approach that simply blames 'toxic culture' can overemphasise 'risk', lead to moral regulation and overlook the positive things that girls and young women may contribute to and derive from a creative engagement with contemporary popular culture.

Although many of the group-work tasks seem potentially valuable to girls and young women some of the programmes are contradictory, talking on the one hand of empowerment yet also framing problems as personal deficit disorders. For example, 'a biologically based drive for risk taking' leads to smoking, drinking alcohol and sex in the 'young adolescent who is not cognitively mature' (p4). It argues that depression is experienced by more females than males, and that 'those suffering from it have a depressed cognitive thought process and ruminate in ways that can be cognitively destructive' (px); and 'girls have a higher prevalence of psychological comorbidity' (p273). Challenging behaviours are categorised as being 'disorders'; for example, as 'oppositional defiant disorder', 'conduct disorder', 'substance use disorder' and 'anti-social personality disorder' (p310-311). There is no scrutiny in the book of this psychiatric classification of young women's behaviour, of reframing so-called 'bad behaviour' as 'mad behaviour', or defiance as 'mental disorder'.

Some of the programmes offer 'cognitive dissonance-based interventions' and advocate a family therapy approach. At times these seems to be a bit prescriptive, for example, the 'dissonance-based intervention for the prevention of eating disorders and obesity' instructs the group leader not to describe 'or allow participants to discuss' the benefits of thinness (p93). The HEART programme, focussed on incarcerated young women and 'substance abuse disorders' is informed by 'the Bio-Psychosocial-Spiritual Model of Addiction'. This involves cognitive behaviour therapy in order to 'alter and challenge faulty cognitions and maladaptive behaviours through cognitive restructuring' (p280). Whilst this programme includes education on racism and cultural diversity, it also promotes 'moral development' and 'spiritual wellness', including 12-step meetings and Epiphany weekends.

The strengths of this book lie in making visible the gender-specific issues faced by girls and young women, and in presenting group work strategies for these. Some of the programmes may be readily adapted for use in British youth work practice, in that they give positive ways to develop personal strengths and resilience (see, for example, www.girlscircle.com). In particular, the chapter on HIV prevention for young African American Women gives practitioners innovative activities for negotiating condom use and sexual decision making skills. The book presents itself as a resource for practitioners and whilst some programmes can be readily adapted for use it is unclear whether practitioners need to get permission to use some of the programmes. For example, the Penn Resiliency Program for preventing depression is owned by the University of Pennsylvania and licensed to Adaptive Learning Systems.

However, the book has a distinct North American approach and it did raise questions for me about the applicability to UK practice. I cringed on reading how young women and

their mentors in the Big Brothers Big Sisters GirlPOWER! Programme are categorised as 'Littles' and 'Bigs', and think that to name young people as 'Littles' is condescending and infantilizing. This programme includes a session on 'staying away from drugs and alcohol' in which 'Bigs and Littles attempt a series of activities while blindfolded to illustrate the impairment that can result from substance use' (p342). Harm reduction drugs education in the UK is far less simplistic than this 'blindfold' approach. Furthermore, the eligibility criteria for this programme 'exclude youth who demonstrate marked limitations in cognitive development (as might be indicated by placement in a special education classroom)' (p336). So, although some aspects of programmes offer useful empowerment exercises and strategies, others seem to reinforce social divisions.

Lyvinia Rogers Elleschild, Associate Lecturer, School of Law and Social Science, University of Plymouth.

Philomena Cullen, Bernard Hoose and Gerard Mannion (eds.)

Catholic Social Justice: Theological and Practical Explorations

Continuum 2007

ISBN 978 0 567 04542 3

£18.99

pp. 250

Louise A. Hickman

C*atholic Social Justice* is a thought-provoking and challenging collection of essays from Caritas-social action, the social justice agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in England and Wales. The book openly aims to respond critically to *Deus Caritas Est's* call for the Church to engage with the politics of justice and it goes a considerable way towards achieving its aim to nurture ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue on social justice. Critique is certainly a characteristic feature of this volume and the wide range of Protestant, liberation and feminist theologies encompassed is a major strength, resulting in a book that will have definite appeal to all self-reflective Christians concerned with social justice. Practical as well as theoretical questions are addressed and the agreeably lucid style of all the contributors means that the book can be recommended both to students as well as to serious academics.

Themes of truth, knowledge and the relational aspect of human beings form a thread through all the chapters and contribute towards what the authors envisage as a genuine form of social justice. Several of the contributions are particularly noteworthy. Bernard Hoose highlights the importance of self-knowledge for authentic social activity. For him, relationality is the key to uncovering accurate knowledge: The process of coming to see the Holy Spirit through coming to know oneself and others (through both relationships and prayer) uncovers our false prejudices and is the only way to develop our spiritual growth. Peter Phan adopts this theme of knowledge to develop an account of Christian social spirituality that insists on 'seeing' the reality of injustice clearly and accurately through the eyes of the poor and oppressed. Phan is particularly interesting because he puts forward a model of Christian social spirituality in dialogue with the Asian spiritual pursuit, which

means embracing inter-faith dialogue, imitating God by adopting a preferential option for the poor, and, more controversially, by emphasising communality rather than a mission to save individual souls. Here, however, lie tricky but unexplored questions about the relative importance of doctrine as opposed to action for social justice.

An important consequence of adopting the call to 'fidelity to the real' is a sharp criticism of what Tissa Balasuriya describes as the failure of the Church to retain a clear vision illustrated by its tendency, at times, to tolerate and benefit from injustice. The Eucharist has been celebrated alongside injustices such as slavery, feudalism and colonial invasion and the ministry of charity has been conceived as social service not requiring reforming social action from the church leadership. He wills the Church to fully embrace John Paul II's call for a 'purification of memory' and to rethink the core of its teaching through a return to what he sees as Jesus' central message that God is love.

Picking up the thread of relationality, the importance of communal relationships is highlighted by Gerard Mannion's article in which he insists that mutuality, not individuality, is the key to uncovering truthfully how we should embrace our shared existence. Much of the legacy of the Catholic doctrine about communal existence, he declares, points towards allowing the being of God to shape our relations, communities and day to day existence. This indivisibility of theology, the common good and social justice marks a further theme within the book, encapsulated by Judith Merkle's conception of 'a belief-practice circle that point to the inseparable unity between religious beliefs, values and action for justice in the Christian life' (p.85). This stands in stark contrast to the secular understandings of justice advocated by John Rawls and Robert Nozick.

There is a tension at the heart of these essays, however, which is perhaps symptomatic of any critical account of Christian social justice that rejects the liberal reticence to promote an account of the good, and it needs to be addressed more fully. It is, as Mannion points out, an insight of Catholic doctrine that the societies which flourish most successfully are those that are attentive to truth, justice and love: But whose truth and whose justice, exactly? Alasdair MacIntyre's question pervades the volume and yet is never satisfyingly answered. On the one hand, the collection of essays accepts the validity of speaking in terms of the absolute goodness of truth and yet on the other, the critical nature of the essays takes its lead from the postmodern rejection of any 'view from nowhere'.

Duncan Forrester's chapter pinpoints the issue: A Protestant Biblical ethic in which justice isn't just fairness but is informed by the agape of the Christian story is particularly inconsistent with Rawls' liberalism, but Catholicism too, despite its cautious embrace of human reason, struggles with liberalism's thin conception of community. If Rawls leaves a void where a notion of the 'good' should be, what exactly should fill this space? Noel Timms raises the fact that the existence of thirty thousand Christian denominations makes it difficult to speak of one unified all-embracing Christian purpose. His solution is for the development of Catholic social teaching by lay people in place of the 'tradition of reliance on the Bible, the Church Fathers and quotations from previous popes' (p.242) but it is hard to see a conception of truth satisfying to mainstream Catholic theology emerging from this vision.

The problem comes to the fore most fully in Philomena Cullen's astute critique of what

she sees as the ideological construction of the stable and uniform nuclear family, and her suggestion that we rethink the concept of family in terms of a feminist perspective that is closer to Jesus' ambiguous attitude to biological family ties. This chapter will not be embraced willingly by those with a conservative leaning but Cullen has a serious point to make: True justice in the family cannot be established if it is built upon an inherent patriarchy. This, however, raises the question of how we can know what is patriarchy and what might be a truthful account of the alleged different 'roles' of women and men? The question rests, once again on definitions: who should have the authority to define 'family', the 'role' of women, the 'poor' (Timms), the 'positive' exercising of the freedom we have (Jayne Hoose) or, to quote from Stephen Wall's contribution, should conscience be the 'ultimate test for all of us who strive to be Catholic advocates' (p.149)?

If the hierarchy of the Catholic Church should listen to all its critical voices to uncover a vision of social justice grounded more fully in the truth, one must hope that we can reach such a vision, or Rawls' liberalism will quickly become the best that can be hoped for amid such a dissonance of dissent. Hans Küng comes closest in this collection to promote a working model of a global account of human good and, to be fair, all the contributors are keenly aware of how much more work remains to be done. As it stands, therefore, the book is a valuable resource for anyone taking up a critical engagement with Catholic social ethics while seeking an alternative to Rawlsian liberalism.

Louise A. Hickman, Newman University College, Birmingham.

Brenda Morrison

Restoring Safe School Communities: a whole school response to bullying, violence and alienation.

The Federation Press, New South Wales, Australia

ISBN 978 186287 477 0

£24.00 (pbk)

pp 260

Rob Hunter

Brenda Morrison suggests that by developing restorative practices (the word 'justice' is seen as not transferring easily to schools) we will be working not only towards just schools, but towards a more just society. But to begin this journey we must be willing to 'disturb the universe', to open Pandora's box. The implications of Morrison's thinking, if fully implemented, would certainly challenge power relationships and the focal task in many UK schools. This could be a timely challenge, however, as there appears to be a belated recognition of the importance of social and emotional life in relation to learning, well-being and community cohesion within school and outside communities. While 'restorative practices' have been in use in some schools in the UK for a decade (and in Australia for 15 years) in relation to bullying, violence and hence exclusions, Morrison's blending of these with more universal emotionally intelligent practice may be of the moment.

Morrison quotes Goleman that 'schools alone cannot stand in for all the social institutions

that too often are in or nearing collapse. But since virtually every child goes to school... it offers a place to reach children with basic lessons for living that they may never otherwise get.' The informal lessons that children and young people learn about living in community in the eleven plus years they spend in schools are not always helpful. The social exclusion and rejection many experience, according to Morrison, reduce intelligent thought, increase aggressive behaviour and diminish pro-social behaviour. Too many schools, she says, fail society in their role as the central developmental institution in the promotion of civil society.

Violence in schools is early on linked to the importance of belonging. Morrison quotes the perpetrator of a rampage – an all too frequent phenomena in US schools and not unimaginable in the UK – as saying 'I didn't have a group.' The National Research Council's 2002 report on the US rampages suggests: 'Young people need some spaces where they feel valued and powerful and needed. If they cannot find paths that make them feel this way or if they find the paths blocked by major threats, they will either retreat, or, in the case of lethal shooting and rampages, strike back against those who seek not to value them, or are threatening them, or are blocking their way.'

Exploring the relationships between alienation, shame and humiliation, Morrison initially focuses on the role that shame plays in normal co-operative relationships and the relevance of Braithwaite's re-integrative shaming theory to restorative justice. Shame that is acknowledged reconnects individuals with their social world, while shame that is internalised and transformed underlies shame-rage cycles that characterise the worst types of conflict. This underpins two of her core principles:

- Shaming of bad acts that avoids shaming the actor's character
- Praise of good character that uncouples praise from specific acts.

Such an approach requires real engagement with the actors and not the zero tolerance approach which she suggests itself promotes intolerance and discrimination and fails to address the deeper issues, build understanding and foster responsibility.

Morrison goes on to develop a valuable triangular, whole school model. At its base is Reaffirming Relationships. This would include proactive classroom conferences throughout the school providing a robust process to enhance teaching and learning outcomes while being explicit about limits and boundaries, and emphasising the importance of relationships, providing a process that can be used for establishing class rules, curriculum topics, teaching strategies, peer tutoring and support, working styles, learning tasks, co-operative learning and student feedback. Personalised and collaborative learning indeed!

The middle layer of the triangle is Repairing Relationships, through facilitated and supported dialogue. This could be triggered by apparently isolated incidents of bullying behaviour or whole class situations where relationship issues are disrupting enjoyment and learning. At the top of her triangle comes Rebuilding Relationships. This may well take the form of full-scale restorative conferences and require intensive facilitated dialogue between all involved in a chronic situation e.g. the bullied, the bully or bullies, and those also affected by the bullying both in school and possibly outside, in family and community systems.

Morrison's clear message is that many policies and practices that seek to regulate safe school communities emphasise the rules of behaviour while failing to address the needs of individuals and the web of relationships (and hence influence) that sustains people's behaviour and well-being. She encourages all schools to develop restorative practices, measure the effectiveness of these practices across all levels of behavioural outcomes, provide professional and institutional development opportunities, and integrate restorative values, skills and processes into the vision and policy of the school.

This book is well-written and grounded in research from a variety of disciplines and a substantial amount of practice in Australasia, Canada and the US in particular. It might with benefit have focused more on structural inequalities. A sole reference, in one of the programmes it describes, to 'analysing the impact of societal injustice on themselves and others' does not recognise sufficiently that the culture and decision-making structures of the school can themselves, for example, compound racist and homophobic bullying. And there is only a glancing reference to teacher bullying – albeit the powerful one of a teacher having the courage to admit his mistake and seek help in repairing the harm through calling a 'community circle'.

Morrison refers briefly to the Youth Justice Board's 2004 evaluation of its Restorative Justice in Schools Programme which was cautiously optimistic – 'restorative justice...if implemented correctly, can improve the school environment, enhance learning and encourage young people to become more responsible and empathetic'. Restorative practices in schools can contribute to young people's happiness and well-being, the development of crucial skills for acting powerfully in current and future relationships and collective community problem-solving. With their relationship skills, group work experience, knowledge of local communities and commitment to young people and social justice, there is every reason why youth workers also could contribute to such practices in school. This book offers a significant underpinning.

Rob Hunter is an Educational Consultant based in Leicester.

Kevin Lalor, Áine de Róiste, Maurice Devlin
Young People in Contemporary Ireland
Gill & Macmillan
ISBN 978 07171 4211 8
€34.99 / £33.33
pp. 398

Noreen Kearns

The current generation of young people in Ireland are growing up in a time of unprecedented social, economic and technological change since the arrival of the Celtic Tiger in the mid 1990s. It could be said 'they never had it so good' in comparison to the middle and older generations who grew up in much bleaker times. However, the reality is much more intricate as this generation of young people face new and complex pressures and challenges in family, educational, employment, and cultural spheres of contemporary Irish society.

The salience of the adolescent and youth life-stage is unparalleled, as questions about self and identity, and corresponding values, behaviours and attitudes appropriate to such are grappled with; Sweeney and Dunne (2003) state that in Ireland, we are just beginning to come to terms with the need to understand our own 'Generation Y' of teenagers. This book by Lalor et al contributes to this understanding, by providing a timely comprehensive account of a broad range of facets concerning young people in Ireland at the beginning of the 21st century.

The theme of disadvantage pervades this book, while gender inequality is another recurring topic. It concentrates primarily on the Republic of Ireland, however, some data from Northern Ireland is included where feasible. The book contains twelve chapters. The authors usefully provide the reader with recommended further reading and source materials at the end of each Chapter. In Chapter 1 an overview of youth and adolescence in Ireland is presented, setting out definitional parameters, perceptions, and the current strategic policy and legislative context. Chapter 2 discusses the main psychological and sociological theories and frameworks pertaining to adolescence.

Chapters 3 and 4 situate young people in the two primary social groups which influence their development, namely family and peers. The former focuses on significant changes in the architecture of the family in contemporary Ireland and the implications of these for young people. Chapter 4 highlights the importance of peers as adolescents' social worlds broaden away from the family structure. The authors interlink peer influence and friendships with factors such as bullying, loneliness, and sexual development.

In Chapter 5 some of the most challenging health and well-being issues associated with adolescence are dealt with including: physical (in)activity, (un)healthy eating patterns, substance (ab)use, sexual health and mental health. The 'human capital' themes of Chapter 6 are education and employment. Specific problems of literacy and early school leaving are highlighted. The recent trend of increasing numbers of young people in part-time employment is addressed. Socio-economic background is discussed as a core influencer of educational participation and subsequent employment status and type.

Using a variety of quantitative based Irish and international surveys, the authors consider normative and moral issues in Chapter 7, in terms of young people's values, attitudes and beliefs to politics and public institutions, religion, sexual morality, social issues (relating to inequality, vulnerable groups, poor countries, volunteering), and post-materialist values. The authors examine a broad range of unstructured and structured leisure and recreation forms in Chapter 8, including: general free-time activities; hobbies; sport; and community or charity groups. Chapter 9 deals with Juvenile Justice, setting out the nature and incidence of juvenile crime, as well as the core legislative and policy developments, programmes and projects.

In Chapter 10 specific social policies, services and welfare issues pertaining to young people and to youth work, the National Children's Strategy, child care services, and child protection are outlined. Whilst the theme of disadvantage and inequality pervades this book, Chapter 11 is dedicated to current issues affecting marginalised and excluded young people with disabilities, Travellers, seeking asylum, in/leaving care, who are homeless, and those living

in rural areas. As a conclusion, Chapter 12 briefly reflects on emerging macro trends in Irish society which are or will impact on young people, in the coming decades relating to: demography, cultural and family diversity, gender and socio-economic inequalities, consumerism, technological innovations, knowledge based society, and globalisation.

The strengths of this book relate to the scope of thematic areas concerning young people covered in a succinct manner, from a theoretical, policy, legislative, service and practice perspective, combined with empirical data, where appropriate. The authors set their discussion in the context of a rapidly changing society, which raises salient questions regarding challenges for the future generations of young people growing up in post Celtic Tiger Ireland. The book deals with a number of similar issues outlined in the European Commission's White Paper on youth (2001) including active citizenship, education, lifelong learning, employment and social integration, and racism.

Upon reading this book, one has a greater understanding of the realities which concern young people. At the same time, the reader may be left with a myriad of reflective questions, many of which require further research into young people's development, attitudes, behaviours and needs. A core message I distilled from the book is notwithstanding the successes of the Celtic Tiger years, poor outcomes for particular vulnerable groups of young people serve to reinforce social exclusion and disadvantage. Furthermore, the serious gaps that pervade many areas of service provision such as physical, mental and sexual health, education and employment, leisure/recreation, criminal justice, and social care, present major challenges for Irish society, and more specifically for the future health and well-being of its young people. Such topics are dealt with more generally by Fahey and colleagues who question quality of life in Irish society after the boom, in their publication *Best of Times? The Social Impact of the Celtic Tiger* (2007).

Overall, the authors accomplish an overview of adolescence and youth in a manner which is highly readable for a broad range of audiences, both in the academic and practice worlds. The issues raised in this book are a worthy read for those in the adult world who have responsibility for, or come in contact with, young people including: parents, teachers, politicians, policy makers, legislators, lecturers, researchers, and statutory and voluntary health and social service providers. It should induce reflection on how these constituents can practically address the new, and in some cases, serious challenges faced by young people. Additionally, I would also recommend this book as core reading for social science students.

Noreen Kearns, Child and Family Research Centre, School of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland.

Sue Peat

Equipping Graduates for Youth Ministry

YTC Press 2008

ISBN 978-1-8479926-7-3

£8.95 (pbk)

pp.144

Andrew Orton

Inexperienced newly-graduated youth workers struggling with their first full time posts within church contexts which are poorly structured and provide limited support: a familiar picture for those working in this field? This monograph summarises Peat's findings from research undertaken with graduates of Cliff College, an evangelical Christian Bible college near Sheffield, and those who have employed them. The academic monograph format adopted is consistent with the case study approach adopted, but may limit the audience.

Based on data from questionnaires, she finds that at least 19 per cent of the graduates from Cliff College entered youth ministry, making youth ministry the largest single destination of their graduates. However, 57 per cent left their initial post within two years with only 17 per cent of these continuing to work in youth ministry for their next post. This extremely-high attrition rate is partly explained by the limited previous experience of many of these graduates. Many had little previous experience of youth ministry, and for 63 per cent, this was their first full time job in any field. Several wider factors were suggested in interviews and focus groups to be contributing to this concerning retention rate. Respondents expressed particular concern about the unrealistically high expectations and general lack of support frequently provided to youth workers taking on jobs within church settings. These were exacerbated by poor employment practices, such as unclear job descriptions, unclear lines of accountability, and expectations of excessive hours. Rather than church employers recognising these practices as problematic, Peat finds that they are frequently underpinned by dubious theological 'justifications', requiring direct theological reflection to challenge them.

Peat's evidence is based on a good response rate, with around three quarters of those contacted returning the questionnaire, and also demonstrates a concern for contacting a broad range of stakeholders. Whilst her precise approach to sampling interviewees, focus group participants and job descriptions is not clear, her findings do reflect concerns expressed in wider research, such as that carried out by Cann (2002) in Manchester. This lack of clarity within the sampling rationale highlights one of the particular difficulties with the text. This is that the cross-referencing to summaries of data in the appendices contains numerous errors, including some referrals to material (such as sample job descriptions) which has not been included. This proves distracting when trying to understand the information given in context.

Throughout, Peat encourages others involved in employing and training youth workers to consider the relevance of these factors in their own settings, for example, a key set of her concerns centre around the suitability of the training provided for working with young people. As a generic Bible College, delivering programmes initially in 'Biblical and Evangelistic Ministry', and latterly in 'Theology', these programmes were not designed

to focus specifically on youth work issues (although they did include an optional module on 'Evangelism and Young People', and Cliff College has since introduced more specific part time programmes). Given the destination of many of their graduates, Peat wonders whether such programmes should include more focused accredited training, such as a JNC-recognised qualification. Whilst Peat does provide some details of course structure and developments, along with a good summary of the specific college context, she provides little detail of the precise course content. The limitation of this for wider readers is that without more detail about the course content, it is hard to reflect on what the wider implications of her findings might be for other programmes. This highlights the problematic tendency of this monograph to occasionally over-generalise the case study findings and assume that they apply normatively to practice in general.

Similarly, Peat does include some useful personal critical reflection on the college context which highlights potential issues arising from the college's particular approach to short-term event-based 'missions' run by teams of students. She helpfully connects this with difficulties that students find when trying to adjust to practising on their own after leaving the 'bubble' of the supportive college community. The unusual degree of theological unity at the college is recognised as a factor which might be supportive at the time but creates difficulties for students when they have to deal with theological differences in later employment. However, the text seems to miss the importance of exploring diversities of identity and perspective as part of the informal educational role of the practitioner, something which Clarke (2005, whose features of community Peat cites) sees as essential. Indeed, other research with practitioners and professional students in related fields (e.g. Banks, 2004; Orton, 2008) is increasingly finding that this learning is central to enabling practitioners to find ways of managing difference and ethical dilemmas in practice.

Overall, these findings clearly show the need for approaches to professional formation which extend beyond seeking to just give new workers 'bags of resources' to employ. The importance of supporting students in their vocational exploration and development throughout training is shown to be paramount, as is helping them to develop an appropriate framework of reflective practice for their work. The results also show the importance of integrating substantial placements with reflection on learning in order to develop practice proficiency. In places, the importance of reflecting on the impact of different theologies on practice also becomes clear, particularly in Peat's recognition of the impact of different understandings of 'mission' on the expectations of those involved.

Perhaps the most important contribution made by Peat is the way that she highlights the lack of support provided for new workers, who often become isolated within these settings. Crucially, this raises the question of how this might best be addressed by both employers and training institutions. Peat is to be commended for tackling these often-neglected issues, and for undertaking research on training in faith-based practice more generally, as these are important areas which require more focused research. As a result, her monograph may be of interest to those training or employing youth ministers in church settings, who wish to draw on the comparative experience outlined here to reflect on how to tackle these issues in their own settings.

References

- Banks, S. (2004) *Ethics, Accountability and the Social Professions*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cann, S. (2002) *A Living Wage Church?*, Manchester: Church Action on Poverty.
- Clark, D. (2005) *Breaking the Mould of Christendom*, Peterborough: Epworth.
- Orton, A. (2008) *Faith, Dialogue and Difference in Christian Community Work*, PhD thesis, Durham: Durham University.

Andrew Orton, Durham University

Kristin Liabø and Joanna Richardson

Conduct Disorder and Offending Behaviour in Young People. Findings From Research.

Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2007

ISBN 1 84310 508 4

£16.99 (pbk)

pp143

Kim Peake

This book primarily focuses on reviewing research and literature mainly from the United States in an effort to provide a comprehensive review of intervention research findings. Although aimed at a wide audience, this book is perhaps best suited to students and professionals working in the fields of Child and Adolescent Mental Health or Youth Offending as it is not intended to function as a practice manual.

The book's main benefit to the lay person can be found in the initial chapters explaining conduct disorder and co-morbidity and how the assessment process operates. Given that conduct disorder in adolescents is more prevalent in conjunction with other disorders, the concise explanations of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and depression amongst others aid understanding of parents or carers of any potential diagnosis.

Chapter three (Aetiology and Developmental Pathways) is of particular interest to those seeking to understand the development of conduct disorder and covers the basic areas relating to the individual, family, school and the crucial role of protective factors. In particular the issue of poor parenting and family interaction is raised as a significant contributory risk factor. However, the authors concede that a paucity of research into resilience in young people makes it difficult to fully understand the aspects of positive parenting that generate coping skill. They also stress the need for further research into risk mechanisms and the lack of a definitive model for conduct disorder and its causes. The fourth chapter is a brief one touching on the prevention agenda, in particular the Sure Start initiative derived from programmes developed in the United States. Whilst not dealing with conduct disorder specifically it aims to decrease the impact of anti-social behaviour and self-reported offending in adolescents by offering interventions during the first three

years of a child's life. Parenting programmes and education tools are also examined but the efficacy of this form of intervention is inconclusive and reports from parents or carers and young people who participate have in some reports varied widely on reported effectiveness.

Chapter five reviews the tools used to assess young people with behaviour problems including the Child Behaviour Checklist, Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and ASSET and their respective strengths and challenges. It becomes evident that correlating and interpreting data across these tools is difficult if not impossible given the different measures used. This is challenging for professionals and may explain why parents and carers often find the assessment and diagnostic process incomprehensible.

Chapter six (covering services for adolescents) includes no surprises when reaching the conclusion that there are insufficient services for young people with a conduct disorder who offend, the problem becoming more acute as young people get older. Interestingly the need for collaborative working to have the hope of an effective outcome for this particular group needs further development as often there are inflated expectations from parents, carers and professionals outside the field of CAMHS and ensuring appropriate support continues is discussed via the mechanism of the new framework children's service, and others are expected to operate under the *Every Child Matters: Change For Children* agenda.

The second half of the book focuses on the research base and associated techniques for treatment approached to conduct disorder. It assists the reader to discover that the research at times has a lack of specific background of the subjects in terms of their diagnoses making comparison difficult. Some of the explanation relating to bias requires further reading to clarify and may not be a wholly effective use of the lay reader's time.

Following on chapter seven examines individual approaches under the collective banner of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and its emphasis on individual responsibility and reasoning with active intervention from a skilled practitioner. Key issues raised by practitioners, and noted by the authors are the need to use CBT in conjunction with practical support to deal with environmental factors and the benefits of incorporating both group work and one to one approaches. To conclude, no conclusions are drawn regarding the efficacy of CBT as an individual treatment to address external influences, rather that it appears more effective when used to bolster systemic models.

Family and parenting interventions are currently in vogue with practitioners in the field of youth offending, chapter eight offers a detailed explanation of family therapy, functional family therapy, multi-systemic treatment, parent-management training and multi-dimensional treatment foster care (MTFC). The authors are careful to highlight that many of these programmes have their origins in the United States and that gender bias, particularly in the case of MTFC is an issue that is still under review in the US. Whilst initial findings show promise there is no conclusive evidence as to which interventions are most successful.

Schools based interventions are raised; chiefly anti-social behaviour and bullying reduction. Most young people spend a significant amount of time in education and the use of interventions to work collaboratively to create a pro-social environment appears to produce some positive effects and this may prove useful in supporting other interventions.

Following on from chapter nine the issue of pharmacology is raised and covers the main medication groups, psycho-stimulants (used in the treatment of ADHD), neuroleptics, lithium carbonate, anticonvulsants and other compounds. Ethical issues aside, the authors are unable to offer any research evidence that supports the use of medication for conduct disordered young people other than around the field of co-morbid ADHD and conduct disorder. The book does not offer any significant information on interventions relating to fire setting and arson, diet or sport interventions and the authors acknowledge the paucity of interventions in the latter areas.

Chapter thirteen reviews and examines treatment approaches for young offenders. The authors offer a cautious explanation that a collaborative approach incorporating CBT, multi-modal programmes and family/parenting interventions may be more successful but they see the need for further research.

In conclusion this book offers a comprehensive overview of interventions currently being used in the field of conduct disorder and the appendices offer the reader some support in dealing with the complex medical terminology and technical jargon associated with this subject.

Kim Peake is a Youth Worker at the 68th Centre, York

Michael Giardina and Michele Donnelly (eds.)

Youth Culture and Sport: Identity, Power and Politics

Routledge 2007

ISBN 978 0 415 95580 5

£20 (pbk)

pp. 212

Gary Pritchard

Through the lens of cultural studies, the contributors to this edited volume draw on ethnography, interviews and discourse analysis to interrogate popular modes of sporting practices and text and how they intersect with contemporary perceptions of race, class, gender and popular modes of sporting culture.

Youth Culture and Sport is divided into ten chapters, which are organized into three sections. Section one, attempts to draw out the interplay of culture and politics on youth and youth sports by looking at how the wider American political culture shape the Little League World Series, where urban youth culture has been located in cinema and the production of normative gender representations from the cultural history of the Cold War. The second section gazes exclusively on extreme sports and how they relate to cultural branding and identity practices. In doing this it interrogates discourses of whiteness in computer games, skater girls and performances of gender identity and gender representation in the media. The final section focuses upon radical pedagogies operating within sporting culture as it concerns indigenous populations and African Americans,

looking at pseudo-Indian imagery in sporting mascots, sport in Canada within the context of colonial relations and motherhood in youth basketball.

The volume succeeds in highlighting the importance of the social, cultural, political and economic functions of sporting culture and illustrating that sport is not an unbiased, neutral arena, unburdened from these influences. A total of seventeen contributors to this relatively small volume give the reader a feeling of disjuncture and a sense that the book is attempting to bring together too many theoretical perspectives on the intersection of culture and sports.

A casual observer would note that sport plays a major part in a lot of young people's lives and this book makes a start at readdressing the imbalance in youth culture literature which largely ignores sporting cultures, in favour of musical ones. The editors fail to adequately distinguish between sporting culture and specifically *youth* sporting culture. A great number of interesting sporting observations and hypothesis in this book are certainly sports relevant but, I am not convinced that they are necessarily youth sports relevant. The book presents itself as a survey of youth sports generally but, so-called extreme sports (BMX riding, skateboarding, snow boarding etc.) enjoy a disproportionate amount of coverage in this book. The largest of the three sections of the book and a number of detailed case studies are dedicated to them and the front cover (which, I know you should never judge a book by) illustrates a group of young skateboarders gathered around an urban stairwell. Depending on context, I would propose that skateboarding is more of a recreational activity, a lifestyle choice and method of transportation than a sport and I felt these ambiguities were not tackled adequately by the contributors to this volume.

The book completely ignores the internationalized sporting environment. The volume is dominated by North American sports, which notoriously travel poorly unpopular outside their own borders. A nod to Hornby's novel *Fever Pitch*, about football supporting culture in the UK, is the only representation of sport in other countries. I would have also been interested to read a case study of a more typical sporting experience. Organized youth sport is run largely on a voluntary basis and has largely avoided commodification. The opening chapter does contemplate Little League Baseball but, only at the most commercial, commodified level - the televised World Series.

The authors seem to enjoy a certain romanticism and nostalgia towards the sporting institutions of the past. In doing so, they do not present a balanced assessment of the consequences of commercialism in sport. It has been proposed for instance, that more commercialism in English domestic football has produced stadiums which are more family friendly and a space which is less racist and violent. The contributors also seem a little obsessed with linking youth sporting culture with domestic American and global politics. Although, highlighting the power of corporations in the sporting arena, the highly charged political thread running through the book does it a disservice and brings its neutrality into question. Whilst showing how politics have transformed sporting institutions, the book argues that these developments have completely depoliticized it. This point is exaggerated as a brief survey of recent Olympic Games boycotts, the Rugby boycotts against Apartheid South Africa and the demonstrations in the run up to the Olympics in China has if anything, shown the ability of sport as a unique and powerful platform for political protest.

Youth Culture and Sport delivers an interesting exploration of the intersection of power, identity and politics in youth sporting culture and will be of interest to students and scholars in the fields of sociology of sport, youth culture, contemporary American culture, media, cultural studies and education. Overall, this is a useful addition to youth culture literature which has until now largely neglected the importance of sport in young peoples lives

Gary Pritchard, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University.

David Lobley and David Smith

Persistent Young Offenders: An Evaluation of Two Projects

Ashgate 2007

ISBN 978-0-7546-4183-4

£55 (hbk)

pp 151

Steve Rogowski

When it comes to working with young people, New Labour continues to espouse a commitment to evidence-based practice, notwithstanding that it is very selective as to what counts as evidence, with the views of practitioners being conspicuously absent (Smith 2004). Not least, for example, evidence from the 1980s that diversion from the youth justice system and developing genuine alternatives to custody is what actually worked in relation to youth crime has been completely ignored. Instead, over the last decade we have had the induction of new, younger children into the youth justice system and integrative alternatives to custody have given way to community penalties (Pitts 2000), the overall result being that we have a punitive response to youth crime with many more young people being locked away. As Goldson and Muncie (2006) note, penal populism certainly does hold sway, at least as far as England and Wales is concerned.

Bearing the foregoing in mind, this book is timely then as it looks at effective practice in work with persistent young offenders at two projects in Scotland, namely Freagarrach and CueTen both being in the central belt. The former was evaluated over five years from 1995 and the latter over the three years of its entire life from 1996. It is important to note that this was a period when the Scottish system of juvenile/youth justice was clearly welfare orientated with the needs of young people being a priority. However, following the election of the first Scottish Parliament in 1999, a more overt New Labour agenda, including the acceptance of punishment being a legitimate aim, has developed albeit not to the same intensity as south of the border.

The book begins by looking at the establishment of the two projects. Freagarrach was a development of an existing local strategy and involved social and community education workers, while CueTen was a newcomer, involving staff with mixed backgrounds, which focussed on employment as a key issue in addressing young offending. Chapters two and three looks at the work of both projects, noting that the work of Freagarrach drew on 'what works' evidence but crucially was informed by relationships with young people that conveyed care and respect as well as setting limits on what counted as acceptable

behaviour. It also utilised group and individual counselling techniques. All this was provided in a flexible and adaptable manner. However, CueTen's work involved a far more structured programme which, simply put, turned out to be too ambitious and demanding for many young people. Chapter four looks at the characteristics of the young people that attended the projects; they were largely the intended target of being persistent offenders, also, for example, being from deprived backgrounds and having experienced loss and abuse in their family lives, as well as engaging in drug and substance misuse. Chapter five looks at how the projects were perceived both by the young people, their carers/relatives and social workers and other youth justice staff. Generally the young people spoke positively about their experiences of the projects, and social workers spoke favourably about Freagarrach though less so CueTen. Chapter six looks at effectiveness in terms of re-offending and in terms of the use of secure residential care and custody, noting that Freagarrach was the more successful as the young people who attended there offended at a lower rate and less seriously after they left the project. Costs and benefits are dealt with in chapter seven again with Freagarrach, although an expensive project, proving to be cost effective because of the reduced offending their young people subsequently engaged in. Finally, chapter eight, drawing on earlier themes provides an overall evaluation of the two projects arguing that Freagarrach was successful, though less so CueTen. And, returning to the introduction Freagarrach 'also counts as a success for the principles of welfare and voluntarism that have always underpinned the Children's Hearing System – perhaps the book's single most important message' (P.7). I wholeheartedly agree.

Much of the above, of course, points to success of Freagarrach, and it is important to note some of the reasons for this. First, as stated, it was embedded in a local strategy which involved agencies coming together to deal with youth crime, this not being the case for CueTen. The latter was seen by many agencies as an interloper with perhaps a more limited experience of working with young offenders. Second, there was the quality of Freagarrach's direct work with the young people and their families, with the staff's social/community education background surely being significant here. For instance, they were well able to work with the young people not merely in terms of challenging them about their behaviour, but also, for example, in relation to their experiences of loss, abandonment and rejection, with resulting feelings of anger, hostility and resentment; all this is something the CueTen staff found more difficult to do. And third and related, an approach that expresses care and respect is surely likely to be more effective than one based merely on suspicion, surveillance and control. On the other hand, CueTen's approach was 'simply not suitable for the most persistent juvenile offenders' as it was 'too cognitively based and rational' for young people who came from unhappy and unsettled home backgrounds and had problems associated with drug and alcohol misuse (p.42).

Overall then, at a time when 'what works' and 'evidence-based practice' are New Labour mantras, this is a welcome book, one which seriously questions much of current youth justice policy and practice, particularly in England and Wales. As such it should certainly be read by all policy makers, managers and practitioners in the youth justice field, as well as all those interested in young offending and ways of dealing with it.

References

- Goldson B. and Muncie J. (eds.) (2006) *Youth Crime and Justice*, Sage
- Pitts J. (2000) 'The New Youth Justice and the Politics of Electoral Anxiety' in Goldson B. (ed.) *The New Youth Justice*, Russell House
- Smith D. (ed) (2004) *Social Work and Evidence-Based Practice*, Jessica Kingsley.

Steve Rogowski is a social worker (children and families) with a local authority in north-west England.

Gillian Evans

Educational Failure and Working Class White Children in Britain

Palgrave Macmillan 2007

ISBN- 13:978-0-230-55303-3

ISBN- 10:0-230-55303-6

£16.99 (pbk)

pp. 196

Heather Smith

The premise of this book is to explore what it means 'to be working class in Britain at the beginning of the 21st century' and question why are 'many working class children still likely to end up in the same kind of low-paid, routine occupations as their parents'. This exploration is delivered through Gillian Evans' personal account of living within a 'working class' community, getting to know the residents and spending time within a local primary school.

Evans introduction to the subject offers the point of view that the value placed on education within the home will often have a bearing on the achievement of children within school. She argues that education is central to middle class values (2007; 9) and that in middle class families 'formal learning and caring are synonymous' (2007; 9). This puts the middle class pupils at an advantage; they already understand the framework of formal learning and associate it with rewards. Evans goes on to argue that working class families have different values and these are not typically linked to formal education. Formal education is something that happens within school; this is what it is there for. Evans argues that this means that the working class child is already at a disadvantage, they have to learn a whole new way of learning in order to achieve within the formal environment. Evans acknowledges that this is not to say that all working class children fail within formal education, many enjoy the different environment that school provides. The focus of her book however is the working class children who don't achieve and the factors that may contribute to this (2007; 9).

By spending time with families within the working class community of Bermondsey in South East London, Evans experiences first hand how family core values affect children's educational aspirations. Having spent time with one family in particular, Evans identifies that post compulsory qualification are for people who can forgo money in the immediate for future return (2007; 44). She identifies that working class families need their children

to grow up and become people that their parents can depend on. At 16 years old, young people can earn a full wage packet, a proportion of which will be given to their mum towards keeping the home, this is a foundation of working class life. Evans highlights that these 'common values often conspire against any aspiration that a young person, like Tracey, may have towards higher education.' (2007; 44)

Throughout the book Evans offers insight into working class families and highlights key points that as educators we should consider. For example, it is often assumed that children and young people who present with difficult behaviour at school come from difficult family backgrounds. Whilst this may be true in some instances, Evans offers the view that some of the children she encountered displaying disruptive behaviour within the school environment came from very loving supportive families where they were respectful, rule abiding children (2007; 96,97). What she highlights is that these displays of disruptive behaviour may actually be the way in which children survive school environments that do little to nurture the children in their care.

She also brings to the forefront the difference between working class boys and girls. This point is raised in respect of the different ways in which they are parented (2007; 113-155), the different responsibilities that are placed on them within the home environment and the different ways in which they function within a formal learning environment.

The style of writing in the book is accessible. Throughout the text, colloquialisms are used, and explained, which offers a real flavour of what it means to be 'Bermondsey' alongside the significance of physical displays of behaviour such as the 'Bermondsey Bowl'. Evans' style is entertaining and has been described as 'compelling' and 'enlightening' by others who have read it.

Having personally been an 'outsider' who has lived and worked within the Bermondsey community I read the book with interest and related to what the author had to say. Bermondsey has a long history of settlements; of people who are not working class coming to live, work in, and contribute to the community. Bermondsey is used to this and more often than not embraces it. A personal criticism of the text would be the author's attempt to become 'Bermondsey' rather than get to know the community through being herself; it is possible to be part of Bermondsey without taking on the persona of the indigenous community.

Evans has provided a significant anthropological study highlighting that community and class dynamics affect how children perform within the formal learning environment. The current climate of education shows that there are particular groups within the formal learning environment that are failing, it is important that we understand why, and what the contributing factors are, if we are to successfully address this and enable each child to realise their potential and aspirations.

Heather Smith is a Faculty Lead Tutor in a FE College in London.

Barry Goldson and John Muncie (Eds)

Youth Crime and Justice

Sage Publications 2006

ISBN 1412911389

Price: £14.99

pp 256

Hannah Smithson

Given the wide ranging developments in youth justice in the UK, particularly since 1997, critical reflection of these developments merits our close attention. *Youth Crime and Justice* examines the tension between evidence and policy formation and addresses a number of key questions around the 'discordance between research findings, policy formation and practice development' (Goldson 2001).

This book is divided into 14 chapters and is presented in three sections. The first part – 'Historical and Social-Structural Contexts', consists of four chapters. Harry Hendrick's chapter on the 'Histories of Youth Crime and Justice' sets the scene and this highly readable chapter provides a lesson in the history of youth justice which should be invaluable for any student or practitioner. This history commences in the early nineteenth century and finishes in the early 1980s. It provides an overview of each major Act and debate during this time period and it concludes by positioning the impact of this history within the current climate. Rob White and Chris Cunneen then present a critical overview of the role of social class, in their chapter – 'Social Class, Youth Crime and Justice'. This overview is particularly timely considering the current emphasis placed on the socially disadvantaged young person and their involvement in crime and the debate surrounding the criminalisation of the poor. The discussion of a 'particular' moral category of young people assists in understanding the development of current anti-youth policies. 'Race', Youth Crime and Justice' by Colin Webster cohesively draws together the most influential research in this area. The chapter questions the interaction of social class and race and aims to highlight the issue of the unexplained influence of 'race' on crime rates, policing and youth justice and how this differs dependent on geographical area. One area which could have been explored in more detail within this chapter are the effects of terrorism on the policing and criminalisation of young British Muslim males. The final chapter of part one is written by Loraine Gelsthorpe and Gilly Sharpe – 'Gender, Youth Crime and Justice'. This chapter provides a historical account of the regulation of girls' behaviour and places this within theoretical explanations of female crime. Of particular interest in this chapter is the reference to the current 'panic' surrounding girls' involvement in crime and the impact this has had on the increasingly punitive approach to dealing with girls to the detriment of more traditional welfare-oriented approaches.

Part Two is named – 'Evidence, Policy Rationales and Contemporary Interventions' and consists of nine chapters. Chapter five by Tim Bateman is of particular interest and is entitled 'Youth Crime and Justice: Statistical "Evidence", Recent Trends and Responses'. Bateman argues that statistical information should not be used to shape youth justice policy under the umbrella of 'evidence led' policy. An informative chapter, it draws attention to the highly problematic issue of the potential of statistics to be misleading. It places into context the use of statistics to develop youth justice policy and argues that the current youth justice

system is based on an increase in youth offending that does not exist. Chapter six by David Smith – ‘Youth Crime and Justice: Research, Evaluation and “Evidence”’, questions the whole notion of evidence based policies under the Labour government. The central theme of the chapter is to provide a discussion of the positivist understanding of what counts as evidence. Smith succinctly argues that politicians and policy makers should not become preoccupied with the positivist approach as it is not feasible or useful to adopt a ‘scientific’ approach within the youth justice context. Chapter seven by Roger Smith – ‘Actuarialism and Early Intervention in Contemporary Youth Justice’, discusses the role of early intervention in youth justice and the identification of risk factors to ‘nip crime in the bud’. The problems of actuarialism are highlighted from the efficacy of predictive tools to the identification of risk taking precedence over the identification of need. In chapter eight – ‘Restorative Approaches, Young People and Youth Justice’, Kevin Haines and David O’ Mahoney provide an overview of restorative justice and the way in which it has been incorporated into current youth justice policies such as youth offender panels, police-led restorative cautioning and restorative conferencing. They conclude that restorative justice approaches remain contentious and that further research should examine the extent to which they are in fact restorative and take account of the needs of the young person. Fergus McNeill’s chapter, ‘Community Supervision: Context and Relationships Matter’, provides a critical examination of the use of community supervision and argues that the current focus on managerialisation of practice diminishes the effectiveness of community sentences. He draws particular attention to the need for practitioners to concentrate on the importance of social contexts and relationships instead of the current focus on the evaluation of tools and programmes.

Barry Goldson provides a history of penal custody in the UK in chapter ten, ‘Penal Custody: Intolerance, Irrationality and Indifference.’ Descriptions of key government legislation from 1838 onwards make this chapter particularly useful for students. Goldson presents an argument for penal abolition for young people based on the irrationality of political decision making compared with evidence which demonstrates the damaging effect of custody on young people. In their chapter ‘Community Safety, Youth and the “Anti-Social”’, Gordon Hughes and Matthew Follett provide an overview of current developments in community safety. No text on current developments in youth justice would be complete without reflection on the government’s current obsession with anti-social behaviour and the tools developed to deal with this behaviour. This chapter critically evaluates the government’s approach and concludes by discussing the effect that this punitive preoccupation on anti-social behaviour could have on future generations of young people. The penultimate chapter in this section is written by Lynn Hancock, ‘Urban Regeneration, Young People, Crime and Criminalisation’. An important chapter, it considers the impact of urban regeneration on furthering the social exclusion of young people in public spaces. Chapter thirteen by Phil Mizen discusses the introduction and impact of the ‘New Deal for Young People – Work and Social Order: The “New Deal” for the Young Unemployed’. A detailed critique of New Deal is provided, which is informative in itself and is then supported by an evaluation of New Deals’ performance to date. Mizen concludes by stressing the limitations of New Deal as a means of enhancing the employment opportunities of young people.

Part three, ‘Future Directions’, consists of one chapter written by Barry Goldson and John Muncie – ‘Critical Anatomy: Towards a Principled Youth Justice’. This Chapter brings together the core themes of the chapters in this book. It provides a comprehensive

account of their vision for a principled youth justice system which involves taking account of international human rights, lessons from comparative analysis and an effort to utilise research evidence and practice experience.

Youth Crime and Justice is an important text which effectively illustrates youth justice developments and the current political obsession of 'dealing' with youth crime. The book's main strength is to critically review the rationale for the current youth justice system in the UK, although more contributions from policy makers and youth justice practitioners would have been beneficial in a book which centres on policy formation and practice development. *Youth Crime and Justice* is a companion volume to *Comparative Youth Justice: Critical Issues*. I did not have the opportunity to read this volume but would be very interested to do so, on the strength of this text.

Hannah Smithson is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield.

Anna Souhami

Transforming Youth Justice: occupational identity and cultural change

Willan Publishing, Cullompton, Devon

ISBN 13: 978-1-184392-193-6

£40 (hbk)

pp221

Terry Thomas

Have you heard the one about the policeman and the social worker? They worked in the same Youth Offending Team (YOT) and did a joint home visit to two brothers who were subject to a supervision order. It was 1 o'clock in the afternoon and their mother said they were both still in bed. The social worker said 'we'll come back later' – the police officer just went upstairs shouting 'bloody get up' or he'd throw water over them.

This story comes from *Transforming Youth Justice*, an ethnographic account of the formation of a YOT in the Midlands during the years 1998-2001. It starts with the existing Youth Justice Team in the Social Services Department and traces the arrival of other agencies, the move to a stand alone office and the eventual emergence of the new YOT with all the confusions and conflicts along the way.

Souhami suggests that the initial Youth Justice Team operated within its own parameters of ambiguity as it balanced welfare and justice for the young people they worked with. An ambiguity the Team could comfortably live with even if they could not always articulate what they were doing or show how successful they were being. They focussed on the individual needs and vulnerabilities of the young people and often saw this as protecting them against 'the system'.

The argument is made that New Labour saw such ambiguity as confusion and incoherence and hence the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the introduction of YOTs to impose order and efficiency – the unwritten sub-text was that social workers had 'failed' and the new

order of things would have a central purpose, and interventions based on risk, outcomes and evidence and be delivered through inter-agency cooperation.

Souhami became a researcher/observer to the team and meticulously tracks the team member's hopes and fears as the old ones adapt and the new ones find their feet. The book is divided into three distinct phases – the Youth Justice Team, the change and the Youth Offending Team. It explores the coming together of workers from the different agencies, with different aims, knowledge, values and skills to see how the occupational cultures adapt to each other – or not as the case may be.

Inevitably the merge is not smooth as the practitioners have to learn a new 'language', new acronyms, and jargon, as well as jockey for new positions and lament the loss of their old roles: '(practitioners) found themselves in a state of disjunction: disconnected from both their home agency and their new organisation. This position left many new staff feeling out of place and superfluous' (p96).

Some team members thought they were all becoming social workers – social workers thought it was all becoming too hard line and too much like social policing. Some workers sought to sabotage the changes by clinging on to their old ways and routines for a lifeline.

Transforming Youth Justice is a welcome addition to the literature of youth justice and not least because it is not another 'how to do it' book. It stands back and offers a unique exposition that many practitioners will identify with. It will also appeal to students of organisational change and occupational cultures.

Souhami is open about the fact that the book is based on a PhD thesis. This is not altogether a problem because the text is engaging and reads clearly. At times there is a feeling that academics are being regularly placated by sentences that start with comments such as – 'As "A" says...' or 'As "B" says...' to contextualise what she is observing with suitable citations. There is a useful final Appendix on how the research was carried out which will be of use to future researchers in this area.

Other issues such as a probation officer member of the team taking out a grievance because she feels overloaded and a police officer going off long-term 'sick' because he feels sidelined are somewhat skated over. These seemed quite major issues to this reader, and both would have been interesting diversions for some more in-depth study that is not there.

The architects of the Youth Offending Teams in New Labour would do well to read this account of what their high minded principles (slogans?) to be 'tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime' actually come down to on the ground. Whether the new Teams are more hard-line today and less welfare orientated is never actually stated in this book but we might do well to remember former Prime Minister Tony Blair's words about young people and crime: that locking up 12-15 year olds is 'horrible' but the politics of law and order require it (Tony 1994).

References

Tonry, M (1994) *Punishment and Politics* Willan Publishing, Cullompton, Devon

Terry Thomas is a Reader in Criminal Justice Studies at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Christopher W. Mullins

Holding Your Square: Masculinities, streetlife and violence

Willan Publishing 2006

ISBN 1-84392-194-4

£40.00 (hbk)

pp. 183

John Tierney

This book has all the makings of a classic text. It is a timely and, in terms of both research methodology and quality of theoretical analysis, highly sophisticated study of masculinities and violence. Its primary aim is 'to understand how definitions of masculinities within streetlife social networks shape men's perceptions and enactments of violence'. With great skill and attention to detail, Mullins provides an illuminating insight into the minds and social worlds of violent men, or more specifically, seriously violent men. They are not, for instance, binge drinkers up for a bit of bover before they enjoy a late night kebab. They are men like 'Red', who felt so humiliated when a stranger in a bar slapped him across the face, that he waited until the man concerned emerged at closing time, and then put seven bullets in his head.

Mullins employed an interesting, and rare, research methodology: the secondary analysis of qualitative, interview data. These data were produced by four previous projects centred on socially and economically deprived, largely African/American, neighbourhoods in Saint Louis, Missouri, in the United States. Thus the research also involved the merging of data sets, which in combination comprised a very large sample of active offenders, another unusual dimension to work of this sort. Mullins was fortunate in having access to this data. Although the original projects did not focus on gender issues per se, the transcripts did provide a rich source of highly relevant material (and the basis for a relatively inexpensive piece of research – a particularly important consideration in that the research was originally for his PhD thesis).

The strength of the study lies in the author's skill in using the findings from his empirical research as a basis for developing a multi-faceted theoretical understanding of male violence enacted within the concept of streetlife. This involves drawing on and interrogating a range of major, sometimes disparate, theoretical work on the theme of masculinities and crime. The result is a holistic understanding of male violence, with (masculine) gender conceptualised in terms of its existence as a structural feature of society, as a concern embedded in situational experiences and, emphasising the importance of agency, as a perceptual preoccupation. The accounts provided by the interviewees are used by Mullins to

illuminate a variety of key theoretical insights, taking in the situational nuances of streetlife as a setting for hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, the often contradictory nature of gendered role expectations, and the relationships between these men and the women in their lives. The analysis challenges those who have conceived of gender as monolithic and simplistically causal in nature, i.e. men are violent and men are violent because they are masculine:

while this view has been logically critiqued by some as tautological...more careful and nuanced understanding of the interactions of social actors within gendered social structures not only diffuses the apparent logical circularity – showing us that individuals and social structure exist in a dialectical relationship of influence – but also guides us to a more intricate analysis of the nature of gender and its influence on behaviour

Some dimensions to issues of masculinities, streetlife and violence are, because of the nature of the research, omitted, or only addressed in passing. As Mullins acknowledges, it was impossible to explore, from a comparative perspective, the relevance of ethnicity, given that all of the young men involved were African/American. We can also note that not all of the men in these neighbourhoods incorporate and live out notions of masculinity that require serious acts of violence. Indeed, many of the men interviewed made disparaging references to those who failed to live up to the demands of hegemonic masculinity. In the argot of those interviewed, the primary subordinated masculinity is the 'punk': a feminine man who lacks courage (and in a prison setting, is homosexual). An interesting question is how and why those defined as punks, along with others in the neighbourhood, end up constructing alternative masculine identities. The nature of the research means that violent women are also excluded (and what salience does the concept of a masculine woman have?). A number of recent British studies of male violence have linked it to the consumption of alcohol and located it within the specific context of the night-time economy. However, in Mullins' study the emphasis is on the bar as a social setting providing opportunities for male violence rather than on the consumption of alcohol itself. A comparative British – US study addressing the respective social and cultural contexts within which alcohol is consumed would be of considerable interest.

In summary, this is a well researched and important book. Anyone with an interest in issues of gender and crime, especially violent crime, will find it of immense value. The accounts given by the men offer a fascinating glimpse of streetlife in these de-industrialised Saint Louis 'hoods' and, at the same time, a solid basis for the ensuing theoretical analysis. One of the interviewees also gave Mullins his book title: 'if you let somebody hit you and you don't hit them back, then that's a sign of weakness. You're not holding your square'.

John Tierney, University of Durham.

Notes for Readers and Writers.

Youth and Policy is published four times a year.

Correspondence:

For Journal Content:

Youth and Policy,
Durham University,
Elvet Riverside II,
New Elvet,
Durham DH1 3JT
E-mail: youth.policy@durham.ac.uk

For Administrative Matters (including subscriptions and advertising)

Youth and Policy,
The National Youth Agency,
Eastgate House,
19–23 Humberstone Road,
Leicester LE5 3GJ.
Tel. 0116 242 7480 Fax. 0116 242 7444
E-mail: andyh@nya.org.uk

Submission Details

Articles

The Editorial Group welcomes the submission of unsolicited articles which take an analytical approach to theoretical, policy or professional matters relating to young people in society.

Articles must be the original work of the author(s) and must not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Manuscripts should normally be between 3,500 and 8,000 words, including diagrams and references. In addition, authors should include an abstract of up to 150 words and three to five keywords.

If considered suitable, articles will be subject to anonymous peer review by two referees. This can sometimes take up to six months. The final decision regarding publication rests with the Editorial Group, who may occasionally recommend revisions and re-submission.

When submitting articles for consideration, in the first instance e-mail copy to jean.spence@durham.ac.uk. Alternatively send hard copy and disk.

Each manuscript should be accompanied by a cover sheet containing the following information:

Title.

Name, address and contact information for author(s).

Word Length

Date of submission.

Short biography of each author (no more than 20 words).

Please do not include authors names within manuscripts as these must be anonymous for

review purposes.

All articles must be written in English. Language should be accessible, free from jargon and sensitive to issues of equality and difference. English spelling conventions should be used.

Lengthy quotations (over 40 words) should be indented and italicised in the text.

The Harvard system should be used for references ie. author's surname and year of publication in brackets, with page numbers where appropriate eg. (Smith, 1994:25); 'as Smith (1994:25) suggests ...'; or 'Smith's (1996) argument is ...'

Each publication cited in the text should be listed alphabetically and in full at the end of the article. In multi-authored articles, the names of all authors should be given in the reference list. In the text use the first author followed by et al. Please check that all references are included and complete before submitting manuscripts.

The following style should be used in the reference list: For example:

Book:

Smith, M.K. (1996) *Local Education: Community, conversation, praxis*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Article:

Wylie, T. (2004) 'How Connexions Came to Terms with Youth Work', *Youth and Policy*, 83: 19–29.

Report:

The Thompson Report (1982) Experience and Participation, Cmnd 8686, London: HMSO.

Abbreviations which are commonly understood can be used, but please spell out in full, with the abbreviation following in brackets, the first time they are used.

Please limit the use of supplementary notes as far as possible. Notes, numbered in the main text and detailed at the end of the article, should be included in the word count.

The editors reserve the right to make minor modifications and edits in the manuscript. However, any in-depth editing will be discussed with the author.

Reviews

Books for Review. Suggestions for future review material and names of possible reviewers should be communicated directly to Tony Jeffs (tony.jeffs@durham.ac.uk)

Reviewers should follow the style outlined for Articles in their manuscripts.