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A Year of Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour: some reflections on realities and rhetoric

Terry Thomas

This article considers developments in policy and public debate in relation to anti-social behaviour in the period following the re-election of a Labour Government in May 2005. It continues the story of anti-social behaviour outlined in previous articles published in 'Youth and Policy,' and at the same time broadens the discussion beyond the immediate issue of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

Key Words: Anti-Social Behaviour, ASBOs, Government, Media

After New Labour's return to power in May 2005, securing their third successive term of office, the political campaign against anti-social behaviour continued unabated. The subsequent twelve months witnessed the creation of the Respect Task Force, the publication of the Respect Action Plan, the Tory Opposition Leader saying we need more understanding of young people, and District Judges saying that children should be 'clouted' rather than brought to court. Off-stage there have been the normal tabloid noises about the decline of civilised Britain.

This article seeks to explore these months of political jockeying and tabloid headlines and to pose questions about the realities of tackling anti-social behaviour. In doing so it builds on earlier articles published in *Youth and Policy* which have traced the story of anti-social behaviour policies over the last few years (Grier and Thomas, 2003-4; Thomas, 2005). Whilst the earlier articles focused on the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), this one widens the picture to include other approaches to anti-social behaviour. It does not claim to be a definitive account of everything that took place over this period but will hopefully be useful background to anyone trying to make sense of these policies. The chronology of the seasons from Summer 2005 onwards is taken as the framework for the article.

Summer 2005

Just before the General Election of May 2005, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee published its report on anti-social behaviour, considering how it might be tackled. The report was generally favourably disposed toward the Government and its initiatives and played down any sharp distinction between prevention and enforcement. Some critics had suggested that there had been an emphasis on enforcement at the expense of prevention, but the Home Affairs Committee was not persuaded, seeing the elements as complementary (House of Commons, 2005). With its return to power, the

Government formally welcomed the report and emphasised yet again the need to restore 'respect' in communities:

> *... rebuilding respect in communities is a key third term priority for the Government and this signals our commitment to step up action to tackle anti-social behaviour.* (Home Office, 2005(a): 3)

At the same time as welcoming the report the Home Office published a MORI poll on public attitudes to ASBOs as the most prominent policy measure to combat anti-social behaviour. The poll showed 82% of the general public supported the idea of the ASBO but only 39% thought they were very effective (MORI, 2005).

Louise Casey, Head of the Home Office Anti Social Behaviour Unit, used the MORI poll to round on the critics of ASBOs, whom she thought included 'youth workers, social workers and the liberal intelligentsia', who were not living in the real world (Ward, 2005). In fact the poll had shown 67% of *Guardian* readers – usually code for the liberal intelligentsia – did support ASBOs (MORI, 2005).

Specific criticism came from David Davis, the Shadow Home Secretary, who at the time was campaigning to be Leader of the Conservative Party. Davis said ASBOs were being used too frequently, and dismissed them as 'a sticking plaster over an amputation' (Asthana and Bright, 2005). The campaign group Liberty said it would continue to criticise any attempts to erode 'precious human rights' (ibid) and oppose a government in danger of making it a 'crime to become a child' (Verkaik, 2005). Meanwhile the *Independent* newspaper opined that:

> *... the reflex to slap ASBOs on unruly children is related to that recent bout of hysteria about the prevalence of kids wearing 'hoodies' in shopping centres ... (and) ... the evidence increasingly suggests ASBOs have become a way for those in positions of power to avoid their deeper responsibilities.* ('The dangers of criminalising children', the *Independent*, 20th June 2005)

These 'deeper responsibilities' referred to the need to provide 'decent leisure facilities and places to go out of school hours' (ibid). They would also presumably include a need to stop asking the criminal justice system to resolve social problems of low incomes, inequality and blocked ambitions.

The Council of Europe also criticised the UK on its approach to anti-social behaviour. Alvaro Gil-Robles, the Council's Human Rights Commissioner, was unhappy with the political rhetoric trying to 'rebalance' human rights protection in favour of the community and away from the individual:

> *... the introduction of a series of civil orders aimed at reducing urban nuisance, but whose primary effect has been to bring a whole range of persons, predominantly the young, within the scope of the criminal justice system and, often enough, behind bars without necessarily having committed a recognisable criminal offence.* (C. of E. 2005: para. 83)

The European report was picking up on the growing criticisms of ASBOs (see e.g. ASBO Concern (www.asboconcern.org.uk) and NAPO 2005; Rowland 2005). These criticisms argued that they were a means to fast-track young people into the criminal justice system and often into custody for behaviour that breached the ASBO but was not normally deserving of a custodial sentence. Liberty described the report as 'Sober reading' (quoted in Jeffery, 2005). However, in truth, Council of Europe pronouncements do not figure high on the UK political agenda.

On a political level, July saw Louise Casey herself on the receiving end of media flak. The Daily Mail had obtained a tape of an after-dinner speech she had made in Stratford-upon-Avon to some 300 senior police officers and Home Office officials. Ms. Casey advocated turning up to work 'pissed' in order to cope with the day, denounced the Home Office 'obsession' with 'evidence based policy' and referred to the pleasures of 'binge drinking' (Slack, 2005). Ms. Casey rode out the storm and an internal inquiry into her behaviour (Travis, 2005).

Also in July, Liberty decided to legally challenge another 'weapon' in the fight against anti-social behaviour – the child curfew scheme. The scheme could designate areas where children under 16 could not gather after a certain time (usually 9 p.m.) unless accompanied by an adult (Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ss.14-15 as amended).

The Court ruled in favour of Liberty and Lord Justice Brook explained that:

> *All of us have the right to walk the streets without interference from police constables ... unless they possess common law or statutory powers to stop us. There is no relevant common law power, and section 30(6) of the 2003 Act does not create an express power to use force.*

Liberty called it 'a victory for the presumption of innocence' (Liberty 2005) and the *Guardian* said:

> *... for those, including this newspaper, who have regularly objected to this government's naïve authoritarianism, with its tabloid-friendly promises of crack-downs, Asbos and curfews, yesterday's ruling is welcome news.* ('Teenage Kicks' the *Guardian,* 21st July 2005)

The accusation of playing to the 'tabloid gallery' was a growing criticism of the Government that developed over the year. In the meantime the *Daily Mail* obliged with its own headline on this court ruling: 'A Kicking for the anti-yob crusade' (21st July 2005).

Autumn 2005

In order to strengthen its central control over the direction of anti-social behaviour policies, the Government formed its Respect Task Force in September 2005. This was a cross-departmental arrangement and Louise Casey was appointed its leader. Press reports suggested the Prime Minister was 'frustrated by the Home Secretary's efforts to combat anti-social behaviour' and even had to pull rank to get the Home Secretary and the Office of

Deputy Prime Minister to provide funding for the new Task Force (Cracknell, 2005(a)). One of the Task Force's initial jobs was to produce a Respect Action Plan.

Formally the Task Force was to be distinguished from the Home Office Anti Social Behaviour Unit by its emphasis on 'early intervention' (Lloyd, 2005); the Prime Minister had made a major speech on parenting during the first week of September (PM's Speech, 2nd Sept. 2005) and leaks to the press now even talked of 'Baby ASBOs'.

The 'Baby ASBO' was journalese for ASBOs on children below the age of ten (the age of criminal responsibility) (Hennessey, 2005). The Home Office had been studying ideas about identifying potential criminals at a very early age – even as young as three – for some time (Hurst, 2005). Pilot schemes had actually taken place over a decade earlier in Humberside ('The little tearaways: police start a war on crime with the four year olds' *Daily Mail* 15th February 1991) and the idea had always been on the Home Office back-burner. In 1995 Michael Howard the Conservative Home Secretary announced he 'was setting up a ministerial group to identify and rescue six year olds at risk of becoming criminals' ('Police computer to target 6-year-olds' *Sunday Times*, 15th October 1995). Different times and different political climates and these ideas were back on the agenda with the Task Force given the job of implementing them.

Other reports at this time were more considered in advocating help to families involved in anti social behaviour. For example, The NCH charity said more money should go to supporting families rather than simply trying to impose and enforce good behaviour on them (NCH 2005).

At the end of October the Task Force had drawn up a preliminary draft of what might go in the Action Plan. The so-called 'Chequers Paper' was run past the Prime Minister and (reportedly) included proposals to:

- ban alcohol on public transport;
- introduce sheriffs to 'acceptable behaviour zones';
- Councils to take possession of homes owned by problem families;
- anyone arrested for violence to be breathalysed; and
- parents to be prosecuted if truanting children were found on the streets.

(Slack, 2005; Cracknell, 2005 (b))

Some of these proposals would have required primary legislation rather than just an Action Plan and in the event the Action Plan itself was somewhat more limited in its scope when it appeared in January (see below). The 'Baby ASBO' idea seemed to have been lost for the moment.

It was also in the Autumn of 2005 that nominations started to be taken for the 'Taking a Stand Awards' 2005. These annual Awards are designed to reward individuals and local groups who have 'taken a stand' against anti social behaviour in their communities. They are co-sponsored by the Home Office, Crime Concern, the Co-op and BBC Local Radio (see www.takingastand.co.uk). Up to 500 winners were to be found for the awards, which amounted to £1,000 to spend on tackling anti-social behaviour in their area; five overall winners would

each receive £5,000. (www.cjsonline.gov.uk/the_cjs/whats_new/news-3243.html).

This idea, that individuals could make a difference, appealed to the Government, and such individuals were duly courted by the press (see e.g. O'Brien, 2006 and www.mumsarmy. org.uk). Later, in June 2006, the new Home Secretary John Reid appeared to overstep the mark when he told the *Sunday Telegraph* that people subjected to anti-social behaviour should 'stop moaning and take action' (Hennessy and Craig, 2006). Reid was accused of trying to shift responsibility for the fight against anti social behaviour from the shoulders of the government, and of putting out 'gimmicks' and 'excuses' in the headlines. Home Office officials hurriedly corrected what they saw as a misunderstanding (Wilson, 2006) and Louise Casey was pushed on to the Monday morning breakfast television programmes (12th June 2006) to make good the damage.

The shine was also somewhat taken off the 'Taking a Stand Awards' when one recipient later took direct action against the Government for its own lack of action on anti social behaviour. Josephine Rooney collected her Award in May 2006 and a month later, amongst much publicity, was imprisoned for refusing to pay her council tax in protest at the state of her neighbourhood, which she said had been blighted by anti social behaviour and disrepair (Nugent, 2006).

Winter 2005–6

The Respect Action Plan appeared in January 2006. A few weeks prior to publication the Prime Minister made a pre-emptive defence of the Plan in the *Observer* newspaper:

> ... *in advance of the publication of new proposals on anti social behaviour and organised crime, we will once again, as a government, be under attack for eroding essential civil liberties.* (Blair, 2005)

The defence was premised around the idea of competing civil liberties and whose civil liberties came first, and philosophical traditions from Labour's history were called on to justify the forthcoming Plan:

> ... *people must live together and one of the basic tasks of government is to facilitate this living together, to ensure that the many can live without fear of the few.* (ibid)

The Plan was also preceded by the publication of Home Office research showing that concern about anti social behaviour was falling (Home Office, 2005 (b)). The latest statistics showed that a total of 6,497 ASBOs had been made up to 30 June 2005 and 43% of the latest quarter's ASBOs were on young people (a slight fall on previous figures).[1]

A Home Office press release was also used to announce the new policy to review all ASBOs given to young people after one year to allow changes in the behaviour of the individual to be taken into account:

> ... *the one year review of ASBOs for young people is an important safeguard and*

will ensure that the young person is receiving the support they need to prevent them breaching the terms of their ASBO and causing further harm to the community. We also recognise that patterns of behaviour may have changed significantly in a year – and this measure provides that check and balance. (Home Office 2005 (b))

This seemed like a significant concession to those who worked with young people, although it hardly fitted the government's 'tough on crime' approach. Conspiracy theorists might believe it was an item of news conveniently 'buried' three days before Christmas in a press release with a title drawing no attention to its complete content. The Association of Youth Offending Team Managers had been one organisation expressing its concerns about minimum two year ASBOs on the under-18s (Batstone, 2005).

When it eventually appeared, The Respect Action Plan was some 40 pages long and with a Foreword written by the Prime Minister (available at www.respect.gov.uk). The Plan had a number of pages completely blank save for large-print Orwellian-type slogans such as:

> *'Give Respect, Get Respect' (p.4);*
> *'The Future Depends on Unlocking the Positive Potential of Young People' (p.8)'*
> *'The Foundation of Our Future is our Young' (p.12); and*
> *'The Whole is Greater than the sum of its Parts' (p.24).*

In launching the Respect Action Plan the Prime Minister placed it in the context of modernising our interventions to better deal with 21st century behaviour. 'We are fighting 21st century crime with 19th century methods' (PM's Speech, 10th January 2006). This was to become a familiar refrain, as the 'victim' and the 'law-abiding majority' were contrasted to delinquents and criminals.

The Action Plan was dismissed by David Cameron, the Conservative leader as a rehashed package of 'short term gimmicks' rather than long-term solutions. He believed 'the issue is too important to be dealt with by "eye-catching initiatives" designed to get newspaper headlines' (Morris, 2006). Later in the year he surprised everyone with his own approach that looked for better understanding of young people rather than simply enforcement of sanctions (Cameron, 2006). The tabloids immediately called it Cameron's 'hug a hoodie' policy, attributing a classic 'eye-catching' headline to him with words that he had never actually used.

On a wider front we might question what exactly an Action Plan is. It is not an Act, a Bill, a White Paper or a government circular and to some extent it might fall in that category described by Tonry as 'theatre and symbols'. It gives the appearance of something happening but without much substance:

> *... crime and punishment is one of those subjects about which little is said or done (by the Labour government) without what looks like enormous concern for short-term public and media reactions.* (Tonry, 2004: 38)

Tonry has also noted how concern with anti social behaviour, as measured by the British Crime Survey, has actually risen since the introduction of measures to deal with it:

… by making anti-social behaviour into a major social policy problem and giving it sustained high-visibility attention, Labour has made a small problem larger, thereby making people more aware of it and less satisfied with their lives and their government. (ibid: 5b)

The implication is that the more you do, the more you publicise the problem, therefore the more you have to do in a never ending ratcheting up of the interventions – whether they be laws or Action Plans.

Liberty appeared to agree, denouncing many of the Government's policies and initiatives as having 'been drafted on Westminster beer mats by ambitious advisers' (Liberty, 2006(a)), and others questioned just what was meant by 'respect'. Amelia Hill picked up on the story of the 'sonic teenage deterrent' that a number of newspapers had reported. It cleared an area of teenagers by emitting a high-pitched noise intolerable to anyone under 20. As Hill commented, if it were dogs we would think it cruel – 'treat anyone with disrespect and you get it straight back' (Hill, 2006).

In February the MP for Livingstone told the House of Commons that the 'police (had) put an ASBO on the whole village of Mid Calder because they had had problems with a small minority of youths for five or six weeks' (Hansard H C Debates, 1st Feb 2006 col. 365). This intriguing possibility turned out to be not quite as described by the MP. The police had actually used their dispersal powers rather than ASBOs and the elected representative got his terminologies wrong ('Village Youth Control order has worked' *The Scotsman*, 10th Jan. 2006).

Spring 2006

Other individual critics continued to snipe at the government to greater or less effect. Martin Narey had been the head of the prison and probation service but resigned in December 2005 to become the new chief executive of Barnardo's. In March 2006 he lamented the 'routine use of ASBOs' for teenagers:

ASBOs have their place but their over-use is unnecessarily catapulting children into a custodial system which has so many children in it that the chances of rehabilitation are extremely slim and the chances of criminalisation very likely. (Travis, 2006)

Professor Rod Morgan, the chair of the Youth Justice Board, invoked 'labelling theory' in his criticisms. Earlier he had asked the press and politicians to stop calling young people yobs (Bright, 2005) and now he thought that young people were being demonised and having the 'mark of Cain' put on their forehead that they were unlikely to get rid of for a long time (reported in 'ASBOs "demonising" young people', BBC News 23rd April 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4935606.stm).

The most prominent critic was Prince Charles. He agreed with the 'labelling theory' and referred to the adverse effects of stereotyping:

...there are a lot of people who ... underneath it all are actually uncertain and unsure of themselves and perhaps insecure ... all it needs, a lot of the time, is to provide them with motivation and self-esteem, and suddenly they are transformed. (quoted in Smith, 2006)

One District Judge sitting on a Youth Court in Salford did feed his sentiments straight into the 'punitive populism' category. Dismissing a case as too trivial to have been brought to court, District Judge Jonathan Finestein said:

... in the old days, the headmaster would have given them a good clouting and they would have gone away to shake hands. ('Judge: don't bring children to court, give them a clout!' *Daily Express* 7th April 2006)

The Crown Prosecution Service was asked to reconsider their decision to bring the case to court and it was later quietly withdrawn ('Playground 'racist' case dropped' the *Guardian*, 26th April 2006).

Summer 2006

As spring passed to summer the government decided to bring out an old idea to tackle anti social behaviour that had been considered before but not acted upon. This was the policy of reducing Housing Benefit as a sanction on householders involved in anti social behaviour.

This idea had first been formally floated in 2003[2] in the White Paper 'Respect and Responsibility – taking a stand against Anti-Social Behaviour' that had preceded the Anti Social Behaviour Act, 2003 (Home Office, 2003: paras. 4.47-49). The underlying philosophy was that all citizens had 'rights and responsibilities' and therefore certain 'conditions' could be attached to their behaviour in order to achieve a common good (see e.g. White, 2003). A more detailed consultation paper had been published at the time (DWP, 2003) but the idea was then quietly dropped in the face of extensive criticism. Poor families would become poorer and some might become homeless.

In June 2006 the Housing Benefit as sanction idea came back on to the political agenda.[3] On 5th June television cameras were invited into 10 Downing Street to film the Prime Minister listening to representatives from the police and local authorities explaining how their work was going and what would help them further in the fight against anti social behaviour. John Hutton, the Work and Pensions Secretary, was there to announce the Housing Benefit sanction for those families who had 'reached the end of the line' (DWP, 2006).

'The end of the line' was now taken to be those families who were being evicted because of anti social behaviour and had been offered rehabilitation programmes but turned them down. The Welfare Reform Bill (Published 4th July 2006) being put before parliament would contain the necessary legal empowerment (Clause 28) for pilot schemes to be started in ten local authorities in 2007. After two years they would be reviewed and the scheme rolled out nation-wide. The position of young people in households who were not necessarily the evictees has yet to be sorted out.

Also around at the start of the summer was a renewed attempt for those thinking of applying for ASBOs to think twice when the person concerned had health or social problems. These concerns were not new and organisations representing young people with Asperger's Syndrome, Tourette's Syndrome and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) wanted ASBO applicants to consider any underlying problems (Flanagan, 2006; Elliott, 2005); the Council of Europe's report had similarly pointed to the number of young people with psychological and psychiatric problems who had been committed to custody (C of E, 2005: para. 93). The Children's Commissioner for England believed that even the ASBOs themselves might be actually harming some children (Russell, 2005).

Conclusions

The Prime Minister has remained focussed on anti-social behaviour and appears to be unaware of its self-fulfilling nature, that the more you seek to combat it, the more you need to combat it. A report in May 2006 suggested that anti-social behaviour was still a bigger problem in the UK than other parts of Europe (ADT 2006). In June 2006 the Prime Minister told the Commons that 'if the police and local authorities want even further powers to deal with (anti-social behaviour), we shall give them those powers' (Hansard HC Debates, 7 June 2006 Col.252).

An Audit Commission report (2006) suggested local authorities and the police were still not getting close enough to the communities they were supposed to be working with and closer collaboration was needed.

As for other areas of life the ASBO model was being seen as so successful it could be adapted to new purposes. The civil order to initially prevent the undesired behaviour, followed up by the criminal sanction if the order is breached, has been spread to the proposed:

- Drinking Banning Order;
- Serious Crime Prevention Order; and
- Violent Offender Order.

The Drinking Banning Orders appeared in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill published June 2005; it will be to exclude individuals responsible for alcohol-related disorder from certain areas and licensed premises for a given period.

The Serious Crime Prevention Order was proposed in July 2006:

> ... *the purpose of the order would not be punitive, but to impose binding conditions to prevent individuals or organisations facilitating serious crime, backed by criminal penalties for breach.* (Home Office, 2006: para. 3.1)

The Violent Offender Order had been announced by the then Home Secretary Charles Clarke, to allow courts to make specific prohibitions on Offenders who have been convicted of offences of violence; breach of the order would be a criminal offence (Hansard HC

Debates, 20th April 2006, col.245). The Order was a direct response to the inquiry report published in April 2006, into the death of John Monckton by a person on parole from prison (HMIP, 2006). It was immediately dismissed by Liberty as 'yet another new-fangled order' (Liberty, 2006(b)).

In the meantime powers had been given to the Environment Agency allowing them to apply for ASBOs to be issued on corporations that damage the environment.

For completeness we should add that a series of academic books on anti-social behaviour have appeared over the last twelve months. In June 2005 Millie et al published their original research into the experiences of those on the receiving end of anti-social behaviour and how those experiences were made sense of in three different strands of thought:

● anti social behaviour as symptoms of moral decline and cultural change;
● as symptomatic of disengagement from wider society and families;
● and as a reflection of the age-old tendency for 'kids to be kids' and just get into trouble to antagonise their elders.
(Millie et al. 2005: Chapter 4)

The researchers concluded that national and local strategies for anti social behaviour should aim for a balance between enforcement and prevention, and that more care was needed in defining anti social behaviour and involving local communities in effective remedies.

In July 2005 Squires and Stephen published an extensive account of the origins, creation and politics of anti social behaviour tracking it back to the end of World War Two through to its current 'use' by New Labour. They see some young people as socially and economically marginalised and trying to negotiate their way out of a structural impasse on an individual level and sometimes resorting to crime and anti-social behaviour to do so. Squires and Stephen use their research to give these young people and their families a voice (Squires and Stephen, 2005).

Squires and Stephen make a telling reference to the Iraq war:

> young people) are presented by politicians and media alike as a risk to 'decent law abiding citizens', yet when 'disciplined' and in uniform and risking their lives, they are hailed by these commentators as heros in the struggle for 'freedom and democracy'. But these are still the same young men who, like countless generations before them, have sought escape and a sense of becoming and belonging as foot soldiers in other people's wars in the absence of more concrete opportunities. (ibid: 207)

Elizabeth Burney followed up her own earlier work (Burney, 1999) that locates anti social behaviour alongside housing management. Burney explains how the 'residualisation' of council housing estates has led to estates accommodating low income families, the economically inactive and families with a large number of children and/or with a lone female as head of the household. In this context housing managers have been drawn inexorably in to the ranks of crime prevention and surveillance, including work for and in anti-social behaviour units (Burney, 2005).

Francis Gilbert's *Yob Nation* (2006) locates anti-social behaviour in the wider context of a breakdown in social and cultural values. He takes us through a journalistic tour of bullying in schools, the army and offices in the city. He looks at the aggression shown in the tabloids and by spin doctors as well as the 'traditional' street culture of gangs and territorial fights. Gilbert sees cultural breakdown everywhere – including the universities with their heavy drinking students – and regards the television programme 'Big Brother' as a veritable 'barometer of people's yobbery' (p.59).

Three television programmes of note were broadcast during our twelve months under review. ITV's 'ASBO Madness' (broadcast 3 June 2005) found ASBOs made on seemingly eccentric middle-aged people who were not really of any harm to anyone, while the BBC 'Panorama' programme 'ASBOs on Trial' (broadcast 20 November 2005) tried to balance the problems of residents with the problems of the young people. 'Panorama' found children and young people with learning difficulties and psychiatric problems facing imprisonment because they did not understand their ASBOs. Both the 'Panorama' programme and a later Channel 4 programme 'Making Our Kids Criminal' (broadcast 24th February 2006) believed we were criminalising a whole generation of children.

The media publicity given to young people receiving ASBOs – and breaching them – continued to be virulent (see eg 'Named and shamed, the yob who attacked firemen' *Daily Mail* 23 December 2005). In Cleveland they came up with the novel idea of putting names and photographs on the back of buses complete with details of prohibitions and 'hot lines' to phone if the person was seen in breech of them ('Yob shamed...on the back of a bus' *Daily Express* 15th July 2006)[4] and in the London Borough of Newham the internet was used to publicise two teenage brothers aged 19 and 15 complete with map showing areas they were excluded from (www.newham.gov.uk/News/2006/May/brothersasbos.htm).

Elsewhere in London the Shoreditch Digital Bridge sought to tie local CCTV cameras into a channel that could be broadcast to people in their own homes. The idea was to enable people to spot anti-social or criminal behaviour and report it to the police; 'ASBO concern' called it 'ASBO TV' ('Rights Group criticises ASBO TV' BBC at http://news.bbc.co.uk/l/low/england/london/4597990.stm).

Arguments about the damaging effects of such publicity on young people seem to have been lost along the way (see eg. Thomas 2005). Professor Adam Crawford, at the University of Leeds, did point out that if this was an exercise in shaming, it was more akin to a negative 'disintegrative or stigmatising' shaming than the more positive 're-integrative shaming' that seeks to first shame and then 'reintegrate' the individual concerned (Crawford, 2006)

For some observers New Labour has become synonymous with the triumph of rhetoric ('spin') over substance and this review of tackling anti social behaviour would seem to support that contention. A problem is elevated and then dealt with by pronouncements and photo opportunities that bear little resemblance to what goes on day by day on the ground.

In late 2006 the PM announced that 77 'parenting experts' – clinical psychologists – would be appointed nation wide to help tackle anti social behaviour amongst young people (Ward

and Wintour, 2006). The media dubbed them 'super-nannies' after the TV 'reality' show of the same name. There was no recognition of the day by day work of youth workers, social workers, probation officers and others – many of them graduates and just as 'expert' in their chosen professions. Somehow these 77 individuals would leave their offices, go into communities and 'make a difference'. Another example of individual endeavour – just like that of the individuals who 'make a stand' in their communities (see above) – taking on the structural 'social and economic marginalisation' of young people described by Squires and Stephen (2005).

As long as this individualised approach continues and anti social behviour is defined and redefined with no particular boundaries to keep it in check, anti social behaviour looks like being with us for some time. As long as MPs are getting ASBOs muddled up with Dispersal orders in the Westminster 'soap-opera' we will have politicians living in a parallel universe to practitioners on the ground. When we will bridge this divide between young people and those who work with them on one hand and politicians and the media on the other remains to be seen.

Notes

(1) The quarterly figures and totals for ASBOs are published on the Home Office's Crime Reduction web site at www.crimereduction.gov.uk/asbos2.htm. At the end of September 2005 7,356 ASBOs had been made.
(2) An earlier Private Member's Bill – Housing Benefit (Withdrawal of Payment) Bill – had been unsuccessfully put forward in the 2001-2 parliamentary session by Frank Field MP.
(3) There had been a reference to it in the January Respect Action Plan (p.23).
(4) The individual in question was aged 20.

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Peer Education: Individual learning or service delivery?

Annette Coburn, Brian McGinley and Craig McNally

This article discusses the importance and values of a peer education approach and argues that the theoretical underpinning, rationale and practice require a change in focus. Community based youth work can benefit from developments in Higher Education where peer education has become routine rather than exceptional practice. It is proposed that the value of this methodology lies in the enhancement of teaching and learning across formal and informal learning environments. In searching for definition and rationale, the article examines contemporary peer education approaches noting the persistent focus on delivery of credible, mainly health related, information. Workers spend time trying to measure recipient impact rather than focusing on the benefits of this approach as a teaching and learning strategy. In response, the authors have created a new peer education template that can be used by peer educators and learners to help track and plan their learning across various learning settings.

Keywords: Peer Education; Young People; Higher Education; Constructive Alignment; Learning Enhancement

The term 'peer education' is used to describe an approach to learning within a range of professional fields including youth work, community education, social work and health. It denotes a process of intervention that engages peers in helping each other to learn across a range of subjects that are often funded on the basis of young people being educated by their peers about a specific topic, frequently related to health and well being (Bignall, Butt and Pagarani, 2002).

The rationale for peer education often relies on its use of volunteers to deliver perceived operational savings in comparison to employing teachers and youth workers (Parkin and McKeganey, 2000). This rationale is not born out in practice as the level of support for peer educators makes this a cost effective but not necessarily cheaper alternative (SPEN, 2006; Levine, Glass and Meister, 1987). Peer Education is also based on assumptions about the credibility of the process and the capacity of those delivering the information as posited by Blackman:

> The proposition is that the shared attitudes and values held by young people act as a foundation of the credibility which can then be used as a basis from which to transmit drug education messages. (Blackman, 2004: 164)

This position is consistent with the evaluation of the UK Government's Drug Prevention

Initiative which highlights that:

> *The peer education approach to drug education rests on the belief that young people will learn more from other young people than from 'adults' because they will feel more at ease and have more in common with them.* (Shiner and Newburn, 1996: 1)

The focus on credibility fosters a belief that adults involved in working with young people are out of touch with their lives and only utilise traditional lecture style teaching in their practice. This is perpetuated through statements that claim, 'young people are more likely to listen and respond to information given by their peers than to a "lecture" delivered by adults' (Fast Forward, 2006). Peer education as a credible method of service delivery has become a clear focus of this approach and as such is concerning to the authors in three significant ways.

Firstly, it is contestable to suggest that peer education is, ipso facto, a more effective way of raising awareness of health and well being issues over other forms of learning (Borgia, Marinacci, Schifano and Perruci, 2005; McNally, 2003). Secondly, it shifts the focus of the learning process away from the peer educators. So the spotlight on peer education often concentrates more on the delivery mode rather than potential benefits of this approach to learning to peer educators. Thirdly, the peer education process itself is often poorly defined and does not produce easily measurable results (Scottish Peer Education Network, 2006). Continuing to develop an unproven approach, on the basis of its effectiveness as a credible method of service delivery, remains a questionable strategy.

Whilst acknowledging the credibility argument, we suggest that the rationale for the development of community based peer education projects should change focus. Peer Education programmes need to move away from the current spotlight on service delivery and become more overtly specific to the learning benefits that are experienced by the peer educator. Furthermore, this shift should also pinpoint how this learning experience may help to prepare peer educators for future learning in the workplace, community or further and higher education. This is of particular importance in that, although many young people benefit from the support of their friends and peers and the starting point for youth work is often based on this association with others, it is simply a starting point (Davies, 2005). Youth workers need to agree appropriate mechanisms with young people to develop their own sustainable support structures, beyond the experience of the initial setting. The creation of a peer education template is a response to this need.

This article was inspired by a small-scale research study (McNally, 2003) that compared the learning experiences of four groups of young people on the subject of drugs education. The aim of that study was to illustrate the value of a peer education approach to both peer educator and participant. However, the findings were inconclusive in demonstrating effectiveness when compared to teacher led input or the use of an educational video. An examination of contemporary literature and analysis of fieldwork experience across a range of peer education practice (Coburn and McGinley, 2004) suggested a lack of consensus on definition of peer education. Meantime, a plethora of learning methods was branded as peer education but with no overall classification to embrace the full range of approaches. All of this contributes to a wide-ranging debate across professional fields, which affects

issues such as rationale, credibility, cost, purpose and effectiveness.

The search for definition led to the identification of a series of theoretical and practical applications that demonstrated linkage between the discourses in both community and higher education settings. The interface between the two provided the basis on which to develop the template for peer education in anticipation that it may be useful to those working in both informal youth work and more formal education settings. The template is offered as a means of helping to track the progress of learners and of engaging in dialogue about commonality across a range of educational environments.

It is suggested that the contribution of an approach which situates responsibility and control for learning with the peer educator and not an adult teacher could be particularly useful within the professions of youth work, social work and health where it is currently underplayed. In particular, it could be purposefully adopted to encourage and support young people's learning by specifically targeting those who may not normally progress to further training or Higher Education. We argue that the use of the peer education template has the potential to engage young people who are not currently involved in education in ways of learning that help to build their confidence and capacity to continue learning beyond the duration of a specific project into work, further education or training.

The article makes a case for the need to examine peer education practice to determine its potential effects on teaching and learning across a range of informal education settings. It provides a conceptual framework that enables both educationalists and learners to track their own developments in learning. It also provides a model through which the learner is encouraged to value his or her own learning journey and develop learning strategies, which can be sustained over a lifetime.

What is Peer Education?

A number of studies in schools highlight the importance of 'multi-functional' peer friendships in facilitating positive experiences and helping improve the quality of learning experiences (Demetriou, 2003). Relationships between peers can be based on age, locale, gender, experience, sexuality, educational achievement or behaviour (Shiner, 1999) and by ethnicity, cultural and sub-cultural membership (Parkin and McKeganey, 2000).

Within the field of youth work and informal learning, peer education is most often associated with issues such as health, drugs and alcohol, relationships, violence and bullying which suggest that it has become a standardised method of delivery within clearly defined subject areas (Shiner and Newburn, 1996; Russell, 2003; Coburn and McGinley, 2004). The typical response to delivering information on particular topics has focused on methods and learning outcomes. This detracts from its intrinsic value in enhancing the learning of the peer educator.

The usefulness of such projects are well documented (Shiner and Newburn, 1996; Turner and Sheperd, 1999; Hunter and Power, 2000) in terms of their capacity to deliver credible information to peers. However, within youth work, there appears to be limited explanation

of the term 'peer education' as its purpose is routinely identified as sharing or transmitting information (Fast forward, 2006) rather than overtly promoting this approach as enhancing learning through the teaching of others. This benefit for peer educators is consistent with the discourse in higher education where it is applied within an increasing range of subjects (Topping, 2005).

The term 'peer education' is in general use in higher education contexts and a range of idioms describe various peer-helping approaches. A clear distinction is made by Falchicov (2001) between *peer feedback* (involving the use of set criteria to engage peers in reflective criticism of other students' work), *peer learning* (students learning with and from each other) and *peer tutoring* (identifying the role of tutor and tutee as they are applied to a variety of deliberately constructed learning environments). In this context, emphasis is placed on the potential for improvement in the quality of the learning through collaboration with others rather than on the credibility or cost of the programme.

Of course, the idea of learners helping each other is not a new concept. For example, Piaget (1938) suggested that learners sought to explore the contradiction between their own knowledge of a topic and the knowledge others have of it. He also held that in striving to reconcile conflicting views, learners engage in peer interaction to test and modify their own ideas. Other theorists and writers have suggested that less able students could achieve much more through the help and support they received from their more able peers (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Valsiner, 1987). However, peer groups comprise people with different knowledge and skills and the benefits of collaboration are not confined to the 'less able'. They offer opportunities that preclude ability or status-led division to offer, 'a richer apprenticeship for future involvement' (Topping, 2005: 634). Therefore, any definition needs to accommodate a wider range of ideas, including:

> *Students learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways .... the emphasis is on the learning process, including the emotional support that learners offer each other, as much as the learning task itself.* (Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 2001:4)

While we recognise that there is an increasing volume of literature on peer learning in higher education (Topping, 2005; Boud and Lee, 2005; Topping and Ehly, 2001; Falchicov, 2001) within youth work fields,'there continues to be some disagreement about what constitutes peer education and great variation in the way which projects are designed and implemented.'(Walker and Avis, 1999: 573)

To assist clarity, the term 'peer education' is taken in this article as embracing a broad variety of approaches that range from friends helping each other in schools or youth projects through to peer tutoring or peer teaching in university during which 'advanced students take on an instructional role' (Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 2001: 4) but including same level peer tutoring (Falchicov, 2001).

Why Peer Education?

Historically, although evident in practice for thousands of years (Wagner, 1990) the concept

of peer education was largely ignored as teaching developed into an organised profession. This situation changed when it was rediscovered in the 1960s with an emphasis on the benefits of 'enriching education and achieving goals that cannot be achieved by other means' (Goodlad, 1998: 2).

Webb and Mastergeorge (2003) exemplified the benefits of students helping each other and identified the role of helper or teacher as fundamental to the creation of opportunities for acquisitive probing and information seeking that facilitates understanding:

> When a student gives an explanation in order to help someone else, this action also benefits her own understanding.....Students benefit from receiving explanations from peers who have more knowledge, a better understanding, or a different perspective. They benefit from giving explanations that help them to clarify, correct, elaborate, or solidify their own understanding. (Webb and Mastergeorge, 2003: 77)

In higher education, Newcomb and Wilson (1966, in Falchicov, 2001: 1) identified the peer group as 'the single most powerful influence in undergraduate education'. Goldschmid and Goldschmid (1976) demonstrated that peer teaching maximised opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning as well as enhancing co-operative and social skills. Moreover, there is a tendency for students who are at risk of failing to seek help from fellow students or their peers outside of the university system (McKavanagh, Connor and West, 1986). There is also a growing awareness of a 'reciprocal learning experience – learning from and with each other' (Boud, 1999: 4) and its place in work based learning (Boud and Middleton, 2003). Meanwhile, Greenwood, Carta and Kamps (1990) highlighted educational advantages, such as integrated learning, giving and receiving immediate feedback, lower learner anxiety and higher levels of self disclosure, as being critical in encouraging students to take ownership of the learning process. Bargh and Schul (1980) found that the involvement of peers helped learners to verbalise their thinking whilst Hartman (1990) held that learning by teaching led to enhanced performance. Hartup (1996) suggested that friends provide the 'cognitive and social scaffolding' to support each other to learn. Additionally, opportunities for questioning and discussion are increased through use of the Internet (Beardon, 1998) that brings autonomy to the individual learner as they, and not their teacher, control who and when they engage in dialogue.

Drawing on these and other approaches, Falchicov (2001) has identified 23 varieties of peer tutoring. This taxonomy facilitated the development of a conceptual framework incorporating key variables that influence peer tutoring:

- *The status of the participants*
- *The location of the activity*
- *The roles undertaken*
(Falchikov 2001: 8)

Although developed in relation to higher education, these variables have resonance within community based settings in a number of ways.

The status of participants varies in terms of age and experience between those who have

experience in problem solving or knowledge and understanding of a topic to others who have limited experience, knowledge and understanding. Status perception may also be related to other factors such as the named position of the individual within an organisation and will impact on the credibility with which messages are received. For example in health fields it has been argued that:

Young men seeking help and information about alcohol-related issues are likely to feel more comfortable with others of their own age who have experienced some of the difficulties that they themselves are trying to overcome. (Russel, 2003: 17)

Meanwhile, location and context are influential in determining the learning and teaching opportunities that are available to enhance the learning experience. For example, in regard to location and context the possibilities for groupwork or a field trip will have a direct influence on how participants engage in learning and how learning is planned.

This is useful in helping to achieve 'constructive alignment' (Biggs, 1999) which is considered to be influential in improving the quality of the learning experience by strengthening connections between planned learning activities and intended learning outcomes. Constructive alignment is about helping learners to think more deeply and is exemplified in peer educators thinking about content and process, as they prepare for teaching but also, in thinking about their own role within this process.

Although the concept of constructive alignment is relatively new, its dependence on student centred, flexible approaches to learning is consistent with existing theory and practice in youth work and informal learning fields. For example, its focus on reflective and transforming practice and the ways teachers think about teaching (Entwistle, 2003) is in line with Freire's concerns about the 'banking concept' of education and the promotion of 'praxis' (Freire, 1972) whereby the learner engages in critical dialogue that not only facilitates understanding but through the process of knowing, enables the learner to become actively involved in transforming the world. Constructive alignment is also congruent with experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) through which learners, engage in action, reflect on their experiences, learn through reflection and apply their learning to future action.

Alternatively, the variables of role and status could also be linked to the concept of androgogy (Knowles, 1984) that takes a specific view of experiential learning in relation to adults. Knowles (1984) suggests that whilst pedagogy relates to learning that children and young people engage in, adrogogy is built on the idea that adults learn and are motivated to learn in ways that are distinct from young people.

We contest the idea of androgogy as a distinct approach to adult learning and suggest that the motivation, capacities and needs of learners are not age dependant. For example, Falchicov (2001) notes motivational distinctions in relation to who (teacher or learner) has identified the learning needs and to the mutual planning, evaluation and assessment of learning. This is consistent with Milburn (1996) who highlighted the importance of young people in defining who their peers were. Therefore, we align with Freire's conceptualisation of pedagogy (Freire, 1972) as situational and transformative and with Brown (2000) who suggests that androgogy is, 'actually good pedagogy in disguise' (Falchicov, 2001: 111).

It is also argued that peer education is central to processes of transformation through increased awareness of experience and the use of this to create new knowledge (Freire, 1972; Boud and Millar 1996). As people become teachers of each other they can work together to solve mutually identified problems and this is pivotal to the capacity to engage in critical enquiry.

Since the late eighties the focus within Higher Education has shifted towards examining why and how peer education works and the benefits in terms of learning improvement for both learners as peer tutors and on the practice of becoming a tutor. As thinking has developed, four outcome categories have been identified:

- *Academic outcomes: performance in different academic settings*
- *Metacognitive outcomes: learning how to learn, transfer of learning*
- *Study skills outcomes*
- *Non-academic outcomes: motivation, attendance, retention and attrition*
(Falchicov, 2001: 70)

In examining these categories, Falchicov suggests that the benefits of peer collaborations have varied considerably and that current thinking is towards mutual and equal benefit facilitated through reversal of roles between tutor and tutee.

The focus on peer education as an overt approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching has not often been clear in youth work settings. The role of workers in supporting peer educators (Fast forward, 2004) and the experience of practitioners (Coburn and McGinley, 2004) has suggested that most often the term is used to describe joint working arrangements involving young people and youth workers delivering information, raising awareness or offering peer support on specific youth or health related issues (Bignall, Butt and Pagarani, 2002). Rather than enabling a reversal of roles, within youth work there tends to be a fixed hierarchy whereby the overall control of the process is with the youth worker and very rarely the peer educator or recipient learner. The worker role is one of overseeing and checking rather than of enabling the transfer of control and power from teacher/ educator to educator/learner. Yet a changing power dynamic is a key element in the process of critical pedagogy, and is consequently central to the concept of peer education as a transforming approach to teaching and learning.

The Peer Education Template

Although developed in relation to peer tutoring in higher education, Falchicov's classification framework of peer collaboration is useful in helping those working in community settings to examine practice. It has been used, alongside reflection on other existing peer education practice in the development of the peer education template which the authors argue is useful in enabling both educators and learners to track their own progress or to plan future learning.

Figure 1 illustrates the move from school based formal education involving peers, towards informal education involving peers.

Figure 1

	Interface Area	
Formal Education **involving peers**	⟶ ⟵	**Informal Education** **involving peers**
Examples of which include: • Paired reading • Prefects • Monitors	• Issue based discussion • Study Groups • Groupwork	Examples of which include: • Peer feedback • Joint facilitation of learning • Mentoring
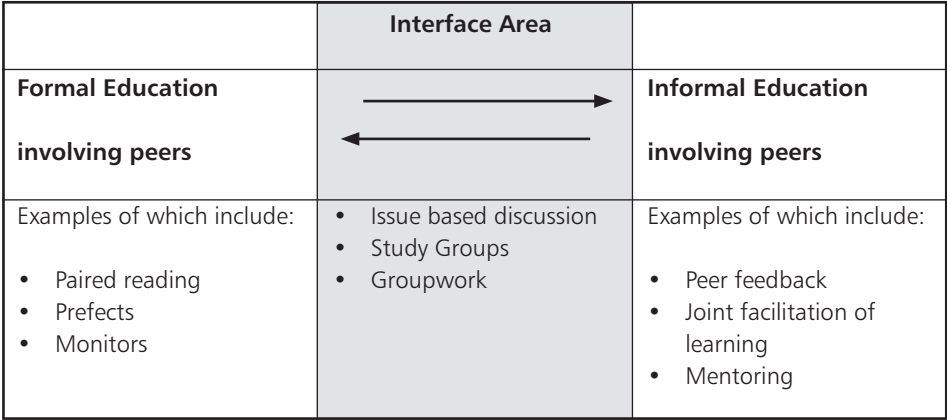
We propose that this figure represents the first stage in developing peer education. It could help to locate work within either formal or informal settings through consideration of the previously noted change factors of status, location and role (Falchicov, 2001) in relation to the educator/learner relationship.

The interface area signifies the conduit through which progression might be facilitated. In Figure 1 groupwork methods and peer discussion could be used to change the dynamic relationship between teacher and learner in areas such as mentoring, peer feedback and study groups. Examples of this include peer enhanced learning in areas of school curriculum such as Geography (Bulman, 2005) and peer education approaches that have helped pupils to gain confidence and to progress at a faster rate than conventional teaching (Revill 1997). These methods appear to represent the interface between formal teacher controlled learning and the move towards the creation of new teaching and learning roles that facilitate, 'the construction of high-quality learning environments' (Boud, 2001:170). Using this figure to plot movement from 'formal education involving peers' towards 'informal education involving peers', may help individuals to track progress on status, location and role.

It is suggested that negotiation of the 'interface' area enables participants to identify the steps they will take to navigate the borders between formal and informal education. This is consistent with the suggestion that:

> As the learning relationship develops, both helper and helped should become more consciously aware of what is happening in their learning interaction, and more able to monitor and regulate the effectiveness of their own learning strategies in different contexts. (Topping, 2005: 638)

Thus, the template may be helpful not only in mapping current practice but as a planning tool in the creation of a learning pathway for individual learners.

However, it is suggested that the collaboration outlined in Fig 1 does not in itself represent peer education, as the influence and power of the worker/ teacher remains central to the

process. Indeed, for peer education to be defined as such, the authors propose that the worker/teacher should retain minimal or, in some cases, no control over the learning process.

Figure 1 therefore does not represent a peer education approach although it exemplifies ways of helping to facilitate independent learning involving peers but which is not directly delivered or developed by them. Thus the authenticity of current practice that is described as peer education, in which the worker/ teacher retains a central role, is contested.

It should be highlighted that the authors are not suggesting that the worker/ teacher abdicates all responsibility for learning. We are, however proposing that they should not be directly involved in every aspect of the programme and their role becomes one of facilitation and enabling. This would help to create a learning environment where the teacher fosters autonomy within the learning process by selecting approaches that support and encourage deep approaches to learning (Entwistle, 2003) and learners learn through learning to teach (Pask, 1975; Topping, 2001).

The absence of the worker/teacher in peer education settings contributes to the creation by learners themselves of new learning experiences and this is proposed as the essence of what distinguishes peer education from other forms of collaborative informal learning (Figure 2). This collaboration supports a more learner centred approach and the evolving template could enable those involved in the process to map their position and to utilise the interface area to track progression or identify future areas for development.

Figure 2
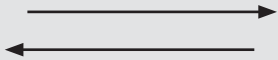
	Interface Area	
COLLABORATIVE INFORMAL EDUCATION		PEER EDUCATION
Delivered by individual peers and peer groupings in partnership with teacher/worker.	→ ←	Peer developed, led and controlled Programmes
Issue based discussion Problem solving Workshop delivery Mentoring	Peer review Peer assessment	Autonomous peer learning Peer tutoring, delivery and research Peer teaching

Figure 2 may be used by educators and learners, working collaboratively to locate their approaches and to identify options for movement in either direction. Thus, the template

could also be helpful in facilitating metacognition by enabling teachers and learners to think about planning for learning at both organisational and individual levels.

The role of workers/ teachers as 'professional partners' (Fastforward, 2004: 8) in facilitating this process should not be underestimated as:

> *Staff usually find they take a more active role early in the students' use of peer learning but the need for support and/or intervention diminishes as students become more confident of the process.* (Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 2001: 59)

Therefore, peer education is not an easy option that frees up time. On the contrary, as the roles and relationships between teacher and learner change a potentially more time consuming, questioning approach contributes to the quality of learning and critical thinking.

Linking the ideas from figures 1 and 2 facilitates the integration of different practice examples within the new peer education template (Fig 3). This template provides a tool through which progress could be tracked from formal and informal learning involving peers helping each other towards what we would describe as peer education involving reciprocal peer learning.

Rather than providing a structured definition, the template represents a model that could accommodate a range of teaching and learning methods broadly identified as taking a peer education approach. It is intended as a dynamic and flexible tool that has capacity to incorporate current and future peer education methods. In doing so, it provides a guide to locating a range of methods within one conceptual map that could enable individuals and groups to identify their starting point and to set targets or note changes that would facilitate progression in either direction. (See Fig 3 opposite page)

The template may be helpful in formalised settings, such as schools, in negotiating a route towards an informal peer education approach. It could also facilitate the creation of a pathway through which existing peer education projects or individuals involved in them, could plan more formalised teaching and learning to assist movement towards accreditation or Higher Education.

Locating both community and higher education methods within a single model may be mutually beneficial in examining different perspectives. This template illustrates how in adopting a peer education approach, power is transferred from teacher to learner within formal and informal settings. Furthermore, it provides a framework to help individuals track their movement towards the position of empowered peer educator by demonstrating the roles and responsibilities that typify elements of this progression.

The model is indicative of an empowering process that supports learners to take responsibility and control of their own learning (Piaget, 1932; McCormick and Presley, 1997) through increased knowledge and understanding of the learning world and their relationship with it. It also facilitates the alignment of learning outcomes with the learning and teaching process by engaging learners in thinking more deeply about learning (Entwistle, 2003).

Figure 3

	FORMAL EDUCATION	INTERFACE (a) ↕	COLLABORATIVE INFORMAL EDUCATION	INTERFACE (b) ↕	PEER EDUCATOR
	Involving individual peers/peer groups		**Delivery by peers in partnership teacher/worker**		**Autonomous peer educators supported by teacher/worker**
Practice Example	Paired reading Prefects Monitors Group Tasks	Peer support Study Groups Groupwork	Issue based discussion learning Problem solving Workshop delivery Mentoring Joint facilitation of learning	Peer Review Tutoring Mentoring Peer assessment	Learner defined problem solving Peer delivery, development and research Peer counselling Peer research
Roles and responsibility	*Teacher holds power* *Teachers define programme* *Teacher Control. Learner in supporting role* *Teacher driven ideas and perspectives*	*Teachers take lead on including learner*	*Teachers and young people negotiate power and control over the learning environment.* *Shared responsibility for teaching and learning*	*Peer educator leads on negotiation with teacher* *Teacher support and alignment of learning outcomes with teaching methods to meet learner/peer educator needs*	*Peer educator lead* *Peer educator hold balance of power* *Learner centred* *Minimal teacher presence* *Questioning* *Teacher in negotiated/clear support role* *Shared Responsibility*
	School/University curriculum		**Youth work curriculum Problem Based Learning**		**Peer education curriculum Constructive alignment**

The framework could also be used to track progress and identify future learning needs. For example, a teacher-led study group could use the template, interface area (a), to engage in discussion of broader issues determined by the students themselves. They could identify themselves moving from formal towards more collaborative informal education based on student interest and learning needs. If, over time, members of the same study group began assessing and evaluating their contributions, or to research other issues, the roles of teacher and learner could change. The power dynamic may also change as the learning became more centred on the individual. With the teacher taking on more of an enabling role, group progress could be tracked through the template as moving through interface area (b) towards peer education.

The model could also be used to facilitate reflective planning of future learning based on the assumption that 'learning is an act of becoming aware of experience, building upon it, extending it and in the process creating new experiences which become part of what we know.' (Boud and Millar,1996: 8) Therefore, it could become a useful tool through which to map peer education approaches by helping teachers and learners to identify their current position. It may also act as a catalyst for critical thinking to engage teachers and learners in significant exploration and planning of learning programmes by helping them to question and identify what they would need to do to move from one area on the continuum to another.

Thus, the tool may be used to encourage deep level learning as both teachers and learners locate their position within the template and, through dialogue, contribute to its capacity to facilitate change through learning and exploring how a peer education approach might be embedded in future practice. In this way it could help to facilitate authentic engagement in a learning process that is constructively aligned to its learning outcomes.

Through examination of peer education approaches this article draws on the empirical work of Falchicov (2001) to conclude that when learners and teachers revise their expectations of their respective roles in the learning process and examine new ways of engaging with each other, the quality of learning and teaching is enhanced. The authors have devised this template to complement current thinking in the fields of both youth work and higher education and propose that it may be useful to assist in extending the use of peer education approaches within an array of contexts.

The template facilitates this by outlining a continuum of peer education that embraces formal, informal and independent peer education settings. The provision of practice examples and exemplifying the roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners in each setting may enable individuals to identify their own roles and responsibilities within a selected setting. This means that they can track their own progress and pinpoint the steps they need to take to move within and through the continuum. Specifically, because of its capacity to embrace the full range of what could be described as peer education, the template provides a conceptual bridge between informal peer education, including youth work or youth health and contemporary approaches in higher education.

Although devised in relation to working with young people, movement within the continuum is applicable to other settings. For example, in addition to tracking movement

from left to right, it could be used from right to left by someone returning to learning through peer supported trade union or WEA learning models. These routes facilitate learning progression through a range of informal educational opportunities into more formal learning experiences. Thus, the template may also be useful to young people in later life by providing them with a framework to track their own progress and as such could help build their confidence and capacity to engage in lifelong learning.

Conclusion

This article asserts that a shift in emphasis in relation to peer education is desirable. This would mean that in addition to its value as a means of delivering credible health messages it would become more overtly viewed as a means of enhancing the teaching and learning process. It may help to build a conceptual bridge between formal and informal education through the learning practices of teachers, youth workers and young people.

To facilitate independent learning in youth and community settings or Higher Education institutions, the newly created peer education template could be adapted by workers or teachers to introduce the concept of peer learning and progression. It could be used by people already engaged in learning but it could also be helpful to those not involved in education or training as a means of demonstrating the underpinning value of a peer education approach as a starting point within a learning continuum.

Ultimately therefore, it should be used by young people themselves to track their own progress beyond their involvement in specific peer education projects and assist them to identify, plan and evaluate their own learning and teaching processes.

The authors will continue to develop and refine this continuum and would welcome comment or feedback from anyone who uses or adapts the template to help enrich or plan their own peer learning or the learning of others.

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Going Up Without Going Away? Working-class Women In Higher Education

Yvette Taylor

This article draws upon the accounts of seven self-identified working-class women who attended a traditional UK university. Widening participation is clearly on the social policy agenda with failure to access higher education heavily coded, yet rarely explicitly named, as a working-class problem. Policies often fail to address the inequalities within the higher education environment. Ongoing disparities operate even after access has been achieved and this article aims to chart some of these processes. It relates female working-class students' everyday class encounters, powerful and continued class identifications and resistances. Although interviewees may be seen as 'upwardly mobile' educational success stories, they still felt a notable sense of exclusion. Class and gendered inequalities were significant to them within and beyond the higher education environment, projected on to anticipated futures.

Keywords: Class, Gender, Higher Education, Mobility

Historically, working-class groups, minority ethnic groups and mature groups have all been marginalised from higher education participation, but government equality strategies and university admissions policies, fail to explicitly name class as a barrier to entry, preferring to speak instead of 'non-traditional' or 'non-standard entry' groups (Archer et al., 2003; Modood, 2004; Taylor, 2006). Notably, there is an intersectional – rather than discrete – relationship between 'non-traditional' cohorts, with British minority ethnic students and mature students being also predominantly working-class (Reay, 1996; Modood, 2004). The government emphasises the practical role of higher education as increasing economic opportunities and competitiveness (Archer and Hutchings, 2000) yet, rather contradictorily, students are left to acquire vast debt, and it is argued that despite the offer of bursaries and means-tested support, this particularly impacts upon those from working-class backgrounds (Archer et al., 2003). The abolition of the undergraduate student grant constituted a very real threat to the presence of non-traditional students in higher education – the introduction of tuition fees arguably cements and entrenches existing classed exclusions and thus seems to be in contradiction to educational inclusion and widening participation (Reay and Ball, 1997).

The focus in widening participation upon access ignores and diverts attention from the subsequent experiences of working-class students who have often, rather precariously, 'made it'; who uncomfortably exist within higher education institutions; and who are, it seems, still unsure of their employment futures. The high 'drop-out' rate, especially amongst 'new' post-1992 universities who pride themselves on their non-standard entry figures, is also worrying, given that this limited and temporary 'access' to university may actually blight

the future educational and employment prospects of the young people concerned (Quinn et al., 2005).

This article explores the exclusions and tensions that working-class women, as students, experience in higher education. Archer and Leathwood (2003) point to the need for greater investigation of the intersection between class and gender in understanding working-class women's inclusions and exclusions from higher education. There has been much popular and academic attention to the under-performance of male youth when compared to females in both school and university settings, and ensuing debate has focused upon the 'crisis' of masculinity which this implies (Walkerdine, 2003; McDowell, 2002; Archer and Leathwood, 2003). What such a focus fails to attend to are the pains and losses of negotiating working-class femininity within higher education, which is all too easily assumed to be simply a process of 'fitting-in'. Women in particular are positioned as having gained more opportunities in a service sector economy, of having 'gone up' and 'got away', leaving behind their male counterparts through their access to the opportunities offered by HE.

In calling for a truce in the 'battle of the sexes' the Equal Opportunities Commission highlights a more complex and concerning relationship between education and employment, noting that although women out-perform men in education, this is not translated into greater equality in employment. The 2005 Annual earnings survey showed that the full-time gender pay gap is 17.2%, while the part-time figure is 38.5% – one which has changed little since the Equal Pay Act come into force (EOC, 2005). The gender gap intersects with the socio-economic background of graduates and Purcell (2002) found that graduates of both sexes have progressively higher earnings the higher the occupational status of their parental background (while males earn more in each class). These official statistics question the expected mobility in accessing higher education, highlighting instead the significance of gender and class in employment outcomes, posing the question of whether working-class women can 'go up' and 'get away'.

Alongside such statistics, many accounts exist, mainly from 'elite', rather than 'new' universities, of the *subjective* experience of being working-class in an environment where middle-class norms, values and 'standards' prevail, operating to produce a sense amongst working-class 'intruders' that they simply do not 'fit' (Skeggs, 1995, 1997a, 1997b; Mahony and Zmroczek, 1997; Reay, 1997; Archer et al., 2003). The majority of working-class young women in Archer and Leathwood's (2003) research spoke of their perception of education as a route for 'bettering' themselves, even while their future identities and aspirations remained structured by classed and gendered occupational 'choices'. 'Bettering' themselves involved giving up, rejecting and 'improving' their working-class selves and, as such, respondents did not claim 'working-class' as a positive source of self-identification but rather as something that had to be put aside and transformed (see also Skeggs, 1997b). Interestingly, working-class male respondents in this research asserted that they could cope with the middle-class climate of higher education and emerge relatively untouched with their working-class identities intact, while nevertheless ostensibly having huge advantages in the labour market as compared to their female counterparts.

The research which informs this article sought to consider the experiences of female

working-class students and the importance of class and gender in structuring everyday perceptions, dis/identifications and anticipated future pathways. The notion of mobility, of having transited, transformed and 'arrived at' a 'safe' class location, whereby the working-class 'past' is given up for a new, improved, educated middle-class present and future (Archer et al., 2003), is problematised in the analysis of the interview material from seven female students who identified themselves as working class. The analysis contrasts with governmental policies, strategies and official equality messages, which imply that to get to university is the end point rather than the beginning, the sole focus of educational change being in motivating so-called disaffected youth. Clearly inequality persists beyond the university door and in opening that door ever so slightly wider the institutional climate still remains and largely goes unchanged.

Production without the means of production: Methodology

The research involved interviewing self-identified middle-class and working-class female students (n=14) at a traditional university, and this article will predominantly concentrate on the accounts of the seven working-class respondents. Interviewees were recruited via university email lists and through advertising on campus. Semi-structured interviews aimed to explore the students' personal experiences, including finances, part-time work and study, and identifications, covering aspects of belonging and feelings about both university and home space. A complementary survey, also completed by interviewees, canvassed the opinions of both working-class and middle-class students across three traditional UK universities (n=95). This was distributed using personal contacts, in lectures, and through accessing emailing lists. Rather than seeking to highlight objectivity or indeed representativity the data yielded by both the survey and the interview process, is used to point to the different ways in which middle-class and working-class students experience their own social class position. This ranges from newly negotiated un/certain contact with the 'other', through to more 'intellectualised' class accounts where class is discussed as a abstract concept far removed from their own personhood and individual responsibility.

The study was undertaken in 2001-2, motivated by my own journey through higher education. I self-defined throughout this period as working-class and the following interpretation is one which inevitably draws and relies upon my own dis/identifications. I have discussed this more fully elsewhere (Taylor, 2005), but it is important to note that I do agree with Skeggs (2002) regarding the importance of focussing upon participants' views and experiences, rather than personal dis/satisfactions. I wanted to know if others were making similar class identifications, noticing the increasing tendency in the literature to frame working-class people's 'dis-identification' and their movement away from the 'spoilt identity' that is 'working-class' (Skeggs, 1997b; Reay, 1997; Lawler, 2000). This tendency is differently echoed in social policy which describes 'non-traditional', 'disadvantaged' groups when discussing issues of motivation and educational failure, whilst implicitly coding this as a 'working-class' problem.

Despite the suppression of a positive discourse of class identity, I have found that many students do identify in class terms. However, the set of criteria which middle-class and

working-class people apply, whilst different in many ways, is similar in the sense that it is relational and co-produced. It is the social 'other' that informs identities, subjectivities, and understandings of selves and others as ab/normal (Archer et al., 2003). Importantly, middle-class students seemed to have more resources to protect themselves against external judgements while apparently feeling able to make forthright declarations about those 'others'. To my discomfort, I was told stories often during interviews with middle class students about 'them', the ones who somehow got in but didn't quite belong, the working-class outsiders who were dressing in comical ways and somehow spoiling the fun with strangely accented complaints of struggle. In these moments I too struggled to voice where my allegiances were, to 'come out', as it were, as 'one of them', while resisting the conflation between my own personal experience with interviewees' experiences (Reay, 1996).

One middle-class respondent, when asked how she would define 'working-class' noted that they could generally be recognised through their excessive appearance, 'sluttish' behaviours and general depravity, presumably apparent in their desire to only want to 'get by':

> Erm, somebody on, you know, income support in a council house or something ... for example, if you look at the number of kids they have or whatever ... perhaps they've got lower values, they want to set up families and they want to just get by.

Another stated:

> ... if they're scruffy or whatever, then of course there's even subtleties within that, so say if I looked at somebody and saw that they were all in sportswear, I would probably be inclined to think they're more working-class because that's a sort of working-class uniform ...

The description of a 'working-class uniform' not only illustrates the embodied aspects of class and classed femininity (Bourdieu, 1984; Skeggs, 1999; 2001) but it also neatly – or, in fact, rather untidily, serves to wrap up the working-class as one easily discernable track-suit wearing 'mob' (see Lawler, 2002). In this example working-class women are represented in a pathological, overtly sexual way: this middle-class respondent is explicitly dis-identifying and removing herself from this group as a student, which is seen as the polar opposite of working-class femininity. Needless to say, none of the working-class interviewees' commentaries were overly marked with a concern for sportswear and often instead had more pressing matters of concern (although see Archer et al., 2005). These descriptors seemed to be more about preserving the distinction between middle-class respectability and working-class 'otherness', ultimately casting light upon the need to maintain such a boundary (Skeggs, 2004).

A few students defined working-class status as 'not owning the means of production', demonstrating a binary between experiential versus intellectualised definitions of class. One middle-class female (survey respondent) was, however, very conscious of how her own broad concept of class potentially contrasts with the specific experiences faced by working-class students:

I see class in a Marxist sense ... However, the discrimination within the university system is much more wider than just Marxist in the discrimination that is manifest towards working-class students. In my experience of others this can be as overt as refusal due to clothes/accent through to non-flexible courses to fit in with work, for students who have to work during term time. (Survey Respondent)

The above quote speaks of wide ranging problems and I will now chart some of these named discriminations, overt refusals and institutional biases, as against the government rhetoric of inclusivity, beginning with the issue of financial constraints and burdens faced by women I interviewed. All were students at a traditional university with a predominantly middle-class intake[1], and were at different stages in their undergraduate/postgraduate courses, having also arrived at these via different routes. Jenny (19), Anna (19), Lynn (20) and Ali (23) were all undergraduate students, while Sarah (27) was a postgraduate MA student and Emma (25) and Jo (29) were postgraduate PhD students. In the following section I examine the 'life of a working-class student', as perhaps summed up by 'rent', 'food' and 'fees'. These accounts begin to bring together the entitlements, choices, even commercial savvy, needed to financially negotiate this new, unexpected place, where benefits and costs are constantly weighed up (Lynch and O'Neil, 1994; Archer et al., 2003). I then move on to consider the reproduction of and resistance to classifying practices produced within higher educational environments, unpacking dimensions of class and gender.

The variety of class as it endlessly unfolds and recasts itself in different contexts, with different and unequal results deserves ongoing attention, illustrating class in practice as opposed to class on paper. The intention is not to homogenise working-class – or indeed middle-class – participants as dis/advantaged; also many similarities, intersections and resonances could be researched with regard to minority ethnic groups (Modood, 2004) and mature students. I suggest that there are enduring inequalities within education which merit attention and which implicitly problematise the sole focus on accessing what is a rather difficult environment to *exist within*.

Rent, food, fees: the life of a working-class student

The above sub-heading mirrors the *Times Higher Education Supplement* headline 'Loan – rents = misery' (THES, 2000: iv) which refocuses attention on the financial hardship experienced by some students, as against reports on student partying and drinking (Hutchings, 2003). For some students, accessing university becomes yet another struggle, where social and leisure opportunities may not be fully realised. The marketisation of higher education persists and continues to be documented and debated (Reay and Ball, 1997; Archer and Hutchings, 2000; Ball, 2003). Perversely, provisions for less well-off groups are becoming more and more insufficient, seemingly based on the notion of addressing 'desire to participate', yet without affecting the financial means to actualise such 'desires' (Archer and Hutchings, 2000; Taylor, 2006). The loss of the maintenance grant directly affected all four undergraduate students (Ali, Jenny, Anna, Lynn), while Sarah, Jo and Emma had been 'lucky' enough, rather than 'entitled', to receive postgraduate funding (Skeggs, 1995).

Only one interviewee agreed with tuition fees stating, 'Well I have to think it's a good idea, I know that sounds strange but my gut reaction is that people from Eton shouldn't get it for nothing'. Emma's agreement is framed within the notion that it is middle-class students who are, quite rightly in this example, affected by tuition fees. In contrast tuition fees are rejected 'in principle' by all others, for 'making finance an issue, when it shouldn't be in education' (Ali). The potential to exclude working-class students is widely recognised, for although asserting that such changes may not deter the 'really determined ones', Emma still asserts that '... there is a sense that debt is something a lot more serious, despite what middle-class people think, working-class people don't like getting into debt ...'. The notion that working-class groups are somehow faulty consumers unwilling, as well as unable, to properly consume educational goods is also articulated by Emma, reflecting government documentation that education eventually 'pays off' and thus constitutes a worthy self-investment. Such 'deferred gratification' does not make financial sense to those struggling and managing with the financial present, as opposed to visualising or expecting a projected, financially sound, future.

All interviewees stated that funding changes had a direct impact in excluding acquaintances and often pointed to concrete examples of this lived out conflict between desires and finances. Sarah vividly portrays a not unrealistic scenario of dwindling working-class students, in marked contrast to government drives to increase participation to 50% of all 18-30 year olds by 2010 (DfES, 2001):

> *... the only way I can see it going, is that what you're looking at is say 1000 less working-class students go to university. Next year 1000 more ... I can see it becoming that eventually we go back to the days when only those who could afford it went on to higher education* (Sarah).

Such financial constraints have an understandable emotional impact, including a reported sense of guilt at their own exclusion, perhaps responding to increasing governmental discourses and policies of 'individual responsibility', which ignore and detach the structural inequalities and disincentives preventing young people from making straightforward transitions (Archer et al., 2003). While aware of the danger of presenting a homogenous notion of 'proper' youthful transitions, via school and university, it seems that certain groups are unable to navigate a pathway full of opportunities, to do things differently with a safety net of certainty: the transitions spoken of here seem fraught and fragile, rather unlike a typical gap year account (Heath and Cleaver, 2003). For example, speaking of her (excluded) friend, Jenny says, 'It has an emotional aspect, I know she feels guilty that she can't join in with the rest of us'.

Echoing Ball's (2003) claims, middle-class students were positioned as more economically 'competent' and indeed capable of manipulating the current funding arrangements, while the disadvantaged economic situation of working-class students was felt to be un-provided for. This need is felt to be greater than that of middle-class students in receipt of parental support, as Jenny summarises:

> *There's people who get parental contributions straight into their accounts and they pay their rent and it just seems to create divisions between people who can afford anything*

they want ... Things like rent don't come out of their loans, whereas it comes out of ours.

It is difficult to covey in this short statement Jenny's sense of disbelief in the idea that money magically appears in some accounts, but most definitely not in hers. Indeed, speaking of their felt economic disadvantage interviewees expressed a deep sense of the unfairness of things. For example, in comparing the experience of working-class students with middle-class ones, Jo speaks of 'unimaginable privilege', as loans are supplemented by parental income. Awareness of economic inequality and feelings of 'jealousy' does not mean that respondents were completely overwhelmed by either but these sentiments and tensions were significant in their everyday class encounters. They were not left outside the university gate.

All interviewees had stressful periods of managing studying and part-time employment. The need, rather than choice, to work in order to maintain body and soul did adversely impact on all of the women's ability to study, necessitating a reorganisation of priorities. Reflecting the impossibility of managing employment and academic deadlines Sarah becomes 'hooked on' the hard to ignore facts:

I worked and worked ... so I went and did the shift and the essay got put to one side ... Then I got myself into a structure that I knew I wouldn't do more than three shifts a week ... it was touch and go for a while 'cause I got hooked on the fact that I needed the money.

The tension in work/university priorities was one that was re-emphasised time and time again, demanding attention: '... it just got a bit difficult when I was still trying to get my head 'round how much of everything I could do' (Sarah). Just how much of everything are working-class students expected to do, especially when doing everything incurs such devastating physical and emotional costs, as Ali expresses, 'you end up not sleeping, not eating, not working, it's appalling'. Such accounts problematise the depiction of working-class groups as unmotivated and in need of educational inspiration. Instead they highlight the burden of doing it all, undertaking education and employment in order to exist, if only just.

It seems fair and reasonable to note that the university 'support' system is ineffective in dealing with such deprivations. Not one of the students had approached the university for support or advice in managing their financial situation, largely because of a lack of knowledge about such things as the Hardship Fund. The Dearing Report recommended that the student support system must be 'easy to understand, administratively efficient and cost-effective' (Dearing, 1997: para. 2.2), yet it seems that the Hardship Fund was, in this case, complex and confusing to the point of it being severely under-used (Hutchings, 2003). There was also an unwillingness to view themselves as economically disadvantaged, or at least to have the university authorities decide and confirm this, rather than declaring it themselves, as Sarah says '... just the word "hardship" makes it sound like you have to be probably worse off than me.' The support system is intended as a crisis mechanism alone and requires explicit pleas from working-class students, who are often already uneasy about their 'difference'. Jo was constrained by her own feelings that she was 'lucky' to be

at university and, consequently, didn't want to 'complain'; 'I do just try and get on with things, I do have loads of problems ... I'm lucky that I've been able to get here and other people haven't.'

In contrast, Sarah was forthright in stating that structural changes had to be implemented, yet 'support' and advice offered by the university did not match the economic realities which she experienced as a working-class student. In fact a distinct mismatch in agendas and priorities emerges:

> When I was struggling to manage the two the advice from the uni was simply that I shouldn't have been working, you know, I had to get my priorities right. I was like, 'As far as I'm concerned I am getting my priorities right and one of them is that I have to work ...'.

The university climate of consumption and corresponding market-based entitlement left many of these women by the wayside, excluded from 'buying into' this space, but nonetheless existing in the space in between contrasting 'priorities', necessities and desires (Archer et al., 2003). These experiences, struggles and sentiments were not only apparent in the economic sphere but also filtered through cultural and social realms (Lynch and O'Neil, 1994). Here the intersection of class and gender, as embodied characteristics to be read and understood produced uncertainties as well as profound resistances – a feeling that their accent, dress and behaviour may well mark them out but that, all in all, they were rather glad of such difference, even distinction, from middle-class 'pretension'. This differs from Archer et al.'s (2003) findings, whereby female students' efforts to 'better' themselves involved the erasure of working-classness.

The wrong kind of gown

In contrast to the sole focus within government and institutional drives upon increasing access, as smoothing out disadvantage and increasing opportunities, it appears that inequality continues *within* the university environment (Archer et al., 2003). Reay (1998) examines different (classed) access to information about higher education, signalling the taken-for-grantedness among those with the required economic and cultural resources (Skeggs, 1995), which contrasted with a feeling of lack, doubt and uncertainty which existed in working-class participants. Echoing such unfamiliarity Emma says of her parents:

> They don't understand the university system at all. When I phoned my mother and said I got a first, the only one who knew what it was, was my sister ... the other's didn't know what that meant or what an MA was. They are even more confused now that I'm doing a PhD.

Here, the university system and the knowledge circulated and understood – or not – is summed up by a few abbreviations, a combination of letters indicating more than just that. The disjuncture between family 'knowledges' and university ones, which the women interlinked in their accounts, were widespread and tangible. In expressing this state of play interviewees perhaps render themselves vulnerable to more criticism, that their families are

simply uneducated, in need of explanation, while the worthy lettering goes unproblematised (Archer et al., 2003).

Expectations, generated via schooling, family and social networks bestow upon the middle-class student a sense of ownership and knowledge of the education system (Skeggs, 1995); knowledges and confidences from which working-class students can be excluded. Ali effectively demonstrates this situation, distinguishing between a smooth middle-class movement in social space with an awkward working-class self, which jars and grates:

> That's their expectations, a natural progression ... whereas for working-class people there's not an automatic progression ... it's an actual physical thing, you have to think 'Do I have the money? Can I afford this?' Perhaps a middle-class person wouldn't have to consider at all, it's just 'You will go to university', they're not moving out of the sphere of what they expect.

In contrast, for a working-class person, at every point there is a decision, marked by conflict and competing pathways:

> Where do I go, which way do I turn? ... Economics do come into it and the idea of what I'm expected to do, all sorts of ideas like 'Why am I at university, why am I not going down to the chicken factory and getting a job?' ... So yeah, you have to be much more aware of where you're going within the system.

At every turning there is the fear that the wrong route has been taken, a questioning of place and space rather than an affirmation of it, taking the form of an 'actual physical', embodied process. Ali conveys this feeling of not 'fitting in', where the gap between 'home' and university only widens in such a setting; ' I don't think some of them appreciate what it's like to be a Northern working-class person in this environment.' The allocation and navigation of place, meaning and belonging is three-fold in that Ali places herself 'in place' while also responding to being placed and being 'out of place' (Taylor, 2004).

Skeggs (1997a) speaks of the institutional and interpersonal silencing of working-class students, explaining the ways they are seen to possess the 'wrong capital' and are made aware of their 'wrong capitals', wrong presence, accent, knowledges and resources, through the judgements of others (Lawler, 1999). In fact, there are multiple and interconnected playing fields where class and gender inequalities continue to exist, affecting the rules of the game, the terrain, the team players and those on the side-lines. This fear of being judged was a highly relevant structuring presence in the women's everyday encounters. Indeed, some respondents were unwilling to reveal their classed selves, fearful of how this information may be used against them:

> I suppose I felt that to argue my point properly I would have had to ...... put myself in a position where they realised I was one of those poor people and having found out ... I didn't want to kinda open myself up to their interpretation of me (Sarah).

In this example, it is not just open declaration of class position, but rather it is saying *anything*, which could open Sarah's words, position and belonging up to broader scrutiny.

In fact the danger of speaking from personal experience as working-class *women*, whose best hope of career advancement lay in entering the caring profession of social work, and the articulated necessity of proving oneself as 'caring', 'respectable' and properly 'professional', was a dominant and repeated theme (Skeggs, 1997b). It is again apparent in Sarah's assertion, 'I wasn't sure they wanted to hear that information. Because you never know when you might be in another position and that information might come back to haunt you.' In this example, silence is preferred, a silence which may nonetheless still be haunting, simultaneously covering and uncovering the fear of potential judgement, the fear of never quite being safe.

Facing attack, working-class students may use silence as a form of protection (Luke, 1994). As Ali says, 'I think unless you're confident in your opinions, you don't ... so unless you really want to put your foot down and make yourself even more of an outsider it's easier not to'. Nevertheless, she still views this as 'her problem', saying 'I think there's maybe some inverted working-class snobbery about it.' Perhaps, however, this is due to the fact that her point is never validated:

> *I've changed no-one's ideas about class. I think they'd all rather now think that the working-class are all sort of obsessed, 'Oh, here goes the working-class person again, how dull. Ignore her for five minutes and she'll shut up.'*

Ali's words require a listener and a response but it seems she is to receive neither. Injustice goes unrecognised: instead the working-class student may be thought of as 'unco-operative' and 'unresponsive', mirroring the government's rhetoric on educationally 'disaffected' youth; a troublesome other to be ignored and silenced.

Cultural stereotyping can also contribute to a distorted, negative reading of working-class students' social, personal and academic abilities, working to produce another stifling limitation. An important part of class oppression is the negation of the intelligence of working-class people, where language and accent arouses the suspicions and judgements of others (Archer et al., 2003). Mocking of working-class speech causes humiliation and anger, apparently 'out of step' because it is working-class and women's language and not properly 'feminine' or 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997a; Belanoff in Jackson, 1998). Taking into account what Archer and Leathwood (2003) describe as working-class men's ability to emerge unscathed by higher education, there may be less pressure faced by men to make such personal adjustments and less worth ascribed or denied to them through this signifier; indeed it may confirm positive notions of working-class masculinity and belonging, denied to women (Walkerdine, 2003; McDowell, 2002).

Notably all seven working-class interviewees were made aware of their 'different' accents as well as their 'inappropriate' use of language, as Jo signifies, 'I think it's about my voice a lot, but that's what pisses me, alright it's a very kind of bourgeois language but I should be able to learn and work with that.' Jo seems to be drawing upon the idea of a correct and more valid language, as authorised in education and made obvious by the discriminations of others, thus in internalising these judgements Jo blames herself for being unable to adjust her tones and words in order to make more pleasing sounds. It is not surprising that Jo expresses a (partial) desire to re-adjust; all of the women related such concerns, stating that

they spent a large part of each day with people, students and tutors, correcting them:

> *They pick up on me saying things because I have a Lincolnshire accent ... when I say particular words they'll pick up on them and it feels like they're criticising me ... I think 'why are they attacking me?' 'Cause it does feel like a personal attack* (Jenny).

The rearrangement and ridicule of vowels becomes a personal attack, rather than a benign correction, highlighting the uneasy journeys within and through the educational system. Several women demonstrated an embodied conflict in terms of the physical movement between working-class and middle-class environments; a shift in accent often accompanied this, which they felt had to be managed:

> *I do find that every time I come back from the holidays I talk very slowly because eh, I'll have picked up all the colloquialisms again ... people just look at me blankly* (Lynn).

There seems to be a (repeated) period of re-adjustment, of expressing and then silencing particular accents and idioms. But in exploring the production of femininities in higher education Archer et al., (2003) also note the specific ways in which working-class women, rather than men, are positioned as 'wrong' – wrong voice, wrong clothes, wrong self, generally in need of improvement. The reported need for women to change and 'improve' via 'bettering themselves' is used to challenge the 'feminization' of education, and the linked idea of the future as female, as against the 'crisis of masculinity' which is generally conceptualised as a male, working-class 'loss' (Walkerdine, 2003; McDowell, 2001).

Working-class women's confidence is potentially undermined within higher education as their voices are not legitimised in the same way that middle-class ones often are. Ali interprets middle-class students as being much more confident in their own opinion while working-class students sometimes have to force out every breath:

> *... it's much more of an effort to say 'yeah, but ...', to get over the fact that they have stupid accents and to feel yourself equal. Perhaps you haven't been to the right school, perhaps you haven't got the right clothes, perhaps you haven't got the right accent, but your opinions are valid.*

It is no accident that Ali is alert to having the 'wrong clothes' but her refusals still powerfully emerge – she is working-class and she is equal. Nevertheless, the constraints felt are very real and the ways of dealing with this, including silence, may in fact become individualised and seen as problematic elements of working-class culture rather than the discriminatory middle-class institution: 'I think it's a working-class thing, a cultural thing, not "making a show of yourself".' (Ali). As such, Ali is constantly caught between being 'shown up', not 'showing off' and the respective silences and responses which these evoke. This occurred both inside and outside the classroom setting where social codes often seemed no more relaxed in terms of rules, regulations and ways of being 'proper' spending students – the range of leisure and social opportunities were accordingly restricted, mitigating against an equalised climate.

Interviewees spoke of social activities and university societies as being classed clubs, kind

of 'members only' events where the wearing of the university scarf would not, by itself, guarantee admission, or comfort. Speaking of her discomfort in certain middle-class social locations, bars and social spaces, Sarah states that she feels 'desperately, desperately under-dressed', a sentiment that is gendered as it is classed (Skeggs, 1997b). Sarah's discomfort is maximised by the drinking of wine and not/knowing how to eat 'properly', something which she has to learn:

> *Em, that's the sort of thing you pick up on because it becomes part of your world em, you have to actually learn,*

But she continues,

> *... can I be arsed to add all that, you know, knowledge to my life em, yeah I think some of it you'd have to be a bit, what do you call it? Em, you'd have to be a bit anal (laughs).*

Although highly critical of such practices, these cannot be completely dismissed because of the worth accorded to them as (feminine) middle-class practices. Sarah's scepticism alone seems to be insufficient in challenging these well-established 'knowledges'.

Overall, many of the women I interviewed often feared revealing their classed selves within social situations, rather than being confident displayers, making visible their cultural resources (Bourdieu, 1984). Both Sarah and Emma particularly feared this occurring within future employment – their class would seem to stay with them in more ways than one; ' I'm looking at a couple of job applications and they ask for your school, it's awful after all these years ... I mean mine's not dreadful or anything ...' (Emma). Similarly, Sarah did not necessarily want people to know where she came from, preferring instead to demonstrate her 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997b; Archer et al., 2003): 'I'm going into a profession now and I'm thinking about my clothes and I'm thinking about how I'm going to present myself and it matters to me that people are going to look at me and see a professional person.' It is her position as a working-class woman which necessitates proof of respectability, and an investment in self-presentation, while middle-class women may find 'professional' and 'respectable' status automatically bestowed upon them (Skeggs, 1997b). Throughout the women's testimonies class seemed to be ever present, even projected onto future (gendered) pathways, informing how the women viewed social space, applicable to social, employment and educational settings. Their 'difference' in such spaces was highlighted by the reactions of others and had in some ways come to be expected – and had to be dealt with, as Sarah poignantly explains:

> *Social work was classically a field that middle-class people went into ... and the manager in one of the offices is seemingly fascinated by how a bus driver's daughter from Liverpool ends up as a social worker in York! (laughs). I laugh it off and pretend it doesn't matter but it's not always fine.*

It is notable that the employment and familial routes foreseen for interviewees, by themselves, their families, their peers and their institution, were both classed and gendered, echoing many other studies which report on working-class women's educational and employment transitions (Taylor, 2005; Skeggs, 1997b). Many women were expected to

pursue low-paid, feminised work – even when degrees had been achieved. For example, Emma's mother actively hoped that she would move from attending keep fit classes, to becoming the teacher. At best, very much situated at the 'top' of possibilities, interviewees' spoke of accessing caring professions and becoming teachers and social workers, and the emphasis on 'caring' resonates with Skeggs' (1997b) account of working-class women's aspirations. Class and gendered inequalities were significant within and beyond the higher education environment, projected on to anticipated futures. Against an individualisation of such aspirations and expectations, the continued gendering of employment opportunities suggests that the women's expectations were formed through a sense of realism (Purcell, 2002).

In the above quote Sarah notably positions herself as a 'bus driver's daughter', and her working-class claims are at least partially made through this reality; her desired movement into a middle-class, female, profession re-invokes rather than disappears this classed reality, enforcing a monitoring of self, dress and speech at the very same time as these 'pretensions' are laughed at and dismissed. Sarah, like many interviewees expressed a pragmatic desire to be economically better off (Archer and Leathwood, 2003) – but not necessarily to 'better', or rather completely erase her working-class self.

Interviewees all made clear the ways in which class still mattered to them and, it would seem, to their peers as they resisted, conspired and reproduced class daily in their interactions, struggles for resources, sense of entitlement (Skeggs, 1995), as well as changing and fixed class definitions. In contrast to Archer et al.'s (2003) interviewees, the women in this study, on the whole, did not want to 'give up' their working-classness, to disclaim their 'past' and straightforwardly move on or up. It is highly significant that although 'working-class' is clearly a pathologized and denigrated status within the predominantly middle-class educational setting, strong identifications as working-class continued to be made. However, it seems women's identifications were mostly challenged, and re-asserted, when recognised as working-class via social activities, clothes and speech, where the traces of class were marked out on their bodies and where they were positioned as inevitably 'wrong' (Archer et al., 2005). I suggest that such processes combine elements of both class and gender; like the women of Skeggs' (1997b) research there was a concern to display and embody 'respectability', via accent and appearance, while these same dispositions, signs and efforts to become 'respectable' were ridiculed and dismissed. This is particularly pertinent given the broader educational context, abounding with references to the 'crises' of masculinity, the underachievement of boys and young men, which positions the education system as 'feminized' and the future as 'female' (Archer and Leathwood, 2003). If this really were the case the painful inequalities, affecting 'past', present and future transitions, would not be so vividly apparent.

Conclusion

I hope to have given a glimpse into the reported experiences of being working-class in university, where the expected and normalised student status is also a middle-class one, making easier the financial, social, cultural and emotional 'journeys' though higher education (Skeggs, 1995, 1997a; Reay and Ball, 1997, Archer et al., 2003). The picture

that emerges from these testimonies is one of continued class divisions and the continued capability of class and gendered distinctions to be recast in an array of interpersonal and structural inequalities, affecting self-perceptions and a sense of not/belonging. Whilst based on a small interview sample, there was within the seven working-class women's accounts, similar and varied senses of difference and distance from their middle-class peers, of not 'fitting in'. Their everyday class encounters, produced sharp criticism, scepticism and laughter as well as disappointment and disillusionment. On the whole the women in this study did not want to 'give up' their working-classness, to disclaim their 'past' and straightforwardly move on or up. What is concerning though is that the legitimacy and credibility of the middle-class institution cannot be shaken as easily, nor can the endurance of class and gender inequalities within and beyond higher education. Both these points serve to problematise the widening participation agenda that focuses upon access as the sole point and indicator of inclusion, while shoring up a lack of working-class 'motivation', without alleviating the structural barriers against working-class participation within and throughout university. Attention needs to be directed at classed processes within higher education and the ways these intersect with other social divisions in generating exclusions. Further, without tackling the enduring gender gap in income it seems that working-class women have little choice to 'get up' and 'go away', even as this notion of mobility is complicated by subjective investments and enduring working-class identifications.

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Note

1   I acknowledge that my findings may have been rather different if I had chosen to conduct my research in one of the many newer universities that have more working-class intakes (Archer et al., 2003). This does not, however, diminish the relevance of these working-class women's experiences of higher education within this particular university setting. These finding are specific and particular but they may also be transferable.

Working with the Contradictions – New Labour's Social Exclusion Policies

Annette Fitzsimons

This article investigates the extent to which youth and community workers exercise autonomy and creativity in relation to government policies. The focus is primarily on social exclusion and uses evidence from a small research project to discuss how workers have tried to respond to local and central government initiatives. The argument here is that this work is not made easier by the often contradictory nature of the policies and strategies. Equally workers have to face up to their own contradictions, not least in trying to empower the excluded whilst they themselves are at times seen as part of a marginalised service.

Keywords: Social Exclusion, New Labour, Youth Work, Structure, Agency

There appears to be mounting evidence that New Labour strategies to combat social exclusion, such as New Deal programmes and the Connexions Service, are having a minimal impact on socially excluded young people. It has been suggested that this is due to the Government's lack of attention to the structural constraints experienced by young people, particularly with regard to the youth labour market (MacDonald and Marsh, 2001: 388). Debates about policies centre on the interpretation of the relationship between the individual and society, structure and agency (e.g. MacDonald and Marsh, 2001; Byrne, 1999; Levitas, 1998) and it is argued that the political focus on agency over structure has resulted in contradictory and conflicting policies and strategies for 'non-participating' youth. This article asks how the limitations of youth policies are experienced by youth and community workers and how they impact on youth work practice. The questions were prompted by Pierson's positive spin on the paradoxes produced by the social exclusion strategy. He argues that:

> *practitioners have more latitude than they might imagine in responding to policy direction from central government. The fact that social exclusion means different things to different people allows for greater flexibility in practice* (Pierson, 2002: 7).

The possibility of such flexibility for practitioners could be a useful counter argument to negative views of the conflicts inherent in the concept of social exclusion and New Labour policies. It posits the idea that the flawed nature of the policies could be used to construct a localised agenda which can provide a strategy for workers to work within the spaces which surface from the contradictions of the policies.

In order to address whether youth workers were able to take advantage of contradictions,

I interviewed a small though wide ranging group of workers involved both with young people and with community regeneration. From this it emerged that committed and skilled workers do appear to use the contradictions of the social exclusion paradigm to open up a space to challenge policies which, whilst stressing social inclusion and opportunities for economically marginalised groups, also tend to pathologise them. This article therefore argues that the focus on agency in the policies of New Labour opens up a paradoxical space which allows youth and community workers to have a degree of flexibility which enables them to talk about issues and take up activities which can empower young people. These spaces can enrich professional practice and create imaginative alliances and partnerships, albeit within the limitations posed by the often short term nature of the funding streams. The key point is that a positive spin can be put on the contradictory flaws and conflicting interpretations of social exclusion which can enhance the practice of youth work.

An example of these contradictory processes is provided by the Social Exclusion Unit's report *Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Training or Employment* (1999) (see also Colley and Hodkinson, 2001; Mizen, 2003). This report has had a significant influence on the policy and practice of youth work as the arguments and analysis helped to shape the introduction of Connexions (DfEE, 2000) and led to the development of the role of personal advisors. The lack of discussion on the complexities of the labour market in New Labour's strategy for inclusion is clear from the introduction provided by Tony Blair:

> *The best defence against social exclusion is having a job, and the best way to get a job is to have a good education, with the right training and experience* (SEU, 1999: 6).

Mizen's (2003) review of New Labour's youth policies also indicates that after some initial successes in relation to the targets set by the government on participation in education for 16-18 year olds, these too have had a minimal impact. He states that:

> *improvements registered between the low point of 1997 (74.9 percent of the cohort) and 2001 (75.5 percent) have been slight and unevenly distributed. Staying on rates for 16 year olds have declined throughout this period and, for 17 year olds, remain static, with the proportion of 16-18 year olds remaining in education and training in 2001 still lower than the comparable figure for John Major's last full year in power (76.3 percent). In relation to undergraduate students . . . numbers actually fell by nearly 50,000 between 1996-7 and 2000-1,* (Mizen, 2003: 465).

Mizen's article also points to the lack of change in the figures for truancy and little if any variation in permanent school exclusions, whilst the 'proportion of young people not in employment, education and training between 2002 and 2001 [has] returned to the level of the final three years of Conservative rule' (Mizen, 2003: 466). For writers such as MacDonald and Marsh 2001; Byrne 1999; Levitas 1998, the policies based on the concept of social exclusion are at best flawed and contradictory.

In *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour* (1998), Ruth Levitas traces these contradictions to three competing discourses[1] in the policies of New Labour. She argues that the inconsistencies generated by these discourses ultimately ensure their failure to

deliver social cohesion and social inclusion. She labels these discourses RED (redistributionist discourse), MUD (moral underclass discourse) and SID (social integrationist discourse). The first refers to redistribution of wealth and resources which has as a central focus the construction of an anti-poverty strategy as a mechanism for social inclusion. In other words, this perspective takes a structuralist approach to social exclusion. MUD refers to Murray's (1990) thesis of the underclass, and this discourse contains a conservative and moralising approach to the socially excluded. Here, the explanation for exclusion is constructed as individuals living on benefits, supplementing incomes with criminal activities, thus producing a culture of state dependency and deviancy. In this discourse, the social excluded are self excluding through their behaviour. Such behaviour is gendered and emphasises the role of 'lone mothers' as undermining the role of the family in reproducing 'socially accepted' norms and values including the work ethic and adherence to societal laws. As Murray states:

> *It turns out that the clichés about role models are true. Children grow up making sense of the world around them in terms of their own experience. Little boys don't naturally grow up to be responsible fathers and husbands. They don't naturally grow up knowing how to get up every morning at the same time and go to work . . . That's why single-parenthood is a problem for communities, and that's why illegitimacy is the most worrisome aspect of single-parenthood* (Murray, 1990: 31).

The third discourse, SID, refers to the strategy adopted to combat social exclusion. The emphasis here is on policies that widen access to employment, education or training in order to gain paid work in the labour market. Employment is seen as the mechanism for achieving social integration and social and community cohesion. There is some overlap in these discourses and this can be illustrated with reference to the work of Frank Field (2003). Field was a former director of the Child Poverty Action Group and the Low Pay Unit up to his election to parliament in 1979. As Minster for Welfare in the Department of Social Security from 1997 to 1998, he moved from an analysis based on the politics of class to one based on the politics of behaviour. In the move he re-invigorated nineteenth century debates on poverty by reproducing notions of the respectable, deserving poor in contrast to those who are undeserving.

Like Murray, Field (2003) outlines the impact of vandalism and anti-social behaviour on communities and the lack of police powers to combat youth delinquency. He argues that the causes lie in the rise of dysfunctional families who do not teach young people a 'set of common decencies' and moral and social responsibilities for their actions. His strategy focuses on changing the behaviour of young people by giving the police powers to act as surrogate parents if parents are unable to control their children. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sanctions this strategy by giving the police powers to enforce curfews and anti-social behaviour orders. Field also attempts to link the receipt of benefits to the notion of civic responsibility by contract compliance. The welfare contract would outline the rights and responsibilities of the recipient to the society and to their community.

Some of the contradictions of these approaches are highlighted by Williams (1998) when she argues, for example, that welfare to work programmes for women fail to acknowledge their child care responsibilities and their unpaid labour in the home. She states that the

focus upon the labour market as a solution to integration obscures the very processes within the labour market which render some groups of people at much greater risk of poverty (1998: 17).

Similarly Levitas (1998) argues that the focus on paid work, or in the case of young people the emphasis on education, employment and training, as the chief mechanism for social inclusion in New Labour's policies, places the responsibility and remedy onto the individual and shifts attention away from the inequalities of wealth in society and the lack of stable employment prospects. In addition there appears to be a lack of awareness of gender inequalities, homophobia, institutionalised racism, and discrimination towards people with disabilities, all of which produce distortions in the labour market.

Policies in Practice

I interviewed[2] four very experienced professionals, two men and two women, who work either with young people or community groups and who also operate in their organisations at a strategic policy level. The group included a co-ordinator of a voluntary agency working with 16-25 year olds; a worker with a Teenage Pregnancy project; a Policy Adviser and a Director of an Area Team, both within Hull City Council. They were selected for interview because of the range and length of experience they bring to 'working within' government policies.

The interviews were directed using open-ended themes as listed below.
● Some people have argued that the concept of social exclusion obscures poverty and the inequalities of wealth – what do you think?
● How useful is the concept of social exclusion to your practice?
● Do you think in terms of social deprivation as target groups?
● Do you use social exclusion as a convenient label for funding and for responding to government initiatives?

What became apparent through the interviews was that each of the people interviewed did have a distinct 'take' on social exclusion.

Perspectives

The first interview was conducted with an officer involved with strategic policy at Hull City Council, who also had a wide remit as policy adviser on regeneration. This worker had a keen interest in the following key areas: 'young people, community development, worklessness, low income and access to services' (interview material). Initially the council focused on developing an anti-poverty strategy. This strategy encouraged the adoption of a number of policies, such as enforcement of the national minimum wage, tenant insurance packages, and initiatives around credit unions in order to overcome 'redlining', expanding educational provision and supporting Sure Start initiatives on child care provision with a view to sustaining women's employment. The arrival of asylum seekers in the city, and the ensuing tensions and conflicts accompanying their arrival in overwhelmingly white

neighbourhoods, has resulted in many initiatives under the rubric of social inclusion and community cohesion. As the interviewee stated, 'there are now 52 languages spoken in Hull despite the tiny percentage of ethnic minorities in the city – some 3.6%, and there is an urgent need to respond positively as a council to these groups' (interview material). The developing focus on disability as part of the social exclusion agenda was set in motion by the widely publicised activities of a leading campaigner in the area. In July 2001, the latter challenged the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott for parking his car in a disabled parking bay outside a local restaurant. This incident made local and national news and drew attention to the local Choices and Rights Disability Coalition. The campaigner concerned was appointed to the first UK Disabled People's Parliament.

The interviewee discussed how the social exclusion agenda has impacted on the organisation of the local council. For example, the neighbourhood renewal remit is separate from the social exclusion unit and this has led to some difficulties. There are also twenty six service departments all of which need to take on the social inclusion agenda, and thus one of the urgent tasks facing the council is to ensure that the issues are a priority for all service heads and service delivery. Thus the strategy has shifted from the initial anti poverty brief and has led to a focus on the need for cultural change amongst these office holders. To facilitate this process the council appointed a Diversity Officer in order to direct these changes. This was presented by the interviewee as a move to 'encourage and even coerce the institutions to view individuals as empowered consumers.' The concept of social inclusion was interpreted as a need for the council to enhance their capacity to meet the needs of communities and groups in Hull, for example, 'lesbian and gay groups, different ethnic minorities, tenants and the unemployed' (interview material).

During the discussion it became apparent that the notion of social capital as a basis for community cohesion was driving the inclusion agenda. The interviewee discussed how the unit has expanded the social exclusion agenda to incorporate the ideas of Putnam (2000) and his notion of social capital. Some commentators (see Smith below) criticise the narrowness of the New Labour's social exclusion strategy because of its neglect of these ideas, stating:

> *While there is recognition within the activities of the Social Exclusion Unit of the significance of neighbourhood and community, this has not been expressed in a sustained and coherent way in government policy as a whole. The folly of this can be seen in the mounting evidence concerning the significance of 'social capital' – and its impact upon community safety, health and educational achievement* (www.infed.org. uk/personaladvisors/connexions).

At a local level however the latitude exists for these ideas to flourish and underpin the work of the Corporate Equalities Unit. This can be further evidenced by the fact that the council discussed the commissioning of a social capital survey of Hull.

The interview with the co-ordinator of a young people's voluntary agency referred to the 'disconnectedness of the council's strategies'. He suggested that it was not simply cultural changes which had to be made at this level, but also the bureaucratic method of working. In his experience 'organisations that wish to empower their "client group" have to empower

their own workforce.' Although he was relatively pessimistic about the drive towards change, nevertheless the co-ordinator did feel that 'the partnerships the agency are involved with, which are serviced by the council, are all genuine attempts to address issues on social exclusion and open to new ideas.' Whilst maintaining a critical stance this worker thought that in the interests of the young people his organisation worked with, 'the partnership work with the City Council and others had to be explored to the full.' He went on to say, quoting Walt Whitman, 'Contradictions? I contain multitudes of them,' and he ended with a saying from Berthol Brecht, 'In the contradiction lies the hope' (interview material).

The Director of an Area Team committee stated in interview that they used the term 'social exclusion' in a formal sense, as a 'term for the work rather than the issue.' Here the social exclusion agenda was useful for opening the space for the workers 'to incorporate working with people who don't fit into some of the services' (interview material). It allowed services in this area to expand their level of involvement with groups of 'long term unemployed who wanted to be employed.' It enabled them to work with poor neighbourhoods, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, in partnership with other agencies and on a wider agenda.

Thus the concept of social exclusion enabled a shift from the notion of servicing an individual client to a broader canvas of neighbourhood and community renewal and cohesion. The workers were empowered to engage with structural issues of discriminatory practices, cultural exclusion and institutional racism as these impacted on service delivery. These activities appear to challenge the critique presented above about the lack of attention paid to structures and would appear to further support Pierson's claim that a degree of latitude is available to practitioners using the concept. Of equal significance was the comment 'there are no examples where you are not talking about people in poverty' (interview material). Rather than minimise the issues of poverty, or direct workers away from dealing with poverty, the more generalised idea of social exclusion frees them to deal with issues of relative poverty. The traditional welfare state worked with a definition of absolute poverty as a guide for benefits and there was little flexibility for workers to be able to challenge the cultural and social dimensions. The concept of social exclusion has, it appears, facilitated a different approach to poverty for this local area team.

The worker from the Teenage Pregnancy project added another dimension to the debate. Hull has the second highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the country; approximately 74 per thousand under 18 year olds get pregnant, which is double the national figure. This is accompanied by a low termination rate which this interviewee linked 'directly to social exclusion.' The prominence given to this issue in government policies has created, in her view, an 'oppressive stereotype for young mothers.' The references in these policies are framed as 'creating a problem for society and through their actions have been self excluding'. In her experience being 'perceived as a negative statistic impacts on young women's lives in terms of getting jobs and homes'. Criticism was also made of some of the preventative strategies that were used in attempting to reduce underage pregnancies, for example, the use of peer education. 'Using teenage mothers to expose young people to the harsh realities of being a mother reinforces this negative stereotype and impacts on their self esteem' (interview material). Much of the interviewee's work around support for teenage mothers was to help them to feel valued members of society. Thus the work was not 'simply

about opportunities' but rather about shifting low self esteem and empowerment. Special classes up to GCSE standard for groups of teenage mothers were delivered at the agency and this was very successful in enabling their re-engagement with education. But when the young mothers moved from this supportive environment to traditional educational settings they had problems with attendance. A one sided strategy of encouraging these young women into education, employment or training was unrealistic in the short term given their circumstances.

For this interviewee the emphasis on individual agency was hopelessly inadequate as it failed to take on the economic and social realities facing this group. Benefits, earnings and educational grants can be too low to pay for adequate child care. Rather than put the burden of provision back to the lone mother, this worker wants to see high quality, supportive local and state services and incomes for women who cannot work or have problems accessing training and education and the notion of a concept of 'consistent poverty' to replace those of 'absolute' or 'relative'.

Reflections on the interviews

The research sample is too small to allow for any conclusions and indeed the search for definitive answers is not the methodological approach adopted in this project. What is indicated by these interviews is the degree of autonomy exercised by practitioners in the implementation of policies and how practices are shaped by individual negotiation in relation to, in this instance, the discourses of social exclusion. Thus, researching the discourses from a qualitative standpoint may be a useful addition to the collection of the evidence of the phenomenon. The complexity of the topic and the incredible amount of quantitative evidence that is continually produced would also suggest a need for qualitative research on these dimensions in order to strengthen knowledge and understanding of the processes.

Conclusion

A number of initiatives have occurred both locally and nationally since this research was undertaken which would appear to reinforce the argument presented in this paper. Nationally the publication of *Youth Matters* (2005) continues to follow the strategy adopted in *Bridging the Gap* (1999) which individualises the problems faced by young people and discusses these problems in terms of rights and responsibilities. The structural inequalities and constraints faced by layers of young people is glossed over and the construction of an umbrella policy incorporating children and youth services under the policy document *Every Child Matters* (2003) narrows the scope of the statutory youth services, all of which makes for a depressing read. There is however a section from these policies which could be classed as encouraging and this is the references to youth participation in local decision making. Interestingly the reference to participation though clearly stated in *Every Child Matters* (2003: 78-79) changes in *Youth Matters* (2005). *Every Child Matters* (2003) opens up a space which stresses the participation of children and young people in the decision making processes whilst *Youth Matters* conceptualises young people as consumers without any

reference to empowerment, and perceives participation in decision making filtered through their parents (see point 88 and 249, *Youth Matters* 2005: 22 and 66). Workers can either view the possibilities cynically or respond creatively to *Every Child Matters* in order to use this as a platform from which to develop models of citizenship which can empower young people to make their own responses to local and governmental policies.

An example of working in the spaces occurred early last year, when youth workers with little administrative support, organised a conference at the University of Hull to launch a Hull Coalition of Youth Workers (whose aim was 'to create an exciting, empowering, safe and tolerant city for children and young people'). More recently, on the basis of *Every Child Matters* and working in partnership with the University of Hull and the local Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Coalition held a conference on participation which attracted well over a hundred people who were mainly children's workers and youth workers. The theme was to construct genuine participatory processes and to reject token and meaningless gestures of decision making and accountability. Nearly half of those attending have now joined the Hull Coalition. The Coalition is currently working with the City Council on producing anti-racist materials.

The structural constraints facing young people obviously need to be understood and challenged, and the social exclusion agenda can open up a space to talk about a wide range of issues and initiative activities which can contest assumptions and stereotypes. One such example is local activity between young lesbians and gays in collaboration with the police on homophobia. These activities help to shift the debate from fighting to have homophobia recognised as an issue to one which centres on the best way to fight it. A similar process has happened with the anti-racist struggle in the city. The new Corporate Equalities Unit, Hull City Council, is an active partner in the fight against racism. I have no doubt that examples of these types of activities are duplicated across the country. They illustrate the inventiveness of workers in the context of a Labour government which is reluctant to pursue policies which could address the structural constraints faced by young people.

The lack of clarity about the meaning of the concept of social exclusion is usually viewed as a negative. However if it is accepted that New Labour's approach is contradictory, this may actually open up a positive space for practitioners who are charged with implementing government strategies. Understanding and using these spaces can counter the despair experienced by workers faced with a government which has demonised young people. The lack of a constructive progressive political alternative means that it is only in the spaces presented by the contradictions, ambiguities and omissions of New Labour's policies for young people and youth workers that empowering youth work can presently flourish.

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Notes

1 Foucault employs the term *discourse* to refer to ideas/knowledge which shape practices, activities and social relations. Ruth Levitas' definition is as follows: 'A discourse constitutes ways of acting in the world, as well as a description of it. It both opens up and closes down possibilities for action for ourselves' (1998: 3)

2 The interviews were conducted in 2003.

Essays in the History of Community & Youth Work

**Edited by Ruth Gilchrist,
Tony Jeffs & Jean Spence**
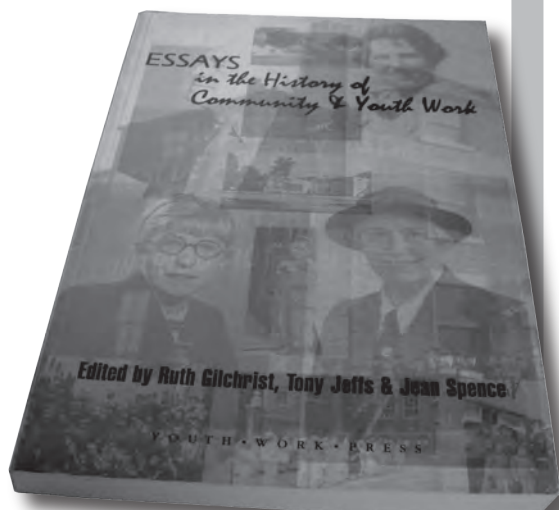
Any profession that fails to learn from its
past is doomed to repeat its mistakes.
Community and youth work has made
a huge contribution to the wellbeing of communities but, with a few
honourable exceptions, it has failed to produce its own histories. By neglecting to
record its successes and it failures, it has left itself vulnerable to those who would
foist on it warmed-over policies that have been tried and found wanting in the past.

This book is part of the process of putting that right. Developed from papers given
at the History of Youth and Community Work conference at Ushaw College in
Durham, it includes 15 chapters written by leading practitioners and researchers.
Each one reflects upon a particular organisation or aspect of work from the past
two centuries – from the earliest moves to make provision for young Londoners
to the operation of HM Inspectorate in the 1980s. Together they not only pay
homage to the pioneers in this field, they help to create a better understanding of
contemporary practice and provide the means to resist pressure to go down the
wrong road.

More than sentimental nostalgia, these histories offer a vantage point from which
contemporary practice can be interrogated. They are an important resource for the
student and researcher, but also, crucially, for the practitioner and indeed anybody
who cares not just about the past but also the future of community and youth
work.

The Cultural Aspects of Social Exclusion and the Stereotyping of Adolescent Males

Paul Clements

This paper focuses on excluded representations of adolescent males in the UK and situates this within policy and broader cultural discourse. The complex factors that help determine the exclusion of this constituency are highlighted as well as the impact of New Labour initiatives. Its idealisation of social inclusion problematises cultural difference and plurality exacerbating the tensions between excluded youth and official expectations. Culture offers teenagers distinction and difference realised through the construction of resistant identities and lifestyles. Whilst critical of policy the author accepts that there are real problems associated with male adolescents and their 'rite of passage' into adulthood. Therefore a hypothetical remedy is suggested to help formalise this transitional process within an educational framework.

Keywords: Dangerous Youth, Representation, Rite of Passage, Social Exclusion, Stereotyping

Social exclusion has been comprehensively described as, 'the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society' (Walker, 1997: 8). This definition recognises a correspondence between the cultural frameworks of value alongside structural considerations. But social exclusion is an unstable, process-orientated and multidimensional term that focuses on relational issues of inadequate participation and lack of social integration which makes it difficult to formulate empirically.

Whilst social inclusion and exclusion appear complementary, the link between them is problematic as they are far from mirror images. The former is an idealised scenario the latter a practical reality. Yet inclusion is presented by New Labour as achievable. It is an ideal embedded in and predicated to some degree on homogenisation and an assumption of shared values, although adolescent males in particular are seen as problematic with regard to the ordered, cohesive ideal of inclusion[1]. Within the constituency of young men, identities may be resistant and cultural meanings obscured, misrepresented and manipulated by government and the media. Here the problems of addressing the realities of social exclusion are confused with an ideal of inclusion that fails to accommodate the individual and collective need to identify with cultural processes that express dissimilarity and mark difference or dissent.

The article is primarily theoretical and policy orientated but utilises selective quantitative analysis. Firstly it delineates representations of a mythical 1950s inclusive UK society and charts the changes from this position to the excluded and exclusive representations that relate to the breakdown of consensus today. This discourse highlights socio-economic

factors and related representations and identifications that correspond to our increasingly fragmented and individualised society.

Secondly, the meaning of adolescent exclusion is set against this backdrop, mapped initially through 'underclass' theories that have generated a stereotyping of young males. There are a range of excluding mechanisms that have helped to define this representation of 'dangerous youth' which include: direct government measures of exclusion; particular medical discourses; a 'toxic cycle' of absentee fathers; the effects of child abuse and bullying; moral panic spread by the media; and the political management of language.

Thirdly, it exposes the ambiguity of New Labour policies and community-led initiatives. Moreover, its advocacy of cultural programmes to help address adolescent exclusion highlights the contradictions within its inclusive strategy. This approach has failed to respect excluded youth groups or address the deeper cultural problems of meaning and value, although arguably this is not the role of government intervention.

Fourthly, the transition of adolescent males into adulthood is evaluated in terms of a rite of passage which is developed to encompass dislocated lifestyles represented by the 'betwixt-and-between' nature of teenage identities. It is in the cultural sphere, particularly the field of leisure consumption that the tensions between inclusion and exclusion are expressed. Cultural space is an ideological battleground determined by performance where individual freedom is pitted against and transgresses established norms.

Lastly, a rite of passage is proposed to help ritualise the transition. This is framed within an educational context for 13-14 year olds as part of a wider programme to reinforce cultural and communal understandings. Its purpose is to try to offset the individual focus and competitive nature of the education and employment systems.

The Breakdown of Consensus

In the UK, social exclusion has been associated with the breakdown of consensus following a mythical golden age of post-war inclusivity in the 1950s (Young, 1999: 2-4). There is a specific discourse surrounding the rise of individualism in the 1960s which is perceived to correspond to an upsurge in crime and increase in anti-social behaviour. Such social fracturing has been described through three areas of exclusion: firstly, avoidance behaviour (for example fear of walking the streets at night); secondly, exclusion by incarceration and thirdly, exclusion from public space which has been increasingly privatised (1999: 17-9). This latter 'exclusive dystopia' associated with gated estates and high-tech security, emphasises exclusion which is more visible today than it was fifty years ago (although this overlooks perspectives of exclusion from minority groups[2]).

The language of social exclusion may confuse different social, cultural and economic inequalities thereby pursuing a false morality. This results in blaming excluded individuals for structural problems inherent to the socio-economic system and assumes that they want or ought to be included (Levitas, 1996). As the moral language of exclusion has become increasingly dominant in social policy, new structures and cultures of work (with

corresponding changes in the educational system towards entrepreneurial acumen) have exacerbated the reality of exclusion. These loosen the real ties of social cohesion and diminish the collective honour attached to being an employee. Within this dominant neo-liberal economic framework the entrepreneur has replaced the more paternalistic and welfare minded employer (Sennett, 1999: 27). Innovative brands of capitalism have helped undermine the sense of usefulness and purpose achieved through paid work as well as important mutual ties and responsibilities which have traditionally helped maintain a unified society[3].

The political agenda manifest in the language and representation of exclusion is steeped in the ideology of possessive individualism where the attitudes and values of the excluded are identified as the source of their problems. It has been argued that this process of blaming the poor and excluded for their own condition is a contemporary version of Protestantism's excluded and morally deficient non-elect (Byrne, 1999: 21). Accounts of exclusion in policy documents and the media may embed a morality which judges others as unworthy though possibly redeemable sinners. The focus on individual culpability denies a wider collective framework and awareness. Moreover, treating those identified as 'excluded' as an undifferentiated entity that requires inclusion assumes an ethical social policy but obscures cultural differences and the tensions between social groups in order to portray harmony. This short-circuits a possible dialogue through which the majority culture might adapt itself to embrace minority cultures and vice-versa. Within the discourse of exclusion, related issues of identification are foregrounded which vacillate between representations of 'difference' that contain both positive and negative connotations of the minority excluded groups, as distinct from stereotypical representations which are purely negative (Hall, 1997: 257-9).

Identification is a mutable and hybrid social process through which people associate with the wider social group alongside identities of difference within minority cultures. This process reveals the complexity of social relations and distinguishes individual or minority definitions from mainstream ones (Gilroy, 1997: 314-7). Identity positions are enmeshed in dialogue with difference and social solidarity which is multi-layered and formulated through conflict and exclusion. The relationship between similarity and difference is tense. But the different identities that people adopt through an often unconscious recognition of self within particular social positions, moves the understanding of inclusion and exclusion into a complex psychological realm and into consideration of the deeper drives to conform or rebel. Ultimately, constructed collective formations represented by peers, community, organisation and nation, offer belongingness and stability beyond the isolation of individualised identity positions. However the strength and unity of collective identity processes have waned as the individual has become increasingly dominant in economic and social organisations, asserting agency against the restrictive ties of community (Bauman, 2001). Arguably this increases people's apprehension about their security which has been undermined by choice (Giddens, 1991). Individual decision-making has therefore become a stressful component of life which has diluted traditional systems of inclusion, disorientating the certainty of identity and belief. We long for a more collective and inclusive identity, stimulated by our desire for security (Bauman, 2004: 29), in contrast to structural and ideological variables which help shape representations of exclusion.

Excluded Adolescent Males

The marginalisation and exclusion of young people is considered by sociologists as well as government (Macdonald, 1997; SEU, 2004) as a central feature of the breakdown of consensus particularly in urban spaces. But it is difficult to dissociate empirical evidence of exclusion from representations shaped by the government, media and theoretical debate (for example surrounding a youth underclass -Macnicol, 1987; Westergaard, 1992). The controversial underclass thesis refers to harmful anti-social practices and welfare dependency which determine 'dangerous youth'. It is argued that before 1970 the majority of young people could make successful and secure transitions from school to work, which allowed social independence and economic security in adulthood (MacDonald, 1997: 20). Today middle-class adolescents can better realise this through trading on their social and cultural capital, whereas working class youth have limited options. Conversely it can be argued that there is far more diversity in terms of an informal economy of jobs (Mann, 1992), although this situation may verge on the illegal and entrap those young adults as 'dangerous' and 'underclass,' a condition epitomised by dependency on the cash economy[4].

The negative attitude and behaviour of youth in deprived communities has been explained through mechanisms associated with peer pressure, adult role-models and the infrastructure of the neighbourhood (Bauder, 2002: 86). The effects and consequences are complex as there are a variety of ways in which these interrelated processes operate. Furthermore, there is an ideological discourse determining 'normal' behaviour which fails to accommodate cultural difference, for instance, in terms of child-rearing, educational performance and labour market success. New Labour initiatives such as Sure Start and citizenship as forms of integration sit uneasily in this context because they promote dominant cultural norms which pit social inclusion against cultural difference.

The discourse of exclusion is supported by empirical evidence which aids the construction of stereotypical representations of 'dangerous youth'. There are six specific areas of concern. Firstly, young males are stereotyped by direct and highly visible measures which include permanent and temporary school exclusions, as well as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ABSOs) in the community. In 2001/2 there were four times more boys excluded permanently from school than girls, of which 81% were in secondary education (DfES, 2003). There has also been criticism that the ASBO has been ineffective and accompanied by a corresponding increase in anti-social behaviour (Thomas, 2005)[5]. A related problem has seen a disproportionate growth in the number and reconviction rates of criminals in England and Wales[6] as 72% of all young offenders discharged in 1997 were reconvicted within two years. In terms of gender, 94% of young adult offenders (18-20 years inclusive) and 86% of juveniles (15-17 years inclusive) in 2001 were male (SEU, 2002: 154,172). Furthermore 75% of young men in prison have previously been excluded, suspended or truanted from school (Farrant, 2005).

Secondly, young people are (mis)represented within a medical discourse of mental and physical disability[7] that includes general health and body image issues related to food, alcohol and drugs. For example, overweight working-class adolescents are excoriated for their size and blamed for the unhealthy nature of their lifestyles. Their diet of, 'white bread, jam, salt 'n sugar-rich pies, pizzas, burgers' incurs contempt in contrast to one of

'vegetables, fruit, wholemeal bread' (Dakers, 2006). This conforms to what Bourdieu (1984: 179-80) called the 'taste of necessity' for people who lack the bourgeois propensity to calculate and sacrifice pleasure for health concerns as they undervalue their future needs. Whereas in Bourdieu's 1960s France this related to the quantities of heavy and fatty foods in working-class diets, today this is exacerbated by the processed nature of foodstuffs and by additives. The corollary, as the Head of the National Obesity Forum explained, is that, 'one third of obese children in adolescence are carrying one risk factor for heart disease and diabetes and another third are already carrying two risk factors and we know that the majority of obese adolescents go on to become obese adults' (Campbell, 2004). Such medical conditioning has its own health-driven rationale, but because obese adolescents often have behavioural problems and are frequently bullied, this adds to the justification for altering such people through weight management programmes. This discourse is fuelled by lifestyle choices revealed by research undertaken into young people's liberal behaviour and carefree attitude towards alcohol and drugs (see Miller and Dowds, 2002; Boreham and McManus, 2003; HSCIC, 2006). The highlighting of problematic adolescents injects morality into a medical discourse of abnormality which feeds negative representations. However, these findings need to be contextualised as such problems pervade society more widely.

Thirdly, there is said to be a 'toxic cycle' (Dakers, 2006) for certain males nurtured by single mothers who lack self-esteem. It is suggested that the absence of a male father figure encourages disrespect for and devaluation of women as well as lack of respect for parenting and wider social norms. Utilising the 2001 census figures, 22% of dependent children were cared for by a lone mother (Compared with 2% by a lone father (ESRC, 2004). This constituency is said to lack male role models, which social phenomenon emphasises the importance of male peer groups as compensation.

Fourthly, there are issues of child abuse and the later effects on teenage development. Government figures show that 25,900 children were on the child protection register in March 2005 (DfES, 2006) including marginally more males than females (although abuse of females may be less visible). According to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children this is merely the extreme scenario as 7% of children experience serious physical abuse from their carers (Cawson et al, 2000) whilst 16% experience serious maltreatment (Cawson, 2002). There are also issues of bullying from peers, which although nothing new, has taken up novel formats through text messaging and the Internet. For example, a MSN/YouGov survey (2006) found that one in ten children had been bullied online and 24% knew a victim[8]. The behavioural effects of abuse can vary from introverted withdrawal to boorishness which affects inclusion and encourages excluded representations.

Fifthly and directly related to these variables is the moral panic spread by the media which takes many forms. An example was the hysterical representation of the satanic abuse of children. When high-profile cases in Nottingham, Rochdale and the Orkneys were investigated in the 1990s all claims were found to be wildly exaggerated, as none of the 84 cases reviewed by a Department of Health Commission were considered satanic (Brindle, 2000). Moreover, the portrayal of 'feral youths' corresponds to a representation of adolescent males as wild animals or as 'teenage gangsters' who are scarier than their adult namesakes, placing more value upon violence and money (MacIntyre, 2005)[9].

Violent criminals are perceived to be younger and more brutal, caught up in a desensitized lifecycle that glamorises street life and encourages a disregard for their impact upon others (Robinson, 2005). The association of youth with criminality is symbolised by the specific uniform and subculture of the 'hoodie' with baseball cap, baggy jeans or tracksuit bottoms and mandatory trainers (Wainwright, 2005). Such badges of identity are vulnerable to misrepresentation, propagating the 'dangerous youth' discourse. The labelling of adolescents encourages their identification with these representations, making it more difficult to continue normal routines of everyday life, thus provoking young people into further 'abnormal' actions (Becker, 1966: 179). The key point is that this process of embodying negative identity positions offered by parents, representatives of social institutions, or the media can involve disavowal. This reinforces exclusion through identification with a negative representation that may be preferable to the 'positive' one offered. It also highlights peer pressure to conform to these stereotypes.

Finally, there is a problem with language which is aimed at transforming excluded groups. Representational practices of re-labelling (for example, 'teenage gangster' as 'young assistant chef'), may reflect a change of categorisation, not necessarily of inclusion. Male adolescents may be drawn into a simulated inclusive reality that tries to conceal this. Here, the terms 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' are examples of a political fantasy language, which, 'rather than giving expression to a world that already exists....creates a world of its own, a virtual world, related more to how people might want to view things than to how they really are' (Ryan, 2001)[10]. Crucially this simulacrum and management of language is part of an ideological discourse where attempts to manipulate normality through remedies based on an ideal inclusion may only compound the problems of misrepresentation.

New Labour Policy Intervention and Cultural Remedies

Although government can only influence attitudes and values, it is important to recognise how New Labour has attempted to address social exclusion. It has concentrated on four policy areas: increasing employment and training, better health, and reducing criminality (PAT, 2000: 37), but this is a partial narrative. For adolescents there is much ambiguity and contradiction between an agenda of inclusion and the actual use of ASBOs, school exclusions and increased incarceration of young adults. Furthermore, the government's healthy lifestyle campaign as set out in its *Public Health* white paper (DoH, 2004) is confused by its vacillation towards smoking in public places, and its extension of licensing laws (DCMS, 2003). Moreover, the encouragement of appropriate parenting skills in young single mothers has to be considered against government pressure to work (in terms of losing benefit). This may also leave children more exposed and exacerbate their exclusion (Holman, 2001). Finally, the problem of child abuse is another complex scenario. Whether legislation concerning the creation of sex offender registers (HO, 1997) helps reduce offending or just increases the visibility of offender and offence is a moot point.

The government's response to youth exclusion has combined a range of economic, political, cultural and social processes (see Burden and Hamm, 2000: 185-7). But although it maintains that it is difficult to separate the causes from the consequences it stresses that the likelihood of being unemployed is greatest for those with multiple disadvantages (SEU,

2004: 4). This is a paradox, as the work ethic which is perceived by government to be a key factor for addressing exclusion, is a contributory variable due to the transformation of capitalism into less socially cohesive formats[11]. Furthermore, there is a confusing economic narrative as the income gap between rich and poor has increased[12]. These factors problematise New Labour's underlying principles of Christian communitarianism, volunteerism and the stakeholder society (Levitas, 1998: 121-7). This was acknowledged by former Regeneration Minister Yvette Cooper who admitted that the government 'cannot simply promote a communitarian notion of inclusion. We have to tackle long-term inherited inequalities too' (cited in Cooper, 2004). If exclusion is a by-product of the unfair distribution of wealth which is embedded in the economic system, it is difficult to rectify this through policy directed solely at the poverty and conditions of the excluded. It requires reducing both the income gap and wealth inequality more generally as well as generating greater interaction between different social groups[13].

Notwithstanding, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) has focused on the problems of young people (see SEU, 2003) and has cited a range of reasons for social exclusion[14] which help undermine family support, loosen community cohesion, encourage racism and exacerbate inequality of wealth (PAT 12, 2000). In response, government has targeted 13-19 year olds through a range of educational, stakeholder and employment schemes. This has included the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) launched in 2000 which has directly funded community-based solutions. But there are tensions between promoting community-led initiatives and the need for empirical evidence of improvement (Turner and Martin, 2004). Government performance targets have to be satisfied which can undermine locally led initiatives affecting both delivery and impact.

The government's *Youth Matters* green paper (DfES, 2005), also aimed to encourage, enable and empower young people in their communities; increase parental involvement and responsibility; and improve information and advice services. But its discourse of community has been critiqued as a systemic concept that is overly idealised and fails to fully consider diversity or the possibility that the community itself contains the sources of conflict and exclusion (Oliver, 2005). The top-down determination of community participation and norms of behaviour paradoxically counters the development of this ideal bottom-up communitarian society. The treatment of youth throughout the green paper is also presented in a standardised manner, perceived as a 'problem to be managed' (Merton, 2005: 33), reinforcing negative representation.

Criticism can also be levelled at policy initiatives to utilise cultural factors to combat adolescent exclusion. The DCMS has claimed that art and sport help address exclusion amongst both young people and those from ethnic minorities (PAT 10, 1999: 5), although one of the anomalies has been to advocate this position whilst seeking evidential proof. It maintained the need for longitudinal evaluative evidence to confirm the success of sporting programmes which was hitherto short-term and anecdotal (PAT 10 Sport, 1999: 26). Moreover, arts project evaluations were similarly hamstrung and lacked robust documentation of effect (PAT 10 Arts, 1999: 6-10).

The government-directed need to quantify evidence of cultural effect has not been convincing. There are questions both about the methodology advocated and the

instrumental agenda. For example, the evaluation of the social impact of cultural programmes undertaken for the DCMS (Long et al, 2002) whilst bemoaning the lack of good practice and longitudinal evaluation, questioned the rationale for evaluation. For the 14 projects monitored were not set up as a conduit for New Labour's instrumental concerns but to realise more locally determined factors. Long and Bramham (2006: 147) although highlighting the greater recognition of cultural projects to promote social inclusion in terms of social exchange and empowerment, admitted that their 'search for evidence of the link between cultural projects and social inclusion, whether in the literature or in the case studies, was largely unfulfilled'. They argued that community based workers were hard pressed to collect valid and reliable data to satisfy government demands for hard evidence.[15]

Moreover, instrumental performance indicators geared towards inclusion fail to recognise the transgressive effect of culture on youth and the extent to which it is a vehicle for expressing difference or even resistance. The Secretary of State for Culture (Jowell, 2004), alluded to this problem and the need for culture to be a means for individual and collective expression, although she failed to express how an instrumental inclusive policy achieves this. Moreover, this agenda of addressing social exclusion through cultural impacts has arguably diverted attention away from key structural concerns especially economic redistribution (Belfiore, 2006; 33).

The Inclusion through Participation (2001) research project funded by the European Commission concurred with the view that most inclusion policies aim to increase people's employability in order to decrease dependency on welfare benefits, but questioned whether such a policy of focusing on employment was desirable. It promoted inclusion in terms of wider social participation and engagement through bottom-up community based initiatives that are steeped in attempts by those concerned to 'make something of their lives'. This self-help philosophy also recognises that inclusion needs to overcome the negative identification with specific social groups and accommodate cultural difference.

The catalysts for inclusion were described by Chanan (2000: 208-9), who concluded from his own fieldwork in seven European urban communities that these tended to be white-collar workers or middle-class professionals over forty who had a long-term association with the locality. Practical inclusion relies on a network of neighbourhood, personal and family bonds. But for excluded adolescent males in particular middle-aged authority figures and family networks are possibly perceived as the root of the problem – there to be resisted and challenged.

Rites of Passage and Sub-cultural Space

Adolescent male exclusion can encourage a peer group solidarity which has been described through concepts of subculture and lifestyling. These have traditionally related to music, dress, fashion, demeanour and language (Hebdige, 1979) and a correspondence with group identity that explains the meanings and forms of consciousness produced (Willis, 1978: 198).[16] Subcultures 'are a means by which youth assert their distinctive character and affirm that they are not an anonymous member of an undifferentiated mass' (Thornton, 1995: 10). Research into peer group solidarity amongst adolescents was undertaken into those

living in disadvantaged communities in Glasgow (Seaman et al, 2006). It highlighted the extent to which these are support mechanisms that help young people avoid trouble and combat aggression from abusive adults and organised gangs. Such a scenario contrasts with negative media stereotyping.

Notwithstanding, the positioning of youth groups into subcultures corresponds to a rite of passage within an anthropological discourse which consists of three classic phases that function to transform teenagers into adults: separation, transition and incorporation. This theoretical construction has been used to explain how traditional small-scale tribal societies ceremonially dealt with adolescent life crises (Van Gennep, 1960). Its application to large-scale urban society, for example in the USA (see Kett, 1977), highlights a far more ambivalent, complex and oppositional transition from adolescent culture to mainstream society.

The 'separation' stage in traditional society takes the form of isolating certain age-groups in order that they learn adult ways and cultural mores. For adolescents in modern urban society such a phase corresponds to hanging out and participating in a range of (anti-)social activities with their peers. Such separation helps bond the individuals and encourages group identity.

The 'transition' period in traditional society is a meditative phase which can involve an elder offering important cultural knowledge, from the everyday to deeper mysteries and spirituality. Eventually, the wiser and self-realised adolescents are 'incorporated' back into mainstream society but with an enhanced status. For adolescent groups in modern urban society this transition is boundary breaking, beyond adult control and material (although for some teenagers lifestyling may be expressed through an emotive spiritual attachment and congregation[17]). It often includes experimenting with sex, alcohol, drugs and body image. This rebellion can revolve around 'abnormal' forms of leisure which offend the moral order and push experience to the limit and beyond (see Rojek, 2000: 180-191). Such a situation allows marginalised adolescent groups to develop a resistance identity that opposes legitimate processes (Castells, 1997: 8) and expresses their need to transgress conventional codes and seek experience beyond the laws and limits imposed by convention. Social exclusion, far from being a negative status can be thereby conceived more positively as a badge, a preferred social space as it is considered exciting, radical and risqué.

This mutable secondary 'transitional' phase has been recognised as 'betwixt-and-between' which symbolises a 'not-boy-not-man' intermediary being (Turner, 1967: 95). It is structurally indefinable but in modern urban society can be re-interpreted as the transition between work and play. Adolescents show obedience to their elders in traditional society which moulds them through narratives and cosmologies that instil fear through 'monster- or fantasy-making' (1967: 106), whereas in modern urban society they are more likely to disrespect their elders and embody this monstrousness. Most teenagers are incorporated back into mainstream society although for some this leads to a more unconventional lifestyle on the edges of legality and acceptability, characterised by the underclass thesis.

The rite of passage in traditional society, a conduit for releasing the surplus energy of adolescents, is fixed and cyclical as there is no notion of leisure as personal choice. In

modern urban society the change from ritual to performative culture (see Rojek, 2000: 1-50), makes this release process problematic. Leisure is dominated by performance which is enacted through a range of procedures that relate to individual consumptive practices, competition and status positioning. It is this freedom of expression so deeply embedded in modern societies that undermines the solidarity required for incorporation.

Re-visiting the Rite of Passage within an Educational Discourse

A return to the mythical 'inclusiveness' of 1950s society is unrealistic as it fails to accommodate the realities of diversity, individuality and choice. Meanwhile the increasing influence of performative culture diminishes the primacy of the community and society as it emphasises the individual, work and the needs of modern organisations (which in school corresponds to excessive examination and grading of students). Nevertheless, the problems of adolescent male exclusion could be aided by an educational system that emphasises a broader socio-cultural curriculum.

To accommodate this inclusive focus a hypothetical programme is suggested which could be adopted across the UK secondary educational curriculum. This is the only practical mechanism available through which it would be possible to introduce a comprehensive age-related measure. The programme would cover important subjects: community, culture, spirituality and morality as well as more mundane legal, political and economic concerns. It would emphasise participation, process and teamwork to complement the competitive individualistic and result-based educational system. This would allow students to develop their self-confidence and -esteem as well as collaborative skills and group awareness. It would be embedded in related programmes within the secondary school curriculum and accompanied by celebration and ceremony.

The process would be dialogic, creative and critical to encourage the teenage voice.[18] It would emphasise active participation in socio-cultural education through talks, discussions, interactive games, creative projects and group workshops. Semi-structured play and problem solving activities that offer autonomy and self-managed experimentation would be accompanied by talks, discussions, visits to community organisations, a residential aspect and voluntary work placements.

This rite of passage would be targeted at all 13-14 year old students and ideally be part of a broader educational process. It would radically develop citizenship classes for Key Stage 3 and 4[19] and incorporate aspects from pre-existing programmes[20]. Although a one term separation phase would be ideal as this allows space for autonomous social and cultural experimentation within a loose educational framework, more realistically with regards to cost and curriculum, this programme could be implemented at the end of year 9 for one half of the summer term which would avoid the two-year run-up to GCSEs at the end of year 11 (see Fig 1).

Fig 1 Hypothetical Programme for a Six Week Rite of Passage

Week no	1	2	3	4	5	6
Theme	The Community	Practical Voluntary Activity	Everyday life	Spirituality	Culture	Education + Evaluation
Location	Non-residential, school and community based activities	Non-residential, various in the community	Residential	Residential	Residential	non-residential, school and community based
Content	Visiting a range of communities: Young offenders units; geriatric homes, hospitals, homeless and rehabilitation centres, mental health units, arts and community centres, etc.	Placements in local community. To include: legal, educational, health, business, care, environ-mental, social service, artistic and sporting projects	Practicalities of living including: basic household economy, human rights, law and employment	Moral issues, life purpose, lifelong education, awareness of other values and cultures	Creative workshops in groups. Arts, environ-mental, heritage and sports projects	Verbal and oral feedback. The experiences related to wider socio-cultural and educational objectives and outcomes. Celebration and ceremony
Format	Talks, discussion, observation, practical workshops and group problem solving	Complete specific tasks as required for various types of voluntary work. Feedback, problem-solving and discussion	Talks, discussion, group work and problem-solving	Talks, discussion, group work, problem-solving and role-play	Group work, problem-solving and role-play. Student led and autonomous	Talks, discussion, videos, diaries and group work

There are obvious criticisms regarding the cost of the programme and whether this would adversely impact upon later GCSE results. Also, there would be concerns that those hard to reach adolescents would truant. Therefore it has to be attractive to students as well as compulsory[21].

Although an official rite of passage denies adolescent ownership, bottom-up initiatives and self-determination can be built into the programme to ensure student empowerment. As the programme develops the educational facilitators would ensure that participants take control and determine group activities. Discipline would be paramount and the programme would need to be situated in such a manner that this would not discourage ownership by the participants.

Conclusion

The exclusion of adolescent males is part of the process of attaining adult status. But representations are stereotyped through a combination of empirical evidence, excluding theoretical discourses, mythical notions of inclusion, moral panic in the media, distorted lifestyles and language management. Crucially, teenage identity requires cultural distinction from the mainstream to mark difference which can confuse issues of inclusion. This socio-cultural and economic analysis has attempted to illustrate the difficulties of dissociating evidence from these representational practices and how ideal notions of inclusion fail to accommodate the excluded reality.

New Labour's endeavour to remedy this situation has been confusing which is partly due to the realpolitik of implementing policy. Its idealised inclusive scenario ignores the reality of youth culture, the disputed nature of community and the need to rectify structural inequalities. It conforms to a specific ideology of the individual predicated on an assumed consensus of cultural value which conforms to a particular functional and conservative discourse. This fails to consider the excluded adolescent male viewpoint, how meaning is determined and discovered by this constituency and the importance of sub-cultural lifestyle. Such misunderstanding concurs with the relentless move towards performative culture which hinders inclusion as it drives greater competition and individuality. There needs to be a counterbalance and focus on wider social participation and engagement that recognises alternative ways of applying and consuming surplus adolescent energy. One way to realise this in practice would be to alter secondary educational strategy, philosophy and practice.

Hence the recommendation of a six week educational programme as one method that aims to formalise a rite of passage for teenagers. It would aid the formation of individual and collective identities within a safe social space and encourage respect for difference within a framework that prioritises social cohesion and self-determination.[22] This is a high risk and idealistic remedy but radical measures are required to stem the increasing atomisation of society which transcends gender. Whether this can encourage more positive representations of teenagers is debateable as adolescence is so challenging to mainstream culture. Hopefully just as its counterpart in tribal society, this rite of passage will enable teenagers to better know themselves, their peers, the community and society as well as some of the wider mysteries of the world.

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Notes

1 The focus of this article is adolescent males. There are similar concerns with regards to adolescent females as most of the issues intersect gender.

2 For immigrants, the disabled, single mothers and travellers, 1950s society was far from inclusive and in many cases openly hostile.

3 New Labour has attempted to influence this representation of capitalism through its corporate responsibility agenda. Blair created a Minister for Corporate Social Responsibility in March 2000 within a competitiveness brief at the Department of Trade and Industry. This was pitched as good for innovation, an incentive to attract and maintain employees in the business sector and an aid to business reputation (Timms, 2003).

4 This process of exclusion from banks and related mechanisms of credit and support makes the underclass vulnerable to loan sharks and pawnbrokers during times of hardship.

5 ASBOs are also highly visible. Conventional UK legal procedure protects young offenders from having their identity revealed whereas such protection is not afforded those subject to ASBOs (Aitkenhead, 2004).

6 This is a massive 67% increase over ten years of extensively male prisoners in England and Wales from 42,000 in 1992, to a record breaking 70,000 in March 2002 (HO, 2002). Furthermore, this is predicted to rise to between 91,400 and 109,600 by 2009 (Travis, 2002).

7 Recent legislation concerning rights for the disabled has helped with structural problems regarding access and employment in particular (see Disability Discrimination Act, 1995).

8 This survey found that over half of the parents of these victims were unaware that they were being bullied.

9 'Feral youths' is related to the term 'underwolves' which is a ferocious version of 'underdogs' (Wilkinson & Mulgan, 1995).

10 Furthermore, a 'dangerous youth' may not identify with inclusion as represented by a poorly paid low status job or be better off financially compared to semi-legal or illegal dealings in the informal cash economy. But a 'proper' job may be a good front for these activities which ironically can enable a continuation of the original lifestyle.

11 Notwithstanding, the promotion of employment measures has resulted in a historically low rate of those out of work in 2004 at 4.9 per cent, down from 9.1 per cent in 1994 (SEU, 2004: 13). But this trend has been disputed as the unemployment rate has risen by 0.3% in 2005 (IDS, 2006).

12 The share of all UK income received by the poor has steadily decreased since 1981. In 2000 the poorest fifth of households had 6% of national income after tax. The share held by the richest fifth has risen under Labour from 44% to 45% (Ward, 2001). By 2006 the widening income gap had been checked and was the same as when Labour came to power, but no inroads had been made into rectifying the overall situation (Branigan, 2006).

13 The government could for example, instigate radical policies of taxation of the rich and related measures to address the rise of possessive individualism. But such constraint coupled with wider restrictive impacts upon civil liberties and freedom of expression may not be generally popular.

14 These included: a family life that features disruptive relationships, poverty and

unemployment; an education that fails to satisfy needs or to motivate; excessive peer pressures that encourage drug or alcohol abuse, unsafe sexual activity and crime; low expectations in life and poor adult role models; experience of victimisation and bullying; and inadequate response from public services (PAT 12, 2000: 8).

15 There are methodological problems that underpin proving a causal link between cultural factors and inclusion particularly in terms of the longevity (and idiosyncratic nature) of effect and distinguishing these from other variables.

16 The male orientation of this framework has been criticised for ignoring female input (McRobbie & Garber, 1991).

17 There has been a return to religion on a more individual level which Neumann (2006) postulated has been highlighted by the success of Harry Potter and his world of magic.

18 This educational philosophy is steeped in the pedagogy of transformative learning, problem solving and consciousness-raising which tackle the power relations between educated and educator as well as between peers (see Freire, 1970; Merizow, 1991).

19 Its agenda covers: human rights and responsibilities; car crime; the media; challenging racism; how and why laws are made; participating in the community and globalisation. This includes more economically grounded information regarding consumption, business, enterprise and the economy (DfES, 2002).

20 For example, the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme (2006) residential projects concentrate on group work in key areas of service, skill and physical recreation; also the Department for Education and Skills (2004) 'Gifted and Talented' residential programmes offer a broad curriculum for teams of students to work artistic projects and sporting activities.

21 Furthermore, a review or amnesty process would be required with regards to those students temporarily or permanently excluded from school, to try to involve as many of them in the programme as is feasible.

22 The programme could be supported by student and cultural exchange with other schools, localities and countries.

Reaching socially excluded young people

A national study of street-based youth work

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

The National Youth Agency

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What has Mary Douglas got to say about Youth Work?

Maxine Green

Mary Douglas, the British anthropologist, although a major figure within her own discipline is not someone familiar, one suspects, to many youth workers. Yet with regards to youth work, as I shall suggest, her work raises some profound questions relating to how arguments are constructed around the concepts of purity and danger, the importance of food and commodities, how individuals and organisations take risks, and the ways in which institutions 'think'. Douglas was born in 1921 in Italy whilst her parents were working in the British Colonial Service. She was educated in a Roman Catholic convent, and studied at Oxford University from 1939 – 1943 where she was influenced by E.E. Evans Pritchard. Douglas worked in the British Colonial Office until 1947 when she returned to Oxford to study during which time she undertook fieldwork in 1949 with the Lele people in the Belgian Congo. In the 1950s she taught at University College London and subsequently held positions in the USA. In 2003 she was invited to give the Dwight Terry Lectures at Yale University and her theme was 'Writing in Circles'.

Douglas has worked prolifically in her own field of social anthropology, but also she has daringly worked across the social sciences and ventured into other academic disciplines. Her early work was with the Lele in Africa and her early ethnographies explored the traditional areas that anthropologists study. However, what made Mary Douglas unique was the way that she dared to apply the principles and systems that she observed and studied in Africa to the more 'sophisticated' Western society. In the social science field this met similar resistance, albeit on a smaller scale, to that encountered by Darwin when he suggested man evolved from apes. Also Douglas was not afraid to explore her ideas in the popular press, publishing articles for example in the *Times Educational Supplement* and *Spectator*, she was always prepared to respond to a wider audience. 'Applying' anthropology in this way was then anathema to more purist academics within the discipline. To manage the threat she posed by this approach to the purity of the discipline, opponents placed in her way various systemic, organisational, and individual obstacles designed to contain her and lessen her impact. This was not so much a conspiracy as a linked series of unrelated actions that operated to stabilise the existing academic structure.

Another innovation resisted by her academic opponents was Mary Douglas's excursions from anthropology into other disciplines. These thoughtful ventures had the audacity to challenge the way other disciplines approached their own core subjects, for example how economists viewed economics. When Douglas compared complex Western economic systems with the way the Lele exchanged raffia (1963) there was a range of reactions from some people not crediting her for her innovative thought to others ridiculing her. As a result of her creative and explorative thinking Douglas found the academic progression and promotion that reflected her ability did not readily come her way. Even though she was a

strong candidate for some of the top social anthropology chairs in Britain during the 60s to 80s she ended up going to America to achieve this position, a move, at the time, akin to academic exile.

In many ways this walking between disciplines modelled by Douglas is quite familiar to youth work as its policy and practice is drawn from, and informed by, a range of academic thinking. Therefore it is perhaps not surprising that Douglas created theories and thinking which can be directly and powerfully applied to youth work; she, like creative youth workers thinks 'outside the box'. Certainly youth work and social anthropology share a number of similar methodologies and approaches. For instance the focus for social anthropology and youth work is at an individual level. Rather than looking at large societal trends and extending this thinking to the impact on the individual, both start with the individual and then seek to find connections with others in small groups, in local communities and from there to national communities. Thus Mary Douglas's work looks at the individual, studies how they relate to their family and friends, and from this seeks to understand how they are perceived in the wider society and how they are treated by that society. This sort of thinking is very powerful when applied to youth work as it constructs models of understanding that places young people at the centre of the discipline. Models constructed in this way have a deep reality as they grow out of people's lived experience. Because this way of studying the world is rooted in people living in 'real' contexts there is an authenticity and integrity which is sometimes difficult to replicate in disciplines which start with general hypotheses and seek to fit these into the life experience of individuals.

Learning from Mary Douglas and applying her thoughts to youth work does have an advantage because the focus on the individual, or the young person can lead to a way of working that involves 'coming alongside' rather than studying from afar. Ethnographic method entails immersing oneself in a culture and noticing how the culture impacts on oneself and others. Youth work with regards to its advocacy role is an alongside role with youth workers seeking to understand what it is like to be a young person and creating spaces and opportunities for young people to work out their development and growth.

Another reason Mary Douglas is attractive is that she was a rebel, like so many youth workers, in the way she dared to challenge other disciplines and orthodoxies. Consequently there is something in the nature of kindred spirits finding each other. Douglas's life is one that fits well with the youth work world. There is a huge amount in her work that can provide youth workers and managers with powerful models that can be used on behalf of young people. As her work is so wide-ranging I have chosen four examples drawn from her work that illustrate how it might enrich our understanding of youth work. These are *Purity and Danger*, the power of food, how risk is perceived and constructed, and how institutions think.

Purity and Danger was written by Douglas in 1966 and had an immediate impact on the world of social science. In it Douglas explores how those in power use concepts of purity and danger to control and limit those less powerful as she says in returning to the subject in a lecture in 1980:

With us, no more than with our forebears, nature and purity are not technical terms:

when the border uses them, the centre is being arraigned for causing pollution. When the centre uses them, a contagious border is being cordoned off. (1980: 1045)

In *Purity and Danger*, Douglas explores how difference emerges in societies and how it is constructed and maintained. By developing concepts of 'them' and 'us' a first step is taken towards producing a rationale for treating 'them' differently. Douglas argues that societies use the body as a metaphor for social control. In particular, she looks at the question of what is pure and what pollutes the body. Her argument is that the metaphor of the body is taken into the wider society and employed to define what is good and what is bad for that society. When this is used in modern society the powerful and organised who are responsible for the fabric of society are identified as pure. This purity is held up as something that is incredibly important to preserve. In the same way that the body is in danger if it bleeds, the social body is in danger if it gets damaged or is exposed to any impurity. This is an extremely powerful argument for youth workers who act as advocates for young people. Young people are a marginalised minority group and if we use Douglas's model we can better understand how they are perceived as a potential danger in society and notice the mechanisms by which society seeks to control them. We can also see how the metaphor of the body, with young people as potential pollutants, is used to create impelling arguments. The use of this metaphor is often 'out of awareness' being copied from other political systems which have worked, an extreme example of this occurred in pre-war Germany.

At a time when increasing restrictions are being place on the movements of young people, it is interesting to think in terms of Mary Douglas's model. Young people are seen as a threat, a danger, and in some way a huge risk to the normal functioning of the social body. What is implicit in a lot of new legislation seeking to control young people, for example ASBOs, is that they are seen as a contamination. In some police services young people are registered as a nuisance simply by being reported as such. There is no onus on either the police, or the person reporting, to meet specific criteria about what constitutes a nuisance. The crime is simply the presence of young people, and for this young people can be reported by the police to their parents, and may receive a caution. Douglas's model shows the power invoked by viewing young people in this way. By aligning the social process with a primitive and useful survival mechanism, control is established by appealing to the fear and worry within most people. This message works at a deeper, non-rational level as at the same time the words and documentation are appealing to reason there is an underlying cry which calls people to preserve themselves by avoiding pollution and danger. There is continuity here with the construction of the purity of the master race in pre-war Germany. The fear invoked of people who 'didn't fit', and thus were a danger to the purity of the social body, enabled the regime to employ dreadful powers against weak minorities. Although this example is shocking and a long way from the current situation in the UK many of our young people are experiencing curfews and restrictions on their liberty simply because of their age.

Fardon, in his book on Douglas, helpfully outlines the threefold classification she utilises:

those in authority wield defined and formal powers, those in interstitial positions are credited with inchoate powers, and pollution powers are not credited to anyone but

represent an automatic response to infraction of formal structure. (1999: 94)

Using this classification the authorities are seen to wield 'defined and formal powers'. In the situation outlined above the police are in the role of authority. Their powers are formal and in many ways unchallenged, even though cautioning a segment of the population simply on the grounds of age is irrational. Their powers are also defined in that there is a sense of order and structure, and some would argue safety, in how they operate and their place in society. On the other hand, young people can be chaotic. Their powers are messy powers, as Douglas says, inchoate, and when these are placed against the cleaner powers of the police it is not an equal situation. Therefore, simply in the way we have categorised this situation we reinforce a power dynamic and advantage the police at the expense of young people. Regarding another point Douglas makes regarding this classification, young people can be seen as attacking the formal structure. When local councils seek to restrict young people from moving freely in certain areas they will often use the language of untidiness and suggest that young people in being noisy, unpredictable and not fitting are a threat to the fabric of the town. By using this metaphor of pollution and contamination there is an appeal at a very basic body/survival level. It is vital youth workers understand this process so that they can work with young people to challenge policy and practice at an appropriate and effective level.

Douglas used similar analysis in studying how food is used to articulate social processes. Whilst many anthropologists in the mid-twentieth century were happy looking at rituals around food in the less complex societies in which they were studying and working, few had 'turned' this analysis onto food in Western societies. Douglas with her innate sense of fun looked at the way food was used to construct systems that articulated how society and relationships operate. For example, she took the ritual of baking and sharing a cake, mapped out how it was used to demonstrate an occasion was special, and identified the symbolism of one piece of food being cut and shared with guests as demonstrating the relationship between them (1974). Furthermore, she extended this thinking into the role of the biscuit, which she interpreted as 'a mini cake occasion'. Thus, in our busy times when it wasn't possible to make cake, offering biscuits enabled us to perform some of the relationship roles linked to baking and sharing a cake. Douglas also turned this focus and analysis on the effect of food and food laws in religion. She studied the very formal end of this through a career long analysis of the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament, and the informal end of this through her study of the pattern of eating in her childhood as someone self-labelled as 'Bog Irish'. Her venture into this world was one of an academic trailblazer, as the work preceded not only the study of food in anthropology, but also the development of subjects such as semiotics and cultural studies. When youth workers work with young people the role of food is hugely important. Occasions are marked and celebrated with the sharing of food and for some young people, such as anorexics, having control over what they eat may be the principal way that they define themselves. Having an awareness of the power of food in the places we work with young people is a potent tool. Mary Douglas extended this thinking into the world of commodities and she said in her book *World of Goods*, 'commodities are good for thinking'. This wonderful way of using relationships with commodities to understand relationships between people would be an exceedingly interesting element to bring into our youth work practice and has already informed us obliquely. Many events to celebrate young people's achievement feature food and the

preparing, cooking and sharing of food, for example within outdoor education trips eating often has a symbolic and ritual place in the experience.

Another area Douglas explored that is relevant to youth work is the subject of risk. In the 1980s and 90s Douglas devoted much energy in exploring the way different cultures defined and used risk. As with much social anthropology the first step is to encourage people to understand that the way they see things is not the only way to do so. For people to understand 'the water that they are swimming in' using the analogy that a fish swimming in water has little awareness of the water itself, the water has always been there and will always be there. It feels natural, is taken for granted and cannot be questioned. For many people a risk is like water to the fish, a risk is a risk and it has an immutable quality with a presupposition that everyone in the world would see it as a risk. What Douglas does in exploring this particular subject was to show that various groups choose different things to be fearful about and identify as risks. Indeed, she said not only do groups choose different things as risks but that what risks the group 'choose' defines themselves as a group. As a discipline with a huge preoccupation with risk assessment Douglas's reflections on this is potentially very illuminating. Unfortunately Douglas has not specifically addressed risk assessment in youth work, however the power of her analysis is extremely challenging and can be transposed across into the youth work world. For example she looked at the treatment of hazardous wastes and expressed this in terms of purity and danger to challenge current practice. In her book *Risk and Culture* she is fascinated by three perceptions of risk. These are (i) people do not agree what is risky; or (ii) how risky it is; or (iii) what to do about it. She suggests in the same book that disagreements about risk are set in a framework which is about the social control of cognition. When Douglas (1992) brings other elements of her thinking into the subject of risk some exceptional things emerge. As she explains:

> Being 'at risk' in modern parlance is not the equivalent of the reciprocal of being 'in sin' or 'under taboo'. To be 'at risk' is equivalent to being sinned against, the invulnerable to events caused by others, whereas being 'in sin' means being the cause of harm … the risk rhetoric upholds the individual, vulnerable to the misbehaviour of the community … America has gone further down the path of cultural individualism, and so can make more use of the forensic potential of risk. (1992: 28,29)

Employing this analysis in youth work indicates that young people could be seen to be 'at risk' and thus as Douglas puts it 'vulnerable to the misbehaviour of the community'. Young people therefore, when put in this category, invoke a narrative of protection where they are victims who need care from others as they are unable to protect themselves. This is the opposite of the empowering aim of youth work and necessarily results in dependency. It is of course true that at the root of how we understand and construct risk there is real danger that can cause physical or mortal harm. There is a rational undercurrent to this argument that can seduce and blind us to the ulterior message of control. It is interesting when one reflects on the government paper *Every Child Matters* where care for the child/young person is a paramount objective and the expectation is that it is society's role to perform that function. If an alternative paradigm was used with the child/young person as a competent and resourceful agent the policy would shape up differently. The reason the argument is very powerful and persuasive is that it has an undercurrent of *Purity and Danger*, with the

central story within *Every Child Matters* being the horrific treatment of Victoria Climbie. With this cautionary tale playing in the background of the policy there is an invitation to professionals to create a society where children and young people are pure, protected and safe from danger. To challenge such a paradigm not only runs the risk of appearing heartless and uncaring, it also implicitly puts the pure body of society at risk of danger. Douglas extends these thoughts in describing 'verbal weapons of control' as:

> *Among verbal weapons of control, time is one of the four final arbiters. Time, money, God, and nature, usually in that order, are universal trump cards plunked down to win an argument.* (1999: 236)

In recent government legislation there is a sense of urgency to push through new practice that will once more make our children safe. Constructing the argument in a framework of time running out and combining this with the concepts of purity and danger is almost irresistible. As Douglas summarises, verbal weapons of control are also social weapons of control.

An interesting question is what does Douglas's work have to say about risk assessment for us as youth workers? She argues that risks are certainly real, but perceptions of risk are socially constructed. Pointing out that the 'the well advertised risk generally turns out to be connected with legitimating moral principles' (1985: 60). Following this argument it is apparent that as youth workers we are legitimising a range of moral principles through the risks that we think are important. For example, the risk of drugs articulates the moral principle of healthy living and the risk of young people 'acting out' or being aggressive can be linked to the fear of upsetting current support mechanisms. Although there are undoubtedly potential dangers in both behaviours sometimes the moral principle is the motivating factor especially when the actual risk is minimal.

These thoughts about underlying moral principles and practice were developed in *How Institutions Think* (1986). In this work Douglas played with theories proposed by a range of academics including Foucault and Durkheim. I use the words 'played with' as many of her critics of this work challenged the way that Douglas 'hop-scotched' over a wide range of theories and did not develop her ideas sufficiently. However, what she did do was to raise awareness and encourage people to see and understand the power of the institutional context in which they worked. Arguing that:

> *Institutions systematically direct individual memory and channel our perceptions into forms compatible with the relations they authorise. They fix processes that are essentially dynamic, they hide their influence, and they rouse our emotions to a standardised pitch on standardised issues. Add to this that they endow themselves with rightness and send their mutual corroboration cascading through all levels of our information system. No wonder they easily recruit us into joining their narcissistic self contemplation. Any problems we tried to think about are automatically transformed into their own organisational problems. The solutions they proffer only come from the limited range of their experience. If the institution is one that depends on participation, it will reply to our frantic question: 'More participation!' Institutions have the pathetic megalomania of the computer whose full vision of the world is its own programme. For us, the hope*

of intellectual independence is to resist, and the necessary first step in resistance is to discover how the institutional grip is laid upon our mind. (1985: 92)

This quote not only challenges the individual to become aware and preserve their intellectual integrity, it also shows something of Douglas's feisty spirit and individualism. This strength and daring is sadly missing in youth work today, as we re-group and reorganise around current government legislation, seeking to find places we can work with young people in a developmental and empowering way. Knowledge of the way institutions work and how political arguments gain power by invoking primitive responses around purity and danger is essential so that we can be strong and effective advocates for the youth work process.

Douglas has influenced the climate of youth work through her impact on the social sciences. Greater awareness of her work can help with this analysis of 'the water that youth work is swimming in'. She can also be used as a role model for us professionals with her sense of play, justice and intellectual integrity.

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Review Article

John Holmes

This is the third collection of essays on topics related to the history of community and youth work that primarily derive from the conferences held at the imposing setting of Ushaw College near Durham. This collection emerges from the 2003 conference. Since then a link has been developed with the University of Minnesota in the USA and conferences are planned for alternate years in Durham and Minneapolis.

How are we to understand this growth of historical enquiry in this field, following as it does Bernard Davies major 2 volume work on *A History of the Youth Service in England* 1939-1999. There is, regrettably, no introduction to this collection of 18 essays but Jean Spence starts her essay on *Working with Girls and Young Women: A broken history* with:

> *Historical knowledge makes a crucial contribution to our understanding of contemporary questions and the recovery of the history of youth work is no exception.* (p.243)

This suggests that history has much to offer the present as well as the future. The introduction to the first edition of essays, published in 2001, gives further answers to the editors' intentions in this enterprise. There it is made clear the impetus for this growth in historical activity comes from a concern that youth policy which derives from the UK government is often ahistorical. Often copying policy from elsewhere (usually the USA), frequently has not learnt the lessons from the past. It is insufficiently challenged by professionals as they know too little about their own history and so are not confident enough to question the latest 'flavour of the month'. There is a call in the first edition for many more histories of individual projects and programmes and for 'bottom-up' histories to balance all that is written on 'top-down' policies.

This is a tall order not least because much has not been recorded in written form, and with a history now stretching back over 150 years many of the key players have died. Given this difficulty this volume is a remarkable achievement in answering the call made in the first volume. The 18 diverse essays in this volume are not easy to categorise and their ordering does not appear to have any obvious significance. The first essay *First for Boys* by Roger Bolton is a study based on historical records of the Boys' Brigade showing its roots in Scotland. Whilst fascinating in terms of identifying some of the cultural roots of youth work in the nineteenth century it has no obvious lessons for today. The last essay on the

other hand is of great contemporary relevance and is called *Extended Schooling: some lessons for youth workers from Youth Service history*. In this Bernard Davies mainly draws on unpublished as well as published records from the time of the so called 'Milson-Fairbairn Report' *Youth and Community work in the 70s*. He comes down clearly on the side of Fred Milson's Committee and identifies the clear division with Fairbairn's Committee on the potential for schools as settings for youth work. Davies, and this collection of essays, concludes as follows:

> *In a policy environment which also envisages an increased role for schools in commissioning services (see for example Youth Matters DfES 2005b), one of the lessons for youth workers from the Fairbairn Milson episode in Youth Service history comes through very clearly: beware an 'extended schooling' strategy bearing ambitious promises of 'community engagement' and 'community development.'*

It is difficult to know if Fred Milson would have approved of his clearly expressed concerns about the 'top down' nature of schools in the late 1960s being quoted as the basis for critiquing current policy. However it is vital, as Davies argues, that we engage with the arguments which government policy seem to ignore with its optimistic rhetoric.

The other 16 essays include 11 more (in addition to the two above) primarily analysing types of provision or issues – Working Men's Clubs, Sail Training, Work with girls and young women, a settlement in Vienna, a youth club in Aldershot, youth work in war time, the 4-H movement in the US, tragedy of drowning of sea scouts, youth delinquency in Australia, Youth Service in Wales, and the link between the physical condition of young people and youth work. The other five essays also deal with issues but start with the influence of particular individuals or families – Mary Ward (in play provision), Flora Lucy Freeman (in work with young women), Donald Hankey (in mission work), the Astors (in a settlement in Plymouth), and Leslie Button (in developmental group work). Although there is much of interest in each of these essays to hold the attention it is not likely that many will read this book from start to finish. This is a book to dip into, reading one or two essays at a time. It should be a major reference source for students of the history of Community and Youth Work and for those researching the issues or types of provision listed above. In this context it would have been helpful to list all the titles of essays, maybe categorised by type of provision/issues and/or historical figures for all three volumes so that researchers have easy reference to this wealth of material.

It will not be possible here to review in detail each essay but I would like to say more about three, and then try to pick up common themes that exist in a number of essays. My choice of these three reflects my interests at present: others will make different choices according to their interests. The first is *Leslie Button and the rise of developmental group work* by Eileen Newman and Sue Robertson, which I read because of my interest in Community and Youth Work qualifying courses and the role of group work within them. It seems clear that the framing of knowledge into modules within HE, the perception that only what can be assessed counts as knowledge, and the desire to cut costs within HE by having large groups have all helped to lead to the decline of group work within qualifying courses since its heyday in the 60s and 70s. Leslie Button's approach was based on action research and provides an evidence-based framework for effective intervention with young people.

Some would argue that the move to 1:1 work with young people undermines the basis for developmental group work but the authors make a strong case against this. What seems particularly valuable from Button's approach is that it provides arguments linked to both theory and research for including group work in courses of training (and a good way to take courses beyond training into education). It is hoped this will be further developed in a forthcoming special issue of *Youth and Policy* on Youth and Community Work qualifying courses (due for publication in 2007).

The second essay I would like to highlight is *Tall ships and gentlemen's yachts: sail training in the UK* by Ken McCulloch. This essay compares and contrasts the tall ships and Ocean Youth Club (with smaller yachts) traditions and their link to youth work. Whilst intrinsically interesting for those fascinated by boats it is valuable in dispelling views that ways of intervening with young people are determined by technical demands of effectiveness and safety. McCulloch argues that these two traditions reflect rather choices about youth work ideology, with tall ships reflecting a military 'character building' tradition whilst the Ocean Youth Club tradition reflects an attempt to break down class barriers and enable adults and young people to work together. This is an important general point in the context of current pressures for youth workers to have a surveillance role over young people and store increasing amounts of information about them. This is often argued for on the basis of the technical potential of IT systems and the need for effective partnership working and there is a danger that this will hide the ideological issues of power and relationships between youth workers and young people.

The third essay is *Youth Service in Wales, 1939-1974* by John Rose and Bert Jones. My Welsh connections made this of interest to me but also the death of Bert Jones in the Summer of 2006 reminded me of his contribution to youth work, particularly in his beloved Wales. This essay argues that the potential for youth work development was missed in Wales in these years. It argues that despite the boost that the Albemarle report gave to youth work in Wales as well as in England, in the 1960s, there was a decline in this period. This is explained by the marginalisation of youth work within Beveridge's priorities after the second world war, and in particular the mis-direction of youth policy deriving from both the Milson-Fairbarn report and local government re-organisation in Wales in the 70s. This is the second essay on the youth service in Wales. It will be interesting to see in future work if it is felt that having distinctive Welsh reports from the 80s and devolution in the 90s will be seen to lead to more appropriate policies in Wales than those developed largely in England and imposed on Wales, during this period.

Having stated it is unlikely this book will be read from start to finish by many, it has to be said that for those who have the time there are real benefits to be gained from securing a wider overview of this historical exercise. Common themes start to emerge, as do commonalities and differences in the approach of the contributors. The links are not necessarily the obvious ones. The article by Ray Masini on *The 2nd Walworth Scout Troop and the Leysdown Tragedy of 1912* clearly had a maritime connection dealing as it does with the tragic drowning of 9 sea scouts but for me it raised more interesting questions about the purpose of history. There is no doubt it is a fascinating read dealing with not only the incident itself but also the national response. It was a very big story in the press, was taken up by government (including Winston Churchill), and one million people attended

the funerals. The term 'ripping yarn' came to mind especially when a link to David Beckham was made, and the Sir Gilbert Scott designed bronze memorial was stolen and melted down for scrap in 1969 (replaced in 1995). I was looking for some reflections at the end of this article maybe about health and safety or the power of tragedy to unite communities but the writer offered none. Is it necessary to draw out conclusions and lessons for the present? I am unsure but most contributors have seen this as their role. Tony Jeffs fascinating article *Oft Referenced, Rarely read? Report of the 1904 interdepartmental committee on physical deterioration* has over four pages as a conclusion and manages to make links to moral panics about young people and support for youth work (but not informal education), the link to activity and outdoor work, and current concerns about physical deterioration. Jeffs detailed scholarly investigation of this period provides ample evidence of the relationship of youth work to economic, social and military history whilst also showing how precarious history can be. Structural forces exist but often a particular person, debate or meeting seems to have influenced the course of history. The commitment of the early youth workers, their passion for their work, and their eccentricity as perceived by establishment figures is shown and beautifully illustrated by a report of the statement of T.C. Horsfall to the committee on the importance of trees.

The methodology used by Jeffs and others of analysing written historical documents (in the case of the 1904 report seemingly not read in the original for 70 years) is added to by other contributors who employ oral history. Lesley Buckland's *The Aldershot Institute 1948-1956: Our Club* is a good example of an ex member (Ray Newman) of 'our club' sharing his memories and then Buckland drawing out conclusions about the shift from 'mental improvement' to 'social and recreational intercourse' during the 1940s and 1950s. Judith Bessant's study of 'Bodgies and Widgies' in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s is a good example of how self reports can challenge the stereotyping of young people and moral panics that occurred at that time, and demonstrate that written reports are not necessarily more reliable than oral ones.

The 3 international articles (the one on Australia, the Austrian Settlement, and the 4H movement in the US) demonstrate the value of comparative work although it is the reader who has to make the comparisons with the UK. The 'Bodgies' and 'Widgies' have clear parallels with the youth sub cultures in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, in particular the Teddy Boys. The other two articles are interesting in that they challenge narrow conceptions that are all too easily drawn. The settlement movement is often presented critically as patronising benevolent philanthropy from the upper middle classes and this view existed in Austria with the anarchist Emma Goldman making the comment that 'settlement work is teaching the poor to eat with a fork' (p124). Yet when this is put in the context of Vienna in the 1930s with the growing anti-semitism followed by the Nazi takeover of Austria in 1938 the value of settlements can be seen in a different light. The Nazis were clear that the Settlement was a democratic institution that could not be tolerated, dismissing workers and eventually closing it in 1938. The potential for any support for people in this largely Jewish area was therefore much reduced.

The strangely titled *Beetroots not Greek Roots: A history of the 4-H Movement* is challenging in a different way. As mentioned above it is easy to resent the influence of youth and community work policies transplanted from the USA with little or no recognition of the

different historical traditions in the UK. It is easy to conclude that the current over emphasis in youth policy on young people as problems, the growing surveillance of young people, and the narrow expectations focussing on qualifications and employability – these all come from across the pond. Yet this history of the 4-H movement reminds us of the strong democratic traditions in the USA from which the UK has much to learn. The 4-H movement grew, organically, from a nurseryman in Illinois in 1899 providing 500 young boys with seed corn and sponsoring a contest to produce good yields. From this a wide range of clubs developed in rural areas across the States. The 3-Hs (head, heart and hand) were added to by health to make the 4-H movement that was a practical, grassroots and hands on movement that had valuable spin offs in terms on improving agricultural production. Here was a movement without any clear founder which drew on the democratic educational tradition of John Dewey and Jane Addams to promote learning beyond the 3-Rs. Joyce Walker in this article points out the links with the British Young Farmers Clubs founded following a visit to the US in 1921 by Lord Northcliffe. It can be argued that the British Young Farmers Clubs represent a good example of young people taking real responsibility for youth work. However it would appear that 4-H is moving, and maybe has to move in the context of weaker community links, towards youth development from its roots in democratic educational methods and as a social movement.

What can we learn from these histories to help us with some of the big issues about youth and community work? It is generally accepted that the origins of this work is both 'top down' in the form of upper and middle classes voluntary sector and State involvement and 'bottom up' in the form of mutual aid and popular education. We should be able to learn from history the extent to which 'top down' involvement is benevolent philanthropy or attempts to control troublesome young people and their communities. Maybe not surprisingly the lessons from history appear not to be clear cut although my impression is that 'benevolent philanthropy' is recognised by writers as often being well intentioned, and not necessarily designed to head off 'bottom up' initiatives feared as too radical and dangerous. Barry Burke's fascinating study of the educational role of Working Men's Clubs is a good example of the complexity. After exploding some of the stereotypes of these clubs, their origins being mainly in the South (rather than the North) of Britain, and in respectability and sobriety (rather than alcohol and raucousness) he recognises that it was 'the great and the good' who were trying to promote 'rational recreation' for the working classes. Yet this did not exclude 'mutual improvement' and when greater autonomy was achieved by clubs in the latter part of the nineteenth century there was only a brief period of greater involvement in political issues before the educational role gave way to purely social and recreational ones. Mary Clare Martin's sympathetic study of Flora Lucy Freeman work with Catholic Guides and 'rough girls' in Southern England between 1890 and 1925 concludes that despite a clear mission of 'social rescue' it cannot be argued that her philanthropy was rooted in social control. Ross Davies' study of Donald Hankey's mission work in the East End of London pre First World War is somewhat more sceptical of the role of this 'toff' and his Christian philanthropic work. The title *Mission Impossible?* suggests doubts despite his 'canonisation' by the *Spectator* after his death at the front in 1916. It does seem clear that Hankey's literary and musical ambitions plus his taste for the good life in the West End meant that his commitment to the 'crucified life' work was limited to Bermondsey. However Hankey himself was modest in his view on the impact of his work and as with others undertaking mission and settlement work was critical of established religion

and the establishment generally. Keith Popple's study of the Virginia House Settlement in Plymouth from its founding in 1925 and the benevolent paternalism of the wealthy US influenced Astor family focuses on the motives and ideals of the time, and particularly of the first British woman MP, the Conservative Nancy Astor. Popple is clear about the ideological basis of 'doing good' in a paternalist framework but leaves open who benefited most from the interventions the local people, the Astors, the settlement workers or the management committee.

A related big issue for youth and community work is the move to state involvement and the professionalisation of the work. It is equally an issue for play work from which youth and community work has much to learn, as Keith Cranwell's article on Mary Ward demonstrates. Cranwell records the acrimonious dispute between Mary Ward who was trying to get state support for play work in London in the 1902-1908 period and CHEA (Children's Happy Evenings Association) a 'society' charity believing in voluntarism. Mary Ward argued that play work was so important for children's development that it should be recognised for state funding, and only then could it be sustainable as provision five nights a week, Saturday mornings and intensive over holiday periods. The debate with CHEA involved disagreements over the ownership of play. The principles of play work put great stress on children and young people having ownership of their own play. Mary Ward argued that voluntarism led to ownership by 'society' ladies intervening in working class children's lives, yet needed support from all play workers to convince a state resistant to committing on-going funding to this area at a time when funding for formal education was rising fast. Mary Ward did not succeed in her campaign despite influential friends in government, one reason being that she found it difficult to provide objective evidence that play work was cost effective in reducing the need for social work interventions. The dilemma of needing to frame a rationale for play work in terms of preventative early years work is one that not only has parallels today but also tends to undermine arguments about the importance of ownership of their play by children and young people themselves. Similarities can be found between Mary Ward's arguments and those developed by Spence in her analysis of early girls work which she sees as having more discontinuity than continuity with feminist work with girls and young women of the 1970s and 1980s. Spence argues that the origins of single sex work must be seen as rooted in a maternalist ideology about rescuing working class girls from disordered lives and trying to ensure respectability, an ordered private life and religious commitment. The feminist attempt to get support from the state for single sex work was flawed in not being sufficiently rooted in the community context and in an analysis of the historical roots of this type of work.

As both Jeffs' and Simon Bradford's articles demonstrate the involvement of the state in this type of work is likely to come at times of perceived crisis (often war time) and not surprisingly comes with strings attached. Youth and community workers have to be particularly skilful to successfully promote their work and stay true to their principles. This theme is clearly relevant to this whole history project in the climate today of state funding being more available since 1997 but expected to lead to policy outcomes that may have little to do with the principles of the work. For many writers, but not all, involved in this project there is a sense of loss of the nature of youth and community work as it has been known and valued over history. This project seems partly to be an attempt to maintain some continuity and protect a tradition that could be lost with policies such as Connexions,

extended schools, Children's and Young Persons Services, neighbourhood renewal and even the current direction of community cohesion. The death of Bert Jones in August led me to reflect on whether there is not only a problem of the history being lost as practitioners from the past retire and die but also that many of those who are attempting to record this history may also be reaching this stage of their lives. My impression of the conferences I have attended that led to these collections of essays is that despite their friendly and dynamic nature there was a sense of the whole project deriving from a sense of loss. This is partly because this generation of workers and teachers mainly had their formative years in a very different context of community and youth work. One still much influenced by the post Albemarle period the 60s and 70s. It is right that this tradition and the values that it represents should be recorded and analysed. But is there also an issue in this history project of older youth workers (and I am one of them) wanting to resist change and not wanting younger workers and teachers to take over? Do youth workers grow old gracefully or do they resent more than others their movement into old age? It used to be that youth work was partly a celebration of youth although now it seems the role is more one of 'damage limitation' in this time of 'difficult transitions'. It is to be hoped that this history project will continue and will enable older workers and teachers to engage with younger ones to draw on the past for the benefit of the future.

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Reviews

Timothy H. Parsons
Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa
Ohio University Press 2004
ISBN 0-8214-1596-4
pp318

Aylssa Cowell

Timothy H. Parsons is an ambitious man. In *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* he aims to write the first historical account of Scouting in Eastern and Southern Africa spurred on by the rather mysterious fact that Boy Scout uniforms, alongside firearms, explosives and illegal drugs cannot be imported into Kenya.

In the African colonies the British had a problem; they did not have the money nor the resources to impose their rule upon, in particular, the rural areas, so they relied on a method of 'indirect rule' whereby 'tribal' leaders would ensure that British interests were served. These 'tribes' in many cases did not exist previously – they were created to fit in with the British model of the tribe having rights, not the individual. In order to justify the occupation of the African territories, Britain claimed it had a humanitarian mandate; the duty to educate.

Education in many places fell to the church missions, and initially African children were taught a classical literary curriculum, however this caused problems. Once you teach someone how to read you cannot dictate which books and African young people started challenging Empirical rule.

Scouting was introduced into Africa at this point to 'retribalise' young people whose education and intelligence led them to question tribal leaders and therefore British rule, wanting more for themselves than rural farming life. It was thought that Scouting would make western education more compatible with British rule by helping make such ambitious students accept their place, well under the 'colour bar', in colonial society.

Anyone who has ever been a Scout will remember the Fourth Scout Law – 'A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what country, class or creed, the other may belong' (p.259). African Scouts used this law to directly challenge racism and oppression in their country, demanding equal rights amongst Scouts as many troops were split through colour. In Apartheid South Africa many years were spent fighting to enable Black young people to become fully fledged Scouts as opposed to 'Pathfinders' which was based upon Scouting but without the Fourth Law.

Personally I never did find out why Scout uniforms were banned from Kenya or whether South African Pathfinders ever did become Scouts because I abandoned the book halfway

through. It is the first historical account of Scouting in these areas of Africa therefore it is incredibly detailed, far too much for me as a general reader. When you read the book it feels as though the author has uncovered masses of information, and does not want to leave anyone or anything out, so for example you get to know all the names of all the missionaries who set up both Scouting and Girl Guide troops. I felt like I was wading through lots of detail but not really getting any further with the overall picture so eventually I gave up.

This is not to say the book does not hold any value. It is interesting as the story of a time in Scouting history where instead of helping young people challenge oppression and racism, colonial authorities attempted to use the movement to keep young Black African people in their place, and young Black Africans used the movement to challenge exactly that place within that society. The book is fantastic if you want to hold a piece of Scouting history and use it as reference. If you are interested in the way colonial society actually worked it is best to see it through one of its institutions. Scouting turns 100 next year and it is great that this has been written. However it is hard going and I would only recommend reading it if you already have a vested interest in this topic, otherwise wait until someone writes an overview.

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Sarah McNamara
Helping Young People to Beat Stress
Continuum 2005
ISBN 0-8264-8755-6
£16.99 (pbk)
pp114

Mary Hodgson

This book arises out of the research done by the author (published initially in 2000) into the growing levels of teenage stress and from which a companion pack 'Stress Management Programme for Secondary Schools' (2001, Routledge Falmer) was produced. For this edition she has removed some of the more academic parts of her work, and has aimed to produce a practical guide for parents, teachers, mental health professionals, social workers and youth workers or 'anyone who wishes to talk to teenagers about improving their coping skills'.

The scope of the book is ambitious, with chapters covering mental strategies for, and physical ways of coping with stress, study skills and time management, interpersonal and communications skills, and self care ('treating yourself right'). These chapters are broken down further to cover a massive agenda, from depression to anorexia, nutrition to time management and bullying to problem solving. Gray, shaded boxes throughout the text helpfully summarise the major learning points and give ideas for exercises or discussions.

The book starts at a place very familiar to youth workers – how to frame initial conversations with young people so they will participate and engage in the activity on offer. The author gives a brief reminder that the tone of any work should be relaxed and exploratory, and that ground rules should be negotiated relating to confidentiality, democracy and respect. The agenda should be young person-led, with no right or wrong answers. One would hope that anyone setting out on the skilled work of running a young people's group would already have these principles well entrenched and would be experienced in such work. It is doubtful whether others who need this guidance should be working with such groups at all. The bulk of this chapter then concentrates on suggesting ways of defining, recognising and analysing stress.

Chapter 2 covers how to discuss coping and preventative strategies with young people. It contains some useful material about planning ahead and being prepared for stressful events, once identified. There is a strong cognitive behavioural approach apparent in this section, with the author encouraging the reader to help young people to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Techniques such as 'thought stopping' and 'stress inoculation' are explained, as is the importance of learning how to relax. The author suggests encouraging young people to keep a 'stress diary' as a way of identifying their own personal response to stress. The young person would then use this in the group to discuss how to approach their own stress levels.

The chapter on physical ways of coping with stress is particularly wide ranging. The group should 'discuss normal eating, sleeping, exercise and drinking routines' and see how these link to thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and the role they play in mental health. There is information on alcohol, fat, dieting, eating disorders, PMS and a discussion on weight and body shape. Surprisingly though, given the extensive range of the chapter, there is no mention of recreational drug use.

The book then continues into the more traditional school/stress area of preparing for exams, in a chapter which will not contain any new information for teachers. It is a straightforward and sensible précis of the way in which (one hopes) good schools have been preparing their students for exams for many years.

Chapter 5 covers the more difficult ground of stress in relationships. It contains some good ideas for exercises which will bring it home to young people that 'we can only bring about changes in others by changing ourselves and changing the way we relate to them' and that this takes time. Assertiveness, negotiation skills and listening skills are explained, before the author suggests opening the discussion on bullying.

On then, to Chapter 6 which starts with ideas about how to raise issues of self confidence and self esteem with a group and ends on the subject of 'unhappiness and depression' – all in fifteen pages!

The tone of the final chapter ('Discussion and conclusion') shifts radically from training manual to research dissertation with its discussions of 'programme implementation' and 'socio-economic dimension' (although a final 'grey box' gives a good summary of all the themes of the book).

The book may be a useful overview or introduction to someone beginning to consider the issues surrounding the stress that young people face. Some of the most helpful parts of it are simple, practical exercises which group leaders could add to their repertoires. It is very ambitious in its scope which is where the problem with it lies.

In attempting to provide the reader with a crash course in young peoples' issues, health promotion, cognitive behavioural interventions, social and study skills, it skims over the surface of some very complex areas. Would it be right, for example, for the group leader, whose training is unspecified, to 'try asking young people: Is their weight below normal and Have people commented that they look thin'? These issues have to be approached with caution, respect and expertise

Is school, in fact, the right setting for such a programme and are teachers (even when in 'shifting roles') best placed to lead them, given their main role of educators and disciplinarians. How relaxed is a student going to be when the setting in which s/he is learning about coping with stress may well be stressful in itself and how willing to share personal material?

The author believes her book is important because there is 'a dearth of both formal and informal resources for practitioners in helping young people to cope with stress'. It is surprising she has not come across the publications of, among others, The Trust for the Study of Adolescence and other social skills material being used by practitioners (e.g. youth workers, counsellors) in both school and community settings. Highlighting the amount of stress present for young people can only be helpful but is it realistic though to imagine that armed with one slim 'practical guide' a practitioner could run a safe and effective programme to combat this stress? Surely our young people deserve more expertise and resources than this.

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Allan Percival
No Sex Please – We're BB
Anecdotal BB Memories 1951-2003
Anchorage Publications 2006
ISBN 0-9550311-0-9
£14.95 (pbk)
pp500

Jack House

At any one time I normally keep on my reading shelf a work of fiction and one of non-fiction. There were occasions during my reading of this book when I was a little uncertain into which of these categories it best fitted. To a person like myself, once a Boy

member and later an officer in The Boys' Brigade, and having over the years had a lifelong interest in the movement, many of the author's personal recollections and reflections seemed, initially, to move beyond the realms of reality. Especially so, arising from within an organisation which since its founding in 1883 has proudly declaimed as an object 'The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys, and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverance, Discipline, Self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness'.

Yet the ultimate reality of what is recounted is vouched for by Percival's own impeccable credentials. Having served in the ranks and as a company officer, he was subsequently employed by the Brigade for some 43 years. During this time he served for a quarter of a century as the Regional Field Officer in the North of England and later as Resource Centre manager and Secretary of the International Committee. All this leading up to his being made redundant, with very little warning! Thus he had wide experience of the Brigade and its workings at local, regional and national level.

These 500 pages of recollections and reflections arising from these long years of Brigade membership are variously personal, partial, passionate, penetrating, challenging, even shocking – and quite unputdownable! Read as an adjunct to my own academic research into the growth and development of the B.B. in one particular locality, Percival's revelations have certainly caused me to re-examine my own view as to what the movement was about in the second half of the twentieth century.

Many of the authors recollections and reflections, as hinted, bring little credit to The Boys' Brigade movement generally or to many named paid officials or voluntary officers who have served during the period under review at national, district, battalion or company level. There are numerous accounts of personal conflicts, infightings and antagonisms, arising from misplaced tribal and parochial loyalties, petty jealousies, overweening personal ambitions and the stubborn clinging to outdated traditions and methodologies. Startling examples are chronicled of personal and corporate incompetence in the management of Brigade affairs, especially in the areas of financial control and the stewardship of resources. There are revelations of a lack of even basic professionalism in the treatment of paid employees, let alone any hint of the application of a Christian standard of morality, as might be expected in the B.B. And, sadly, there are instances noted of personal self indulgence in, amongst other things, the apparent personalising of the Brigade's historic memorabilia and in the over imbibing of alcohol. Perhaps, strangest of all, there is some evidence presented of what might seem to be a destructive Masonic influence at work in the movement. All of these propensities in a movement proudly claiming historical pre-eminence amongst the Christian inspired voluntary youth organisations and a movement whose membership would seem to have been largely and naively oblivious to what was going on in its name.

Doubtless many B.B. people will regret the publication of this book, seeing it as an attempt by an embittered individual to wash the movement's dirty linen in public. In fact, I am given to understand that an application by the author to advertise its publication in The Boys' Brigade Gazette was refused. It is also interesting that the book receives no mention in the April 2006 edition of that official journal either. However, in spite of the apparent ferocity of his criticism of so many within the Brigade during the period under review, in an after word, the author stresses his continued commitment to the movement and its Christian object,

although he would like to amend and shorten the wording to 'Challenging young people with the gospel of Jesus Christ'.

I hope that B.B. people in particular and many others engaged in work with young people in our society will read this book, on the basis that it provides a far reaching, if perhaps partial, insight into The Boys' Brigade movement and its doings in the decades 1950-2000 in particular to issues such as the ongoing debates around the admission of Girls into membership, appropriate programmes and activities, particularly for older members, uniform, devolution, falling membership and even the Christian object of the movement. This book has caused me to ponder seriously as to the reasons the B.B. movement has survived, which in spite of considerable numerical decline, especially amongst teenage members, has even in some places seemed to flourish. As a Christian minister, whose own entry into a faith community came through membership of a company of The Boys' Brigade, I might want to suggest that the prime reason for this phenomenon is a belief in a divine working through, and even in spite of, the examples of human frailty revealed by the author. Others, having read this book may wish to proffer other reasons. Certainly, Percival provides much material to assist such pondering. Again, having read and re read the book, I have been forced to consider the motivation of those who seek to serve and work with young people in the B.B. and similar organisations and the dangerous ease with which such a leadership role can become the basis of a personal ego trip – something against which a Criminal Records Bureau check does not safeguard!

Two endnotes. First, I was surprised by the large number of literal and several important factual errors e.g. 'the Flying Scotsman' was a LNER (not GNER) 'giant' (p.118), whilst the Maxwell printing empire was situated in Headington, not Headingley (p.74). Was the book ever properly proofread? Secondly, you have to read to page 148 before you can appreciate the title!

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Peter Aggleton, Andrew Ball and Purnima Mane (eds)
Sex, Drugs and Young People: International Perspectives
Routledge 2006
ISBN 0-415-32878-0
No price given (pbk)
pp224

Richard Kimberlee

A well respected professor of education, who has written extensively on the issues of youth and education has teamed up with a Senior Strategy Adviser from the World Health Organization's Department of HIV/AIDS and a Policy expert from the Joint United Nations' Programme on HIV/AIDS to provide us with a collection of essays on the issues of sex, sexuality, illicit drug use and substance use. Issues, as the book demonstrates, that remain the focus of an almost perpetual and universal moral panic in nation-states across the world when discussed in conjunction with young people's lives. Aiming to inform

professional service providers working with young people the book delivers a series of very interesting chapters on sex and drugs in different contexts (e.g. prisons, the military) and through different lifestyle choices (e.g. prostitution and same-sex relationships) that young people often escape into or encounter in their transition to adult statuses.

Clearly declaring at the start of the book that with increased globalisation it is important and indeed enlightening to get a broader understanding of young people's drug use and sexual behaviour in different zones of the world, the book delivers exactly this. As a reference book, researchers, academics and professionals working with young people could dip into various chapters and use it as a useful starting point to locate evidence and research on a whole range of health issues and themes. These are as broad as the extent and nature of poverty amongst young people worldwide, to more focused like the impact of harm reduction strategies on indigenous communities in Canada. The chapter by Hunt provides a very useful collection of data on illicit drug use but also offers the reader a very clear and concise outline of methodological issues frequently associated with data collection in this field. A subject often ignored by policy makers and practitioners.

The editors' opening chapter takes us through the dilemma of the optimistic and pathological approaches that have been developed historically by writers, analysts and the media in their discourses on young people. This dilemma in discourse and in the reality of sex and drugs is explored throughout the subsequent chapters. The editors also reinforce the accepted but frequently ignored view that young people are not homogeneous and demonstrate that their lives are structured by gender, ethnicity, risk, poverty etc. The latter is explored extensively in an excellent chapter by Rivers et al who remind us that nearly half the people on the planet are under 25, and that developing countries are home to 85% of the world's young people. Also, in contrast to the breadth of quantitative data in this book, several chapters lead the reader to explore more qualitative themes like the discourses surrounding themes of drug use among same-sex attracted young people where public and private consumption is shown by Howard and Arcuri to provide a variety of meanings for young people living in the developing world.

For professionals who work as service providers the array of evidence presented in this volume reinforces the importance of developing a broad understanding of young people's complex lives and it urges them to use programmes that will meaningfully engage with young people's conceptions and discourses on issues of sexual health and substance abuse. It is clear that in the face of global poverty, health programmes frequently fail to do this and they rarely take account of young people's lack of social and economic opportunities. Overs and Castle's review of policy and programmes to deal with young people who sell sex and use drugs frighteningly documents violent programmes unleashed by some state forces. Unfortunately many initiatives have failed to include active, agency forces in civil society and digress instead to perpetuating the pathological discourses of young people as 'collections of difficulties and problems'.

The message from all of these chapters is a reminder of the importance of empowering young people with rights and the need for policy makers to encourage the development of positive policies to address sex and drug issues. When young children escape to the streets and positively valorise prostitution (for whatever reason) it is very clear that policy makers

and practitioners still need to put far greater investment in understanding local cultural processes in order to create and sustain effective programmes with and for the world's population of young people where the effects of poverty, social exclusion and inequality are most firmly felt. All too often across the world, policy has failed because it has always been based on assumptions of blame and at best offers only tokenistic participatory opportunities, if at all.

Where the book has it limits is in its portrayal and contribution to the understanding of the issue of global power. It is clearly strong on justifying and providing evidence to encourage national and global state structures to adopt and respect children's rights as a bulwark against repressive and harmful social policy and as a tool to empower young people to embrace the heterogeneous, local, contexts in which they live their lives and encounter risks. But none of the authors ever fully provide policy makers or practitioners with any understanding of power and/or globalization. This is strange given its declaration of offering International Perspectives. There is no discussion of globalization and yet in various places it rears its head e.g. in reference to young people's common cultural pursuits across nation states (Bullock) and the global labels of same-sex relations (Overs et al). Is this a new era or are young people today inheriting familiar internationalized challenges similar to the colonial injustices of the past that has prevented indigenous young people from developing adequate foundations for health and well being (Saggars)? This is not a complaint. The discourses on international sex, drugs and young people outlined here are broad, but in terms of developing internationalised structural understanding of global forces, professionals working with young people would get very little insight as to the nature of these dynamic structures. They might even get confused as to how they spell homogeneous.

Richard Kimberlee, Senior research Fellow, University of the West of England, Bristol.

A. Bancroft, S. Wilson, S. Cunningham-Burle, K. Backett-Milburn and H. Masters
Parental Drug and Alcohol Misuse: resilience and transition among young people
Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2004
ISBN 978 1 85935 248 9
£13.95
pp42

Willie McGovern

This report seeks to build on findings from the Hidden Harms Agenda and Getting Our Priorities Right, and seeks to describe and analyse the social, economic and psychological impact of parental substance use on young people. It discusses how young people affected by substance use, cope with their daily living experiences and how this affects their transitions into adulthood.

There are a plethora of sociological and policy documents that argue parental substance use can have a detrimental effect on the social, economical and psychological development of young people. However, whilst I accept this can be the case I do not agree that these numbers have significantly grown as the report argues. Not least because there are now

more robust methods of data analysis relating to the numbers of parents who have substance use issues and children. I also believe that there are a large number of young people who have experienced social isolation and economic deprivation as well as the difficulty in the transition into adulthood who have not had parents with significant substance use issues.

Methodologically I find it difficult to agree that young people at the age of 27 can have a realistic memory of their childhood such as those mentioned in the study as it is difficult to conceptualise your position and the factors which inhibit or contribute towards your development at a young age. I also disagree that having extended responsibilities in childhood like caring for others, cleaning houses and looking after siblings is necessarily a bad thing. I support the view, and I guess the majority of youth workers would agree (rightly or wrongly), that taking responsibility and identifying your role within the family unit is essential for young people.

Overall the report is communitarian in orientation and only mentions the economic and social deprivation experienced by parents and young people briefly three times. The discussion surrounds the role of parents, extended family, neighbours and the wider community for the lack of support in young people's lives. The report evokes a somewhat purist model of parenting and the skills required to be a good parent. Unfortunately there is no data from parents or relating to what was happening for them at the time of their substance use, something that weakens the impact of the report. Further criticisms must be levelled at the role of young people in manipulating their parents. Only two references are made throughout the report to how young people preferred their parents to be under the influence of substances. On page 15 the account of a young persons attempts to collude and support their parents use could have been explored more robustly. Certainly I have seen young people manipulate their substance using parents emotionally and financially on numerous occasions.

I would like to draw attention to the sections of the report that focus on resilience and transitions. These two sections could have been more robust in their arguments and explanations. In citing Furlong and Cartmel (1997) the authors indicate that many young people are still disadvantaged by socio and economic position. However, a more appropriate frame might have been adopted by referring to the Introduction of that publication which emphasises how young people now face a set of risks, choices and life chances which were unknown or apparent to their parents.

There is a commonly held empiricist view that substantial numbers of young people go on to use drugs, significantly Heroin, as a consequence of their parents usage. This suggests that young people are passively responding to the norms and values of the household, despite not agreeing with this. However it is also evident that many used drugs with their peers-possibly irrespective of what was happening in the household or to their parents. Finally in terms of policy development it would seem that only those young people who have been in care have accessed services. One must ask if this position could be rectified by incorporating this hidden population's needs into an assessment package whenever adults with responsibility for children attend drug services.

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Ann Wheal
Adolescence: Positive approaches for working with young people
Russell House Publishing, 2004
ISBN 1 – 903855 – 42 – X
£14.95
pp. 151

Naomi Stanton

Musgrove (1964) claimed 'adolescence was invented along with the steam engine' thereby suggesting this crucial stage of a young person's life is a mere creation to compensate for the rise of the machine and consequent loss of the traditional work undertaken by young people. I would argue that in pre-industrial revolution culture, there was a gross negligence of the physical and emotional transitions of young people during adolescence, and the uncertainties they face. Wheal recognises the importance of this transitional time from childhood to adulthood. As she explains:

As they pass through adolescence one can expect alternating times of calm and conflict. Each time a young person is prompted by a new opportunity to become more independent they may experience a surge of enthusiasm or excitement. Since they are facing a new and unfamiliar challenge, they may also feel afraid and overwhelmed. (p. 5)

Wheal acknowledges the importance of this stage in defining the young person's individuality, stability and overall personality for the rest of their life which is contrary to Musgrove's belief that adolescence is a 'fictitious' construct. Certainly the present government invests substantial (if often insufficient) funds in employing various professionals to support and guide individuals through this vulnerable time of life. Wheal's text seeks to guide such professionals in their work with adolescent young people.

This edition differs from an earlier one in acknowledging the current government's agenda and takes account of the contemporary participation and citizenship objectives. The writing style is down-to-earth with a layout that adopts short paragraphs and frequently uses bullet-points. The author chooses not to engage in third person narrative making the overall feel of the text more personal. The layout also helps to make it accessible to workers of varying academic ability.

Wheal stresses the values of 'emancipation' from the outset and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) clearly provides a cornerstone regarding her approach to working with young people. She adopts a holistic perspective acknowledging the diversity of human nature thus rejecting science as a strategic method of work with young people. She states that she 'does not set out to give all the answers, more to enhance the awareness and understanding of teenage years and to give some suggestions for strategies which could assist in achieving success with, and for, young people' (p. 3). Despite this desire for a holistic approach, elements of reductionism and behaviourism are present in the ensuring chapters. The one on communication is set around 'transitional analysis' – very much a reductionist explanation of human interactions. The subsequent chapter on behaviour management acknowledges individuality but frequently assumes a behaviourist approach

looking towards positive and negative reinforcement. Wheal promotes 'rewarding' young people's good behaviour as a more effective method than punishment for bad behaviour, relating this back to transactional analysis. At times the text seems to lay out an exact course of action for a worker to take in dealing with difficult behaviour. A worker attempting to do everything 'by the book', so to speak, thereby risks sacrificing spontaneity and their natural ability to create something unique. However Wheal does take time to remind us that she is offering suggestions not a precise methodological procedure for the worker:

> *Together the chapters on Successful Communication and Care and Control provide a wide variety of approaches for working with young people. These will not automatically work immediately or all the time. What is needed is to practice getting the communication right and then learning the theories and developing them to suit your own personality. The confidence of having strategies available for a wide variety of situations will improve your chances of success.* (p. 89)

The book recognises the importance of the worker's relationship with the young person if they are to be effective in supporting them through adolescence. Wheal acknowledges every aspect of this 'relationship' and examines the factors impacting on the chances of 'success'. This includes an entire chapter dedicated to the value of ensuring the confidence and wellbeing of the worker, something often overlooked by the under-funded, over-pressured agencies employing them. She also recognises the versatility required of the worker; although the latter relates first and foremost to young people, they may often need to communicate with other professionals and adults involved with a given young person. The book promotes inter-agency work, and values the involvement of parents, wherever this is feasible, without undermining the young person's right to control and confidentiality.

Wheal accepts that society and the media impact on what is considered unacceptable behaviour by young people. Noting:

> *How often does it happen that the influence of others affects our own views of what is and is not acceptable – it might be politicians, the media, our next door neighbour or, of course, our partner. It is therefore important to think about exactly what unacceptable behaviour is and how that differs from what you are in fact getting. If the difference is negligible it will often be better to take no further action, merely making a note of the occasion in case something similar occurs in the future.* (p. 79)

However on the following page Wheal suggests some examples of behaviours young people may not realise are unacceptable. Some of these appear quite trivial, for instance 'drinking from a bottle', 'keeping boots/shoes on in the house' and 'putting feet up on chairs'. Personally I would struggle with challenging young people for things I am often guilty of doing myself, things I do not necessarily consider to be wrong. I have at times, for example, made a point of drinking from a bottle where I, a female, have been handed a glass with a bottled drink, whilst my male companion has not. We can discuss with young people what images these and similar behaviours may give to others, so that we can make informed decisions whether or not to adopt or reject them. We can educate young people concerning the need to respect others. However I believe that insisting such behaviour is unacceptable

can reinforce the negative labelling of young people. I recently had a conversation with an adult who told me that they did not like the way in which you people dress in baseball caps and hooded sweatshirts – clothes they felt were designed to intimidate strangers. My reaction was not to ask the young people to dress differently, but to question the stereotypical attitude of the adult, to ask them, for example, to examine how the media had enhanced their fears. It is not the dress style that is unacceptable (after all someone could just as easily refer to skin colour in the same way) but the prejudice held by so many adults towards young people. Wheal does not address this issue of adult prejudice here and the fact that it is not necessarily the young person that needs to change. Wheal does, however, acknowledge that perhaps 'we should not impose our own class values on young people' (p. 79), and it is clear that she encourages challenging such behaviours only in order to make the young person appear in a better light within a culture often ruled by etiquette. She promotes discussion so that young people may better be able to interpret how others may view their actions.

The closing chapters look at formal education, health, equality and young people's rights with regards to the legal system. The 'education' chapter acknowledges the widespread frustration amongst young people with the inherent authoritarianism of schooling and provides useful suggestions for those working in schools. Wheal encourages its professionals to be more holistic in their approach and to be aware of individual differences. She believes lessons should be relevant and lively; they often seem so separate from reality. Wheal states that teachers should not presume that young people know the value of education. The 'health' chapter covers a broad range of health issues with an over-arching consideration of young people's rights in this area. It encourages all those working with young people to engage in issue based discussions and activities around, for example, sexual health and drinking, as well as certain illnesses, for example how to recognise the symptoms of Meningitis. The chapter on 'promoting equality' displays a firm commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and provides practical guidelines for working with those from minority groups. It pays special attention to the question of adopting appropriate speech and actions. The chapter on 'young people's rights and the law' is an informative practical reference manual for a multitude of issues the worker may encounter notable with regards to care, benefits and the justice system.

Overall the book offers a strong reference guide for practitioners and an array of helpful suggestions as to how specific issues or topics might be incorporated into practice. Wheal encourages professionals to think about some of the strategies they employ and how young people respond to different approaches. Humanistic values underlie the text encouraging professionals to be holistic and empathic in their relations with young people. Wheal demonstrates a strong commitment to the rights of young people, and their need to be informed, empowered and even challenged in a way that enables them to take an active role in running their own lives.

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Tim Bateman and John Pitts
The RHP Companion to Youth Justice
Russell House Publishing, 2005
ISBN 1-903855-49-7
£29.95 (pbk)
pp286

Steve Rogowski

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 reformed youth justice not least by the introduction of Youth Justice Teams (YOTs) comprising representatives of the police, social work, probation, education, health and others. New programmes and sentencing options for young offenders were also developed. As Rod Morgan notes in the foreword these developments can be seen as a New Labour success story or, and the view I take, as a dismal policy failure. This is because the number of children and young people in custody remains stubbornly high and many who should not be criminalised continue to be so. Also, again as Morgan notes, we do not treat children and young people with the respect they deserve, we continue to demonise them and a discourse of control rather than care dominates discussion about them and their occasional disturbing behaviour.

The book itself has thirty-nine chapters written by practitioners, managers, policy makers, penal reformers, Youth Justice Board members and academics. It is divided into five parts: youth crime and the youth justice apparatus, the principles, process and face-to-face work in youth justice, and lastly debates and controversies. As such the chapters are broad ranging and far reaching covering issues such as the recent history and legal framework for youth justice, children's human rights and proportionality in youth justice, reprimands, final warnings and the various court orders including custody, working with young offenders, their parents and victims, and issues in relation to gender, race and informal approaches to youth crime.

The editors in the introduction make the key point that although YOTs may be better equipped to deal with young people in trouble, because they can draw upon a broad range of resources, their creation went hand-in-hand with a repudiation of earlier evidence of the deleterious effect of early induction into the criminal justice system. As such diversion from the system into non-stigmatising youth provision should be the way forward but instead we have YOTs aiming to respond to any indication of anti-social behaviour by nipping it in the bud. The overall effect is to spread the net of the youth justice system involving a clamp down on anti-social behaviour which in itself is not criminal, and drawing in children, some

below the age of criminal responsibility, whose offending would not have previously have warranted a criminal justice response. This is surely a sad state of affairs.

Pitts goes on to provide a concise history of youth justice noting the demise of the welfare approach (a focus on needs rather than deeds) of the early 1960s/early 1970s, the resulting 'back to justice'/'nothing works' orthodoxy of the 1980s leading to the successful delinquency management strategies. Unfortunately, following youth riots and the Jamie Bulger case, the tide turned in the 1990s to the 'penal populism' which is still with us and has led to the increased criminalisation and incarceration of young people.

As a social work practitioner I was particularly interested in the section on face-to-face work with young people and their parents. Like other work (see for example Burnett 2004) the importance of the relationship between the worker and the young person/parents is rightly stressed. Rather than, for example, simply emphasising cognitive-behavioural programmes, and the deficit model of parenting whereby if parents simply did x, y and z then all would be well. However, other than a mention of social action group work (see Mullender and Ward 1991) in relation to enabling young offenders to understand the circumstances which give rise to their predicament and take collective action to change or improve these circumstances, there is little mention of what might be termed a radical/critical practice (see Rogowski 2004). This entails addressing the social problems – poverty, poor housing, lack of meaningful educational and employment opportunities etc – of young offenders and their families as opposed to simply offending behaviour per se. In addition though these social problems have to be seen in terms of the inequalities of wealth and power in present society and as such issues of race, gender and class come to the fore.

For me the highlight of the book is Goldson's chapter advocating informal approaches for dealing with youth crime – the opposite of what is currently happening. It compliments much of the case made in Bateman's and Pitts' introduction. As such informal approaches draw upon labelling theories which contend that the formal interventions of youth justice stigmatise children and young people by applying criminogenic labels, particularly on working class and black children and young people. This consolidates and confirms criminogenic 'identities' thereby producing further offending. Informalism is the antidote to this situation whereby children and young people are diverted away from the formal justice system (such as was attempted in the 1980s) into informal configurations which provide support, guidance, advice, opportunities and the like. Meanwhile, state policy should address the social and economic conditions which give rise to young offending, particularly poverty and inequality. All of this may seem naïve and idealistic but is grounded in research evidence. Not least, again as Bateman and Pitts point out, this time in the conclusion, diversionary strategies are cost effective and work in terms of having low reconviction rates and by satisfying victims. Unfortunately such research sits uncomfortably with the government's determination to continue out toughing the Tories in the law and order stakes.

Overall then this is an excellent introductory text. It is clear, concise and easy to read. As such it should be essential reading for all those interested in young offending and the youth justice system.

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Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith
Informal Education: conversation, democracy and learning. (revised edition)
Heretics Press, 2005
ISBN 1 900219 29 8
£12.99
pp. 142

Jon Ord

This book was on its first publication, and continues to be with this the third, revised edition, an important text. It communicates a clear vision of the role of informal education as a medium for the development of learning, association, and ultimately in the development of democracy itself.

For many it communicates the essential ethos and methodology underpinning youth and community work. The book remains largely consistent with previous editions, and its central messages have remained unaltered. For advocates of informal education this will be seen as a strength. For others the lack of adaptation to changing times in the public sector will be seen as evidence that it has become an outmoded method of communicating the work. Indeed the 10 years between the initial publication and this edition has witnessed a widening of the gulf between the NYA, as principle advocates for the youth work profession and those who see themselves as informal educators. The NYA have embraced the emphasis on 'outcomes' and accountability required of youth work and Jeffs and Smith's *Informal Education* has quite clearly stood in opposition to it arguing 'the evaluation and audit culture is a canker, propagating dishonesty and punishing the honest' (p.90).

The authors explain how informal education is dependant upon and develops out of conversation. It is dialogue which provides the basis for learning. Importantly this is a conversation amongst equals: 'To fully engage in conversation... We have to be with that person, rather than seeking to act upon them' (p.31). They go on to explain how conversation provides us with the foundation of another important feature of informal education – 'the process'. Informal education does not develop according to a prearranged

plan but out of a process of engagement. The education is learning in and through life. The educator 'assesses', 'questions', 'discerns' what is going on, in an attempt to facilitate learning. It is perhaps this book more than any other which has established 'going with the flow' as a central tenet – responding to what occurs, what arises, following threads and seeing where they lead -this is the essence of informal education.

Another defining aspect of informal education is its commitment to 'fostering democracy', to achieve this workers must actively recognise and share common interests. As well as 'actively engage with, and seek to strengthen, those situations and movements that embody democratic values and draw people together' (p.48). Although aside from the ways in which workers engage with democracy in people's everyday lives, there is also a commitment to certain political realities. As the authors explain 'fostering democratic processes involves questioning common sense views, ideas about the naturalness of markets, the right to private gain, and the inevitability of hierarchical structures...' (p.47).

The text is not devoid of weaknesses. In particular two problems relating to the issues of values and curriculum respectively would benefit from resolution. First Jeffs and Smith are clear that informal education is based upon a set of 'core values' they describe as: 'Respect for persons'; 'The promotion of well being'; 'Truth'; 'Democracy'; and 'Fairness and Equality'. These are however broad and general. As such: 'they not only fail to distinguish a youth worker from a school teacher, but could equally apply to a social worker, nurse, or even a police officer. In fact they could be said to be the fundamental values of any liberal democracy' (Banks 2001:64). The authors' inability to specify in more detail the uniqueness of informal education's values is a weakness. Not least because as the authors themselves recognise, these 'values are debated' and agreement is not universal, this ultimately means that individual's biases and preferences could overly inform a worker's own practice, and yet still be consistent with the core values.

The second point relates to what appears to be an inconsistency in relation to the authors approach to curriculum; whereby they appear to hold contradictory views. On the one hand maintaining that: 'In fact it is the very absence of curriculum that is a key defining feature [of informal education].'(p.81); whilst on the other maintain that: 'informal educators can and must employ more formal approaches' which they specifically describe as the 'negotiated curriculum' and the 'set curriculum'. One can't define an educational practice by the absence of a particular feature (in this case curriculum) and yet recommend that this feature is in fact a necessary part of it.

Finally *Informal Education* can perhaps best be seen as a moral book. One in which the educator is encouraged to be their own independent moral agent: being clear about their own values, making choices, formulating judgements: 'our first concern should be to do what is good and right, not what is correct' (p. 102). There is a tendency within this formulation that the central messages of informal education will be undermined by what could be described as the 'new professionalism' of youth work. This book however remains, perhaps more so than ever, an important text for those entering social professions, such as youth work. They will be working in a climate of increasing accountability and have demands placed upon them for 'discernable products' in their work, (both as a specific plan of work, as well as measurable outcomes of it). It is therefore important to remind them

of the importance of conversation, the centrality of, both personal and professional, values which are at the heart of their work; as well as the need to 'be with' the people they are working with, rather than be motivated by a desire to act upon them or for them. It is not least a salutary reminder of the importance of process in their work.

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