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Political Education, Political Parties and the Party System in Britain

**DAVID DENVER and
GORDON HANDS**

Introduction

The question of formal political education in schools has been controversial in Britain for some

time. A movement promoting political education has been in existence since the 1960s, centred mainly on the Politics Association, an organisation for teachers of Politics in schools and colleges. Backed by evidence of widespread ignorance about politics among young people (Stradling, 1977), the group developed a 'Programme for Political Education' in the mid-1970s which led to considerable public debate (Crick and Porter, 1978). Political education, it was argued, was necessary to combat 'political illiteracy' and to help create a better informed electorate. On the other hand, there has been a fairly widespread suspicion of formal political education, on the grounds that this is not an appropriate subject for schools, and more vociferous opponents, particularly on the right, have argued that political education is likely to become little more than a vehicle for indoctrination (for example, Scruton et al., 1985).

The supporters of improved political education have had some success, particularly with regard to 'A-level' courses. All of the English examination boards have replaced their old courses on 'British Constitution' with new ones on 'British Politics', which avoid legalistic constitutional description and concentrate on the way British politics actually works - the analysis of party politics, electoral behaviour, pressure groups, policy issues and so on. Courses of this kind are being offered in an increasing number of schools and taken by an increasing number of pupils. But there are many who remain pessimistic about the provision made, especially for pupils who leave school at the minimum age (Robins, 1988), and in the 1980s pleas were still being made for a more extensive programme of political education. Mardle and Taylor (1987), for example, reporting the results of a survey of 15-16 year old English schoolchildren carried out in 1985, reaffirmed that 'the present state of political knowledge and literacy is appallingly low and has not improved in some ten years'. Billig and Cochrane (1987) found widespread ignorance, apathy and disillusion and surprisingly high levels of support for the extreme right among young people in the West Midlands. Their conclusions were explicit:

The policy implications are clear. The current reluctance to introduce political studies into the school curriculum needs to be re-evaluated. The dangers to a democracy of ignoring political education are likely to outweigh the controversies which might attend its introduction (Billig and Cochrane, 1987 p 51).

In parallel with this controversy over the proper extent and scope of political education in

schools, there has been a continuing academic debate over the effects of formal political education. Previous research on this subject has produced surprisingly negative results. The seminal study was carried out by Langton and Jennings among American high school students in the 1960s. They tested the effects of the civics curriculum on a range of political attitudes and perceptions and concluded:

Our findings certainly do not support the thinking of those who look to the civics curriculum in American high schools as even a minor source of political socialisation. We found not one single case out of the ten [aspects of political attitudes and behaviour] examined in which the civics curriculum was significantly associated with students' political orientations (Langton and Jennings, 1968 p 863)

A review of the more recent American literature (Westholm, Lindquist and Niemi, 1987) reaches no more promising conclusion:

the empirical evidence concerning school effects on the political development of children and adolescents has been anything but unequivocal . . . a number of studies assessing variations by curriculum content as well as a host of other school-related factors have reported weak or non-existent effects.

In Britain, confirmation of Langton and Jennings' findings has been provided by Mercer's study of Scottish schoolchildren's commitment to democratic values (Mercer, 1973) and by Stradling (1977). Stradling investigated the political awareness of young people of school leaving age (15-16 years) and his results 'reveal the rather surprising fact that those pupils who have received some formal political education at school appear to fare little better on the political knowledge tests than those who have not' (p 36). His general conclusion is that his study 'leads one to doubt if much of the political education provided in schools today is contributing to the development of students' political literacy' (p 4).

In this paper we report some results of a research project in which we re-examined the impact of formal political education upon the political knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of young people.¹ The study involved a series of surveys of a panel of 16-19 year old students in 154 schools and colleges in England and Wales in which British Politics is offered as an A-level course. The first survey, was carried out in December 1986 and January 1987 and involved 6,250 respondents, of whom 52 per cent were studying politics and 48 per cent

were pursuing other A-level courses. Two subsequent survey waves, involving sub-sets or our original respondents, were carried out in April-June 1987 (close to the date of the 1987 general election) and in March 1988. All three surveys took the form of self-completion questionnaires administered in school time by teachers. This paper is largely based on results from the first two survey waves.

Elsewhere we have presented results relating to political knowledge and to differences in political opinions between boys and girls (Denver and Hands 1990a, 1990b). Here we deal with attitudes towards and perceptions of political parties. Political parties are, of course, central to democratic politics - indeed, in the popular perception it may be said that politics is party politics. Furthermore, our respondents are young people who were coming of political age at a time of considerable upheaval in the British party system. During the 1970s and 1980s, among the electorate as a whole, voting behaviour became more volatile and unpredictable. The influence of long term factors such as class and party identification upon party choice in elections seemed to be in decline, and there was something of a fragmentation of the party system (Denver, 1989). The Social Democratic Party (SDP) was formed in 1981, largely as a result of a split in the Labour Party and the SDP/Liberal Alliance went on to achieve post-war records for third party support in the 1983 and 1987 elections. After that, the two parties formally merged to form the Social and Liberal Democrats (SLD). More recently, in the 1989 European elections, the Green Party suddenly emerged as an electoral force to be reckoned with.

Our respondents, then, have had no experience of stable, two-party politics based on class which was the norm in Britain for thirty years after the Second World War. Rather, their formative years were ones in which the party system and party support were fluid. Given this, their understanding of and orientations to parties and the party system are of particular interest.

In what follows, then, we concentrate on three interrelated themes. First, we consider party identification among our respondents - the extent to which they feel psychological attachment to (or repulsion from) the different parties. Second, we explore their understanding of the ideological dimension underlying the party system. Finally, we consider the factors which might explain how these young people make their choice of party. In each case, we examine the extent to which the formal study of politics affects attitudes and perceptions.

Party Identification

As indicated above, party identification refers to a psychological or emotional sense of attachment to a party. Party identification has been found to be widespread among voters in many liberal democratic states (Harrop and Miller, 1987 pp. 130-45) and the concept has been a central one in studies of voting behaviour in Britain (Butler and Stokes, 1969). This generalised allegiance to a party or 'partisan self-image' is, it has been argued, the most fundamental link between the individual citizen and the party system.

In each wave of our survey we asked respondents the

standard questions designed to elicit both the direction and strength of their party identification.² A number of hypotheses might be suggested here. First, it might be argued that our respondents as a whole would be less likely to have an identification than electors in general, and that where they had an identification it would be weaker. Although party identification is largely inherited from the family, it develops and strengthens as people get older and our respondents are, of course, still young. A second view would suggest again that we would find lower levels of party identification among our respondents, but would see this as a function not of their age but of the fact that they are members of a generation which has come of age in an era of partisan dealignment - a general weakening of commitment to parties. If this were the case, we might expect levels of party identification to be particularly low among politics students, since there is evidence that dealignment has proceeded more quickly among those sectors of the electorate which are best informed about politics. Thirdly, 'classical' party identification theory would suggest that identification should be stronger among the better educated and the better informed. This would lead us to expect higher levels of identification among our respondents than among the electorate as a whole, and higher levels among politics students than among non-politics students. Table 1 shows the extent to which our respondents identified with a party and the strength of their identification in our first two survey waves. For comparison, figures from the 1987 British Election Survey (BES) survey are also given.

TABLE 1:
The Existence and Strength of Party Identification

	WAVE 1		WAVE 2		All	B.E.S. Survey %
	politics students %	non-politics students %	politics students %	non-politics students %		
With Identification	82	70	87	81	85	86
Very Strong	18	9	25	15	21	19
Fairly Strong	43	36	49	47	48	42
Not very strong/none ..	38	55	26	38	31	39

Note: The percentages are based on the responses of 2,421 politics and 1,847 non-politics students who returned questionnaires in both of the first two survey waves. The B.S.E. figures are from Heath et al., 1988.

Since it is well established that levels of party identification tend to be at their highest around the time of a general election, the figures for our respondents which are most comparable with the BES figures are those for wave 2. On this evidence our respondents as a whole do not differ markedly from the electorate as a whole. Of all our respondents, 85% had a party identification, compared with 86% in the BES survey. A slightly larger proportion were very strong identifiers or fairly strong identifiers, while a rather smaller proportion were not very strong identifiers or had no identification. There is no evidence here, then, of an especially dealigned generation. Despite the fact that our respondents are relatively well educated, they show somewhat stronger party identification than the electorate at large.

Of particular interest here, however, are the differences

between politics and non-politics students. In both survey waves (more noticeably in wave 1 which was held between elections) politics students are clearly more likely to identify with parties and more likely to identify strongly. Formal teaching of politics does not appear to weaken party attachments. On the contrary, the 'classical' theory - that people who know more about and are more interested in politics are more likely to identify with parties - is supported by our data.

**TABLE 2:
Direction of Party Identification**

	WAVE 1		WAVE 2	
	politics students %	non-politics students %	politics students %	non-politics students %
Conservative	46	50	44	50
Labour	30	27	29	23
Liberal/SDP/Alliance	19	19	23	2
Other	4	4	4	3

Note: This table is restricted to respondents who had a party identification. In Wave 1 the Ns were 1,981 politics and 1,277 non-politics students; In Wave 2, 2,109 and 1,498 respectively.

Table 2 shows the parties with which our respondents identified in the two survey waves. There is no material difference between politics and non-politics students in respect of the level of support for the Alliance or 'other' parties in either wave, although it is interesting to note that in both groups identification with one of the Alliance parties (or with 'the Alliance' itself) increased in wave 2, which was held close to the general election. Among both sets of students the Conservatives were the most popular party - this is, no doubt, due to the over-representation of middle-class young people among those staying on at school beyond the minimum school-leaving age - but politics students are more inclined to identify with Labour and less inclined to identify with the Conservatives than are non-politics. It is, of course, not necessarily the case that this pattern is a consequence of studying politics. We have, indeed, shown elsewhere (Denver and Hands, 1990c) that, when other variables are taken into account, being a politics student makes little difference to party choice.

In the literature on party identification there is some debate as to whether party identification is actually distinguishable from current voting intention, whether the survey questions used do in fact tap the kind of deep seated commitment suggested by party identification theory (Harrop and Miller, 1987 pp. 138-9). The theory implies that identification should be fairly stable and change only rarely, but critics of the concept have pointed to the fact that some individuals appear to switch identification frequently. When we examined the stability of party identification among our respondents over the three waves of our survey we found that 55% of politics students had the same identification on all three occasions, compared with 45% of non-politics students. (In both cases the commonest form of instability involved switching between having and not having an identification). This gives further support to the conclusion reached above - that politics

**TABLE 3:
Orientations to Political Parties**

	politics students %	non-politics students %
Multi-dimensional orientations.....	77	65
Positive orientations only	7	7
Negative orientations only	9	18
Apathetic	3	6
Others	4	4

Note: The percentages are based on 2,421 politics and 1,847 non-politics students.

students are more likely to have developed a clear party identification than their non-politics peers.

Party identification is a measure of positive affect; it is concerned only with attachment to a party. A more complex indicator of individuals' orientations towards political parties would also involve a negative dimension - how much they dislike the parties. In order to explore this we asked our wave 1 respondents to indicate how much they liked or disliked the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties. Table 3 summarises the responses by showing the proportions of respondents whose orientations to parties could be classified as multi-dimensional (i.e. involving a pattern of liking some parties and disliking others which appeared to be rational); those who showed positive feelings about one party but were neutral about the others; those were entirely negative in their orientations; and those who were apathetic, having no negative or positive feelings about any of the parties. Although the differences between politics and non-politics students are not great, politics students seem more likely to respond fully to the complexity of the party system and are less likely to have only negative feelings or to be apathetic.

Political Parties and the Left-Right Dimension

Political parties in Britain, as elsewhere, are commonly thought of as occupying a distinctive 'ideological space'. At a basic level, the parties are normally conceived in terms of a simple left-right continuum, with Labour being on the left, the Conservatives on the right and the Alliance's component parts in the centre. As a simple test of our respondents' understanding of this basic fact of political life, we asked them in our first survey wave to locate each of the three main British parties on a seven-point, left-right scale. We asked exactly the same question in our third survey wave, which was held 15 months later, and compared the two sets of answers. Table 4 shows the results. We take correct responses to be those which place the Conservatives at one of the three points to the right of centre, labour at one of the three points to the left and the Alliance in one of the three centre positions. As the table shows, the percentages correctly placing the parties are very large. This illustrates the high visibility of the terms 'left' and 'right' in British politics. The results suggest, however, that politics students have a sounder appreciation of the positions of the parties on the left-right scale than do the others.

TABLE 4:
Placing of parties on left-right scale in two survey waves

	politics students %	non-politics students %
Conservative correct twice	94	82
Labour correct twice	92	89
Alliance correct twice	91	80

Note: The percentages are based on the responses of 888 politics and 686 non-politics students.

Simply being able to locate parties on a scale is not, however, a very sophisticated test of the level of understanding of the left-right dimension in politics. We asked our wave 1 respondents, in addition, what positions they believed each party would take on a series of ten policy issues which have traditionally divided the left from the right, such as nationalisation, welfare spending and the redistribution of wealth.³ Using responses to these questions we constructed an index which measured the extent to which the parties were seen, overall, as having left-wing or right-wing policy positions and compared this with how the parties were located on the left-right scale. Because of the difficulty of assigning policy positions to the Alliance they were omitted from this analysis. Labour was positioned to the left both in policy terms and on the left-right scale by 89% of politics and by 71% of non-politics students; the Conservatives to the right in both cases by 87% of politics and 66% of non-politics students. This suggested that politics students have a much clearer understanding of how the terms 'left' and 'right' relate to individual policy issues.

A more direct way of approaching this question is to ask students to define what is meant by the terms 'left' and 'right' in politics, and we did this in an open-ended question in our second survey wave. We coded answers using a scheme originally devised by Butler and Stokes (1969). They classified responses as either multidimensional, uni-dimensional, nominal, minimal or showing no recognition of the meaning of the terms.⁴ The percentages of politics and non-politics students who gave multi-dimensional responses or showed minimal or no recognition of the terms are shown in the first part of Table 5. The differences are marked - almost twice as many politics students give multi-dimensional responses, and substantially smaller proportions show minimal or no recognition. The figures for both groups, however, differ strikingly from those reported by Butler and Stokes in the 1960s. They found that fully 80% of their sample had minimal or no recognition of the concepts 'left' and 'right' (Butler and Stokes, 1969 p.211).

Butler and Stokes also coded the content of respondents' definitions of the terms (although they did not report the results); we have followed this procedure, again using their coding scheme. The figures are shown in section (c) and (d) of the table. Politics students were more likely to offer definitions of 'left' and 'right' which included relatively sophisticated ideological concepts such as 'socialism', 'equality' or 'freedom'. They were also more likely to refer to government intervention in the economy or the welfare role of the

state. Non-Politics students, on the other hand, were more likely than their colleagues to describe left and right in relatively simple terms, such as 'for the working-class' or 'the Conservatives'.

TABLE 5:
The meaning of 'left' and 'right'

	politics students %	non-politics students %
Level of definition:		
(a) % multi-dimensional - left	48	29
- right	48	26
(b) % minimal/no recognition - left	16	25
- right	17	32
Content of definition:		
(c) Left - ideology	68	55
- role of government	33	16
- party	35	43
- policies	12	8
- class	9	11
(d) right - ideology	53	39
- role of government	38	18
- party	33	40
- policies	17	9
- class	6	10

Note: The figures are based on Ns of 2,241 (politics) and 1,847 (non-politics) Percentages in sections (c) and (d) do not total 100 because multiple mentions were coded.

In summary, we have shown that politics students have greater appreciation of the left-right dimension underlying the British Party system. They are better able to place the parties in left-right terms, are able to relate individual policies to positions on the scale more accurately and have a richer understanding of the meaning of 'left' and 'right' in politics. A final aspect of this question which can be considered here relates to how respondents locate themselves on the left-right scale. Table 6 shows how identifiers with the three main parties placed themselves across the entire scale. There is a good deal of interesting detail in this table but two points in particular should be noted. Firstly, non-politics students are more likely not to know where to place themselves on the scale and secondly, fewer politics students place themselves 'incorrectly'.

TABLE 6:
Party identification and self-placement on left/right scale

	LEFT		CENTRE			RIGHT		DK	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Conservative identifiers									
Politics	—	—	1	7	42	34	11	3	(919)
Non-Politics	1	1	2	11	42	27	5	12	(639)
Labour identifiers									
Politics	8	42	38	6	2	1	—	4	(604)
Non-Politics	8	31	34	14	3	1	—	8	(346)
Alliance identifiers									
Politics	—	1	26	47	22	2	1	2	(382)
Non-Politics	—	1	22	49	20	1	—	7	(243)

Note: The numbers on which the percentages are based are shown in brackets

Party identification may be a shorthand guide to political attitudes, but in order to explore the relationship between left-right self-location and policy opinions a little further we use respondents' positions on the ten left-right issues mentioned above. As before, we assigned each respondent a score on an index based on their issue positions, and we compare this with their view of themselves in left-right terms. Since index scores range from -10 to +10 and the left-right scale from 1 to 7, it is difficult to present cross-tabulations of these data in a form that is readily comprehensible. An overall indication of the relationship between the two variables may be obtained, however, by calculating correlation coefficients. For political students the correlation between the issue index score and left-right location was +0.77 and for non-politics students it was +0.66. The self-placement of the former was, then, more accurate, given their policy opinions, and this again supports our conclusion that politics students are in general more knowledgeable about, and more sophisticated in their handling of, the left-right dimension.

Voting and the Bases of Party Choice

While party identification is perhaps the most fundamental link between the individual citizen and the party system, it is voting for parties in elections which ultimately determines the nature of the party system. In this section, therefore, we consider how the young people in our survey came to make up their minds about which party to vote for.

First, however, it is worth investigating the extent to which our respondents would actually vote. Proponents of increased political education in schools believe that if citizens have a greater appreciation of the workings of the political system they will realise the value of participation. To what extent is this expectation fulfilled?

At the time of our first survey, most of our respondents were too young to be eligible to vote. None the less, we asked them how certain they would be to vote in a general election if they were eligible. In our second survey wave, we asked those who were eligible whether they had voted and those who were not whether they would have voted. Table 7 shows the proportions who indicated in the first wave that they would be certain to vote and the proportions in the second wave who said that they had voted or would have voted.

TABLE 7:
Likelihood of voting

	WAVE 1		WAVE 1	
	politics students %	non-politics students %	politics students %	non-politics students %
Certain to vote	73	51	—	—
Would/did vote	—	—	89	80

Note: The percentages are based on 2,421 politics students and 1,847 non-politics students.

In the first wave, substantially more politics than non-politics students indicated that they would be certain to vote. In the second wave the figure is higher for both groups - this is likely to be a consequence both of the proximity of the general election during the second wave and of the somewhat weaker version of the question - but again likely participation by

politics students is greater than that of non-politics students. Turning now to party choice, in each survey wave in addition to eliciting party identification, we asked respondents the standard opinion poll question on current voting intention. In the following analyses we use voting intentions at the time of wave 1 as dependent variables.

There are then in simple terms three basic models of voting behaviour in Britain. The first views party choice as a consequence of social structural location - primarily, in the British context, social class. The second emphasises the socialisation process as producing in individuals a partisan identification which then determines voting choice. The third is an 'issue voting' model, which sees party choice as the outcome of the individual's policy preferences and his or her assessment of party policy positions (Denver, 1989 chs. 2-4; Dunleavy and Husbands, 1985 ch. 1).

Although this subject is not without controversy, the orthodoxy in British electoral studies is that the last twenty years have witnessed a decline in the traditional bases of party choice - involving class and party identification - and a rise in issue voting. Issue voting requires more sophistication on the part of the voter and approximates more closely to what would be expected of the 'ideal' democratic citizen. Many of those who favoured extending political education in schools hoped that it would help to produce such 'ideal' citizens.

Is there any evidence, then, that politics students are more likely to choose a party on the basis of issue preferences? To explore this question we use multivariate analysis. This allows us to assess the relative importance of a number of factors which might affect party choice. The analysis produces an 'r²' statistic, which is a measure of the success with which a dependent variable (party choice in this case) can be predicted on the basis of a range of explanatory factors, and a 't' statistic, which is a measure of the relative contribution of each of the explanatory variable to the prediction.⁵

Our strategy was first to predict our respondents' party choice vote using only class-related and socialisation variables as predictors. (The variables used were father's occupational class, parents' housing tenure, parents' trade union membership and parents' partisanship.) We then added an index of issue preferences to the list of predictor variables. This index combines respondents preferences on a range of 13 policy issues together with their perceptions of the stances of

TABLE 8:
The impact of issue positions on party choice

	politics students		
	Class and Socialisation	Class and Socialisation + Issue Index	+ Change
Conservative vote	0.256	0.550	+0.294
Labour vote	0.256	0.562	+0.306
Alliance vote	0.083	0.199	+0.116
	non-politics students		
Conservative vote	0.278	0.522	+0.244
Labour vote	0.299	0.562	+0.263
Alliance vote	0.109	0.216	+0.107

Note: The figures shown are pseudo-r² statistics derived from logistic regression equations (see footnote 5).

each of the parties on the same issues. By comparing the r^2 statistics produced in the two cases we can assess the effect of issue opinions upon party choice after class and socialisation effects have been taken into account.

Table 8 provides a summary of the results. It can be seen that using social background and socialisation variables alone gives a better prediction of party choice for non-politics than for politics students. The latter, it seems, are less influenced by their social and political background than the former. Adding the issue index sharply increases the r^2 figures in both cases, but the increase is greater for politics students. Examination of the 't' statistics associated with each variable confirms the greater importance of issue positions and perceptions in predicting the party choice of politics students. Table 9 shows the relevant statistics for parents' partisanship and the issue index ('t' values for the three remaining variables are very small in all cases and have been omitted) and it can be seen that the issue index has markedly higher 't' values in the case of politics students.

TABLE 9:
Relative importance of family socialisation and issue preferences

	politics students	
	parents' partisanship	issue index
Conservative vote	12.0	20.7
Labour vote	11.7	20.1
Alliance vote	10.8	13.7
non-politics students		
Conservative vote	12.4	15.6
Labour vote	11.4	15.4
Alliance vote	10.4	11.4

Note: The figures shown are 't' statistics.

This analysis suggests that politics students do approximate more closely than their peers to the 'ideal' democratic voter. Socialisation and social-structural variables are less effective in explaining their choice of party and their preferences on policy issues are clearly more important in determining their vote as compared with non-politics students.

Conclusion

Up to now the results of studies of the effects of the school curriculum have been disappointing for the proponents of increased formal political education in schools. Their claim that this would help to produce a 'politically literate', critical electorate did not appear to be borne out. We have found, however, that there are consistent differences between students who study politics and those who do not in their orientations towards political parties, in their understanding of the ideological dimension underlying British party politics, in their propensity to vote and in relating their choice of party to their opinions about policy. The differences, it would be fair to say, are never very great. This is partly because all young people are exposed to at least some informal political education from the media, family and so on. But politics

students are consistently better informed and view the party system in more complex ways than those who have received no formal political education.

We have not, our course, demonstrated that these differences are effects of studying politics. The task of demonstrating causal connections is one that is beyond the scope of this paper. What we have shown, however, is that, contrary to much previous research, there is at least a priori evidence that if young people study politics formally at school then their understanding of party politics is considerably enhanced.

Notes

1. The project was financed by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Nuffield Foundation.
2. Two standard survey questions are used to determine party identification. The first is 'Generally speaking do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal or what?'. The second is 'How strongly (chosen party) do you generally feel - very strongly, fairly strongly or not very strongly?'
3. The ten issues were unemployment, inflation, nuclear weapons, taxation, nationalisation, education spending, health service spending, redistribution of wealth, government intervention in the economy and trade union power.
4. Following Butler and Stokes, a multidimensional definition is 'one in which concepts of left and right seemed to organise the respondent's attitude to several issues at once'; those who show minimal recognition are able only to 'connect the terms left and right with the parties' (Butler and Stokes, 1969 pp. 208-10).
5. In this analysis party choice is the dependent variable, but the existence of three contending parties means that we have to create three 'dummy' variables, each scoring 1 or 0 - votes Conservative or not, votes Labour or not, and votes Alliance or not.

A consequence of using dummy dependent variables is that there are technical difficulties in using ordinary least squares linear regression analysis. Instead, therefore, we use logistic regression which provides results that can be interpreted in a broadly similar way to those produced by linear regression. In particular, logistic regression generates 't' statistics, indicating the relative significance of individual variables in equations, and a 'pseudo' - r^2 statistic which corresponds to r^2 in ordinary least squares regression.

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NON-ALCOHOLIC BAR

Oxford House Youth Club is being renovated. The idea being that the interior design reflects modern adult provision i.e. Wine/Cocktail Bar with all the trappings except alcohol.

An integral and essential feature of this new facility is the principle that young people will take responsibility for the day to day management of the club.

Would anyone running a similar venture or with any relevant information please contact:

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Accrediting Prior Learning: Implications for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work

SARAH BANKS

In 1987 Jeffs and Smith published in *Youth and Policy* a highly critical analysis of initial qualifying training for youth and

community workers (Jeffs and Smith, 1987 (a)). They linked the failure of youth and community work to emerge as a discrete profession to a failure on the part of the education and training institutions to develop a strong theoretical base which would provide the occupation with a commonly understood identity and purpose. The training agencies, it appears, had colluded with, and indeed promoted, an ethos of anti-intellectualism and anti-professionalism within the work.

Three years later, in 1990, what has changed? While Jeffs and Smith themselves have made a significant contribution to the critical discussion of the theory and purpose of youth and community work (Jeffs and Smith, 1987 (b); 1988; 1990 (b); Smith, 1988), the climate of anti-intellectualism and anti-professionalism has probably intensified, reinforced by central government ideology and policies. These policies are leading to the undermining of the autonomy of welfare professionals and educators and to a focus on narrow vocationalism for economic ends (McCarthy, 1989; Nellis, 1989; Brown, 1989). At the same time the values of youth and community workers, with their emphasis on equality between client and worker, client self-determination, and participation, have tended to encourage the occupation to reject professionalism as elitist and theory as irrelevant to practice. This has left youth and community work particularly vulnerable to incursions from the 'new Tory vocationalism', especially because the results of some of the government initiatives and policies (such as proposals for employer-led and competency-based training) can appear to accord with the occupational values of broadening access to training opportunities, the primacy of practice, reducing the power of professionals, and client or student centred learning.

This article will make brief comment on just one current development in youth and community work training, that of accrediting prior learning, and suggest what some of the implications might be. It will be argued the accreditation of prior learning is one example of a development which is emerging in community and youth work from a variety of sources based in different ideologies and values. Hence it is important to evaluate it with some care before adoption.

What is the accreditation of prior learning?

For the purpose of this article, the term 'accreditation of prior learning' is taken to mean:

A process that involves assessing what an individual

already knows and can do with the aim of giving recognition; credit towards a qualification,

or a full qualification to that person.

There are, in fact, numerous definitions of 'accreditation of prior learning', 'validating learning from experience', and numerous different titles for the same process, including 'assessing prior experimental learning', 'accreditation of prior achievements', 'accrediting practice'. Each has its own acronym - APL, VLFE, APEL, or APA. In this article the term 'accreditation of prior learning' will be used, occasionally abbreviated to 'Accreditation' with a capital 'A'.

Such a variety of terminology can be confusing, as each title does have slightly different connotations, and is not always used carefully or consistently. 'Accrediting practice' sounds as though it might be a system for giving credit simply to experience - for example, the fact that someone has spent a certain amount of time practising as a youth and community worker. However, this is misleading, as it is usually *learning from experience/practice* rather than experience itself that is credited. This learning involves a process of reflecting on and interpreting experience and is often referred to as 'experiential learning' - another ambiguous term, which one commentator described as 'the most popular, overriding catch-all label for a range of progressive educational developments' (Robbins, 1988 p. 15). McGill and Weil (1990) actually identify four distinct ways of using the 'experiential learning' - as a basis for: (1) assessing and accrediting learning from life and work experience as a basis for new routes into education and employment, (2) change in education, emphasising the value and use of prior experience and making learning relevant to the learners' agendas, (3) group consciousness raising and social change through critical reflection, and (4) personal growth and development.

It is the first strand of experiential learning that is relevant to accreditation of prior learning. It has its origins in the U.S.A. with the work of the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning in the 1970s and has been developed in the U.K. by Norman Evans and the Learning From Experience Trust (Robbins, 1988 chs. 1-3; Evans, 1981; 1983; 1984; 1987). Evans defines experiential learning as follows:

the knowledge and skills acquired through life and work experience and study which are not formally attested through any educational or professional certification (Evans, 1983 p. 5).

Evans distinguishes between prior or unsponsored experiential learning (what students bring with them) and sponsored

experiential learning (what students acquire during a course). It is the former that we are concerned with in the accreditation of prior learning. This definition differs from some others in that it includes informal study as a source of experiential learning. For example, the definition given in the Review of Vocational Qualifications (1986) is 'learning through experience rather than through study or informal instruction'. To avoid confusion, it is preferable to use the term 'prior learning' which is learning brought with a student, however it was gained.

Even the term 'learning', is problematic. As Jessup points out:

learning is at different times being used to describe both the process (i.e. the acquisition of knowledge, skill and competence) and the outcome of the process (i.e. 'noun, knowledge got by study') (Jessup, 1990).

Jessup claims that it is not the learning that is being accredited, but the product of such learning, that is, 'the achievements, the attainments, the outputs of the learning process'. So, when the term 'learning' is used in the context of the accreditation of prior learning, it tends to refer to what is learnt rather than the process of how it was learnt. However, some people do use it to refer to both process and product, and indeed would question whether the distinction is meaningful or even possible (Bainbridge, 1988 p. 11).

Uses of the accreditation of prior learning

Accreditation of prior learning has been used for a variety of purposes, and takes different forms accordingly. These purposes include:

(1) A starting point for guidance, counselling, or for a training programme - this involves working with individuals to assess their strengths, weaknesses, skills and qualities in order to take stock of their current position, build up confidence, to identify areas for career development or further learning. Examples include the 'starting from strengths' training programme for part-time and voluntary youth and community workers (Bolger and Scott, 1984), or adult education workshops based around students assessing themselves and building portfolios of evidence of their skills, knowledge and learning (see Evans, 1984; Evans 1987 pp. 7-10; Learning from Experience Trust, 1987 pp. 14-15).

(2) Access to further or higher education - this involves individuals identifying and documenting evidence of their learning with a view to gaining admission to a particular course of study. For example, a candidate for a degree course in the social sciences might present a portfolio of evidence of learning and abilities instead of the traditional 'A' level entry requirements (Evans, 1987 pp. 8-9; Council for National Academic Awards (CNA), 1988).

(3) Exemption from elements of a course of study - this would involve a similar process to the above, but with the aim of gaining exemption from part of a course. For example, within a modular part-time Diploma in Higher Education or degree, students might be granted academic credit for modules for which they had previously acquired knowledge and skills (Evans, 1987 p. 10; CNA, 1988).

(4) Full qualification of experienced workers - this is a

system whereby the knowledge and skills of a candidate can be accredited, and that person can receive a qualification purely on the basis of prior learning. There are examples of this in the non-advanced further education sector (Jessup, 1990), and there are currently proposals for a community work accreditation scheme to be endorsed as a qualification by the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (Greater Manchester Community Work Accreditation Unit, 1990).

In the context of initial training for qualification in youth and community work, it is the third and fourth uses of accreditation - for partial exemption or full qualification - which are relatively radical and untested. Access to initial training courses for people without formal academic qualifications is already well developed, with learning from previous experience in some form of 'people work' being not only recognised but required for the majority of courses. The 'starting from strengths' model of building on people's existing knowledge and abilities has also been widely adopted in the training of part-time and volunteer workers and seems to be gaining some currency in the training of full-time workers as well. The next section of this article will therefore focus on the recent impetus towards using accreditation of prior learning for all or part of a vocational or professional qualification.

Recent developments in accreditation of prior learning

I shall look at the work of just three bodies in developing accreditation of prior learning which is having some direct or indirect influence on thinking in the youth and community work field. These bodies are: the Federation of Community Work Training Groups; the Training Agency/National Council for Vocational Qualifications; and the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community work. I will examine what their rationale for promoting Accreditation is stated to be and will briefly summarise their proposals, before looking at the implications of accreditation of prior learning for youth and community work training.

(i) The Federation of Community Work Training Groups

The Federation of Community Work Training Groups tends to use the terminology 'accreditation of practice' which is:

a process which gives recognition to the learning and practice of experienced paid and unpaid community workers who have not had the opportunity to gain formal qualifications (Federation of Community Work Training Groups, 1986).

It is interesting that this definition talks of accrediting 'learning and practice' rather than learning from practice. Much of the documentation produced by the Community Work Training Groups does not distinguish between learning and experience/practice. In fact, the North East Group's definition of Accreditation talks only of 'recognition of experience', although under the heading 'what is to be assessed' is a 'range of skills, qualities and experience' (North East Group for Community Work Education and Training Accreditation Unit, 1989). This suggests a concern with the process of learning, as opposed to just the outcomes, although the documentation does not make this point explicitly. This is reinforced by the

fact that most of the Community Work Training Groups' schemes require a candidate for accreditation to have a minimum length of experience as a community worker. And it is important that the experience is in community work as defined by the Training Groups.

Members of the Federation of Community Work Training Groups have a long history of interest in the accreditation of community work practice (see Smith, 1982 for some of the early thinking on this issue). Organised on a regional basis, Community Work Training Groups have a commitment to offering training to local community activists and a strong ideological position that has resisted professionalisation and centralisation. Accreditation is seen as a way of according some kind of recognition to experienced but unqualified practitioners - and particularly as helping the career development of people who have not had the chance to gain a college qualification. The Greater Manchester Community Work Training Group puts the case as follows:

The accreditation process was developed because community work was seen as increasingly becoming a 'professional' occupation for people who had the means and access to existing community work courses and qualifications. Recognition for the experience of working class people, particularly women and members of ethnic minorities, would bring the grass roots experience of activists and volunteers into community work practice (Sapin, 1989 p. 7)

Another reason that may have contributed to community work as an occupation developing Accreditation is the fact that there is no recognised qualification for community work *per se*. Many workers are unqualified; of those that do possess a qualification, the majority have either come through social work or youth and community work. The development of Accreditation schemes has been a process whereby community workers themselves have defined what the work is and therefore what type of workers are needed to do the work. In this respect, community work has been a lot clearer about its principles and purpose than youth and community work.

Starting with London in 1983, there are now Accreditation Units in operation in Greater Manchester, the West of Scotland and the N.E. of England, with units in other regions currently in the process of development. The Units are managed by the regional community work training groups through a voluntary committee/group with representation from field workers, volunteers and employers in the voluntary and statutory sectors. Each region operates differently, but broadly speaking, the process involves applicants working with a mentor or consultant to determine whether they are ready for Accreditation or not. The applicants then prepare evidence of their knowledge and skills, guided by a list of 'areas to be assessed' and with advice from the consultant. Three assessors look through the evidence and also make visits to projects and groups where the applicant has worked to interview people who have first hand experience of the applicant as a community worker. After a lengthy interview with the applicant, a letter of accreditation outlining the findings of the panel is prepared. The whole process can take

from three to 18 months. Negotiation with trade unions and employers has resulted in support from the major unions and cases of local authorities regrading workers to a qualified rate following Accreditation, and advertising posts which include Accreditation as an appropriate qualification (for full details of each scheme see: Greater Manchester Accreditation Unit, 1989; North East Group for Community Work Education and Training Accreditation Unit, 1989; London Council for Community Work Training, 1983; West of Scotland Accreditation Unit, 1989).

In the mid 1980s regional Accreditation manuals tended to talk in terms of 'recognition' of experience and providing an 'extended reference' for participants to present to their employers. By 1989, the Greater Manchester Accreditation Unit was clearly stating that the aim of the accreditation process was 'to provide an alternative route to *qualification* for experienced community workers or activists' (Greater Manchester Accreditation Unit 1989). A year later, the Federation of Training Groups, through the Greater Manchester Unit, is seeking endorsement by the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work the Accreditation process as a qualification equivalent to a Certificate in Youth and Community Work.

(ii) The Training Agency/National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ)

In the context of NCVQs most recent work, the term 'accreditation of prior learning' tends to be used, which is described as:

a process by which individuals can gain credit towards qualification based on evidence from their past achievements. It facilitates the assessment and formal certification of current competence based on evidence drawn from past experience and enables individuals to identify new paths of learning and development (Simosko, 1990 p. 2).

The use of the term 'achievements' here is significant, firmly emphasising the NCVQ focus on the outcomes of learning, and implying an identifiable and tangible product.

The Training Agency/NCVQ interest in accreditation of prior learning can best be understood as part of the wider general philosophy that informed the 'Review of Vocational Qualifications' (1986) and White Paper 'Working Together - Education and Training' (1986). This was based on a concern for a 'competent and adaptable workforce' to ensure economic productivity and competitiveness. Accreditation in particular, was based on the need to bring into the workforce adults who may have experience but no qualifications - women returners, older workers, the long term unemployed (Jessup, 1990 p. 1; Simosko, 1990 p. 2).

During 1988 and 1989 a national programme was conducted to test the feasibility of using accreditation of prior learning as an alternative means of awarding qualifications. This involved four awarding bodies (City and Guilds, Business and Technician Education Council, the Royal Society of Arts and the Hotel and Catering Training Board) and six colleges offering qualifications in non-advanced further education in subjects such as catering, engineering and information technology. Although the above may seem of marginal relevance to youth and community work, some of the findings about the

accreditation of prior learning process in general may be of interest, and, of course, the fact that Accreditation is being promoted nationally by NCVQ and the Training Agency does influence the policies and attitudes of colleges and trainers. Some of the candidates entering the accreditation of prior learning programmes were awarded credit for some units or modules making up a full qualification, others were accredited for all units. The types of assessment required varied for each candidate, depending on what evidence of prior learning they presented, and what 'competences' the qualification required. In many cases the tutor had to design and administer 'proficiency tests' - e.g. 'the creation of a data base file and spreadsheet on commercially available software' as part of a BTEC qualification (NCVQ/TA 1990). This kind of individualised assessment is relatively time consuming and costly. One of the conclusions of the feasibility study was that if accreditation of prior learning becomes nationally available, the process will need to be streamlined, with support materials and considerable economies of scale (Jessup, 1990 p. 17).

(iii) The Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW)

The Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work also commissioned a feasibility study, published in 1988 on what was termed 'Validating Learning From Experience' (Bainbridge 1988). In this study the working definition of Validating Learning From Experience adopted was:

the assessment of a collection of evidence that demonstrates what a person claims to know, is able to do, and the values that inform her/his work (Bainbridge, 1988 p. 19).

Validating Learning From Experience is said to:

seek to bring together process and product. It aims to establish a set of procedures by which an individual can gain recognition for claimed competence; procedures which are rooted in a substantial supported process of learning which starts with reflection, and interpretation of life experience (Bainbridge, 1988 p. 11).

It should be noted that for Bainbridge, Validating Learning From Experience is about both developing a process by which people learn from experience and accrediting the product of that learning.

The impetus for this study came from concerns expressed by employers about the shortage in supply of qualified youth and community workers. This led to the creation of a working party in 1985 to examine the position of unqualified workers (Bainbridge, 1988 Foreword). The report took stock of recent developments in the field of validating or accrediting experiential learning, including the work undertaken by the Community Work Training Groups and earlier work sponsored by the Training Agency on assessing experiential learning mainly for access to further/higher education or for counselling and guidance purposes (Learning from Experience Trust, 1987; Evans, 1987; FEU, 1987). The model proposed by Bainbridge for initial qualifying training in youth and community work was very much a development of earlier work on training for part-time and voluntary workers, building

on people's existing strengths and experience using an individual portfolio method (Bolger and Scott, 1984). In order to facilitate the assessment of candidates' prior learning, the CETYCW report included a list of 'generic core competencies' for youth and community work under the headings of underlying principles, skills and knowledge (Bainbridge, 1988 pp. 25-6). A framework for assessment was also proposed as follows:

1. Enquiry and introductory discussion(s). Check for appropriateness of Validating Learning From Experience as a route to qualification.
2. Forming 'learning contract' with participant, employer, tutor.
3. Join Participants' Group.
4. Reflecting on and interpreting experience.
5. Identifying actual learning which has developed from experience.
6. Forming competency statements.
7. Comparing competency statements with required Generic Core Competences and identifying gaps.
8. Devising a learning programme to meet gaps.
9. Preparing evidence to claimed competence.
10. Presentation of evidence for assessment.
11. Assessment and Certification.
12. Negotiating Personal Development Plan. (Bainbridge 1988 pp. 28-9).

The current context for accreditation of prior learning

These three lines of development have occurred separately, and as has been suggested above, were initiated for different, though probably overlapping, sets of reasons: opening up access to qualification and challenging elitism and professionalism (Federation of Community Work Training Groups); increasing the number of qualified people in the workforce and thus productivity and competitiveness (National Council for Vocational Qualifications); redressing the shortage of qualified community and youth workers and opening up access to qualification (Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work). The different avenues of interest are now converging. The Federation of Training Groups is applying to CETYCW for endorsement of its Accreditation scheme (the first such application to CETYCW), while it is also involved in a feasibility study on behalf of NCVQ to develop the 'Core Competences' for community work. CETYCW has a 'watching brief' on the 'Care Sector Consortium' of NCVQ which is concerned with developing national standards for vocational qualifications generally. As yet, the NCVQ has not moved into the arena of 'professional' or 'semi-professional' qualifications such as the Certificate in Youth and Community Work. But CETYCW's own interest in accreditation of prior learning is no doubt reinforced by the increasing acceptance of flexible, competency - based approaches to education and training being promoted by NCVQ in the further and high education sector (NCVQ, 1988(a); Heffenden and Brown, 1989; Eraut, 1989; Oates, 1989). For the initial rationale for CETYCW's promotion of Accreditation - a shortage of qualified youth and community workers - is no longer so pressing, as supply and demand

seem likely to balance in the near future (Jardine, 1989). The earlier stance of the Community Work Training Groups against 'professionalisation' (which would include rejection of a nationally recognised qualification in community work - see Smith 1982) seems to have mellowed slightly. Of course seeking national endorsement of the Accreditation process for experienced practitioners is not the same as developing a single nationally recognised qualification for community work, but it does contradict some of the views expressed in the 1970s and early '80s by community workers that it is impossible to define a set of skills and attributes which all community workers should possess (Smith, 1982 pp. 190-1). In fact, the Federation of Community Work Training Groups has done just that, based on a very clear definition of what community work is (Federation of Community Work Training Groups 1990).

So, in 1990, the climate in which we are operating is very different from that of a decade ago. While some of the original reasons for the interest in accreditation of prior learning in community work, and in youth and community work, may have changed or been modified, the general context in which the NCVQ developments are set - developing a flexible workforce training to national standards related to employers' needs - is conducive to Accreditation. This fact is tending to lead to some questioning, particularly by youth and community worker educators, about whether, on balance, accreditation of prior learning is a beneficial or a harmful development. Jeffs and Smith, in one of their latest comments on training, rather summarily dismiss 'the retrospective accreditation of experience', along with 'the adoption of low-level apprenticeship style training and part-time employer-led programmes':

Programmes are often dressed in the progressive clothing of openness, access and flexibility. Yet underpinning many of them is a desire to limit critical thought and to undermine the autonomy of practitioners. The current situation in youth and community work is a good example of this (Jeffs and Smith, 1990(b) p. 129).

Although Jeffs and Smith do not elaborate their criticism of Accreditation, it is not hard to see why they perceive it as a threat. If linked to the Training Agency/NCVQ enterprise of training and qualifying workers to employer-defined standards emphasising skills and practice at the expense of knowledge and theory, then it can be seen as part of the de-professionalising, anti-intellectual trend described in the introduction to this article. And youth and community work educators and trainers are yet again colluding with and indeed promoting this move. A 'quiet revolution' is taking place within vocational education and training (Burke (ed.), 1989, p. 1), yet this is little discussed or known about outside the Further Education sector, and within that sector, very little research and development is being undertaken into these new models of training (Jessup, in Foreword to Burke (ed.), 1989).

But are Jeffs and Smith right in so summarily dismissing Accreditation? They talk about 'accreditation of experience', but the majority of Accreditation programmes are accrediting *learning from experience*. Accreditation can be concerned

with knowledge, critical thinking, reflexive practice as well as technical skills. The Community Work Training Groups certainly would not see themselves as 'dressing up' Accreditation in progressive clothing. They genuinely perceive it as progressive. The danger is, of course, that a development promoted for progressive motives may be hijacked by a project with different motives, and the result may, in fact, be regressive. The next section will examine in a little more detail what some of the implications of the accrediting of prior learning might be for youth and community work.

Implications for education and training in youth and community work

(1) Shift towards defining qualifications in terms of learning outcomes/competences

Accreditation of prior learning is a process of assessment; and the assessment is of an individual candidate's current skills and knowledge, or 'competence', based largely on indirect evidence of past achievements. So, unlike tutors on youth and community work courses, the assessors for Accreditation cannot build up a cumulative picture of a student over several years based on a variety of direct and indirect evidence; nor can they compare that student/candidate with a ready made peer group. Accreditation of prior learning, therefore, requires a set of standards against which individual candidates can be assessed. These tend to be called 'competences' and often comprise a list of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values that would be expected of a qualified worker.

In common with 'experiential learning', 'competence' is another problematic term which it is important to clarify the use of:

The word is applied in many ways and a single unifying definition does not exist. Definitions of competence in vocational education and training are often narrowly based on performance to a standard which excludes elements of achievement like the development of learning skills, persistence or teamwork (UDACE, 1989 (b) p. 6).

This has led some bodies to use the terminology 'learning outcomes' as having a broader meaning than 'competences'. The latest CETYCW Guidelines to Endorsement (1989) for initial training lists the 'learning outcomes including core competences' required of a qualified worker, but does not define either term. The Unit for the Development of Adult and Continuing Education defines learning outcomes as 'the gains, benefits or achievements of learners' (UDACE, 1989 (b) p. 1). These include both subject based outcomes (knowledge and comprehension, the ability to apply knowledge in different situations and the processing skills acquired through the use and application of knowledge) and personal outcomes (inter-personal and intra-personal skills such as teamwork or critical self-reflection). Competence, on the other hand is,

an outcome which is primarily concerned with doing, but which embraces both specific task skills and the understanding, knowledge, attitudes and personal skills required to carry out that task effectively (UDACE, 1989 (a) p. 3).

The NCVQ-type definitions of competence along the lines of 'ability to perform at standards expected of employees' (Wolf,

1989 p. 40) are very definitely about *vocational* competence, that is, competence for a particular job or occupation. Who decides on these standards, and by what process, obviously determines how the competences for a particular field of occupation are defined. Recently there has been a move away from 'occupational analysis' focussing on tasks to be undertaken and the skill attributes required of workers, towards 'functional analysis', which starts with the key purpose of the occupation and then defines what products/outcomes need to be achieved to meet this purpose (Mansfield, 1989). This results in a focus on what is done/produced (for example, 'produce multiple copies . . .'), rather than on tasks and workers' skills (for example, 'be able to operate the copier . . .'). While this approach integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes, it focuses more heavily on outputs or products, and it is difficult to see how it could be applied in any detail to youth and community work.

Within youth and community work, the CETYCW feasibility study into the accreditation of prior learning (or 'Validating Learning From Experience') devised and published a statement of 'generic core competences'. This comprises a list of underlying principles, knowledge and skills required for the work and appears more akin to 'occupational analysis' than 'functional analysis'. This list has had an impact on taught courses and training schemes in that it has been eagerly adopted as a measure against which students' progress and abilities can be measured. As already mentioned, the CETYCW guidelines for endorsement of training courses/routes to qualification has now adopted a modified version of this list calling it 'learning outcomes' (CETYCW 1989). This is a clear shift away from defining a qualification in terms of the learning process or curriculum content a student has studied, towards defining it in terms of outcomes for the learner/student. The concern is with what people know and can do, regardless of how they gained that knowledge or ability. Accreditation of prior learning fits easily into this framework; and in youth and community work it could be argued that the promotion of Accreditation has actually contributed to the development of competency-based training.

(2) Emphasis on skills at the expense of knowledge?

These lists of competences are often criticised for a focus on skills at the expense of knowledge, and for a tendency to include those abilities that can be most easily measured. This is certainly true of some of the early NCVQ work, where the definition of competence is 'the ability to perform a particular activity to a prescribed standard'. Recently, however, there has been more concern with the 'underpinning knowledge and understanding' which is thought necessary for performance to be transferred to a range of different situations, and NCVQ has recommended it be tested in its own right (NCVQ 1988 (b)). Wolf, in fact, argues that knowledge and understanding can not be divorced from performance: 'it is more appropriate to see behaviour (or "performance") as deriving from knowledge structures' (Wolf, 1989 p. 42). Wolf suggests that part of the reason for the common dichotomy between knowledge and skills is that we tend to regard 'knowledge' as meaning factual knowledge (of *what* is the

case) gained through study. But there are other kinds of knowledge, such as procedural knowledge about methods (information about how to do something) and strategic knowledge about alternatives for goal setting and planning (information about which, when, and possibly why) much of which is acquired through experience just as skills are. Wolf argues that where occupations are characterised by unpredictable situations, or a large range of different situations, separate assessment of knowledge and understanding will be desirable. She regards knowledge and understanding as inputs into competent performance, and since it will be impossible to measure performance in a vast number of situations, knowledge, can be tested as a 'second order' measure of competence. No doubt, youth and community work would be regarded as just such a complex occupation. It is worth noting that the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work includes contextual knowledge of social policy, human growth and development, and other areas, in its list of learning outcomes for a qualified youth and community worker (CETYCW 1989).

The argument of the Community Work Training Groups is that workers' knowledge and values are reflected and used in their practice; and that good practice (i.e. competent practice) should be informed by broader understanding and knowledge. For example, a worker cannot practice anti-racist work competently unless she has an understanding of the historical, cultural, and psychological context of the oppression of black people in this country. Although detailed contextual knowledge is not listed in the Community Work Training Groups' areas of work to be assessed, in a sense, the difference between them and CETYCW or Wolf could be regarded simply as one of emphasis. The Community Work Accreditation process focuses on the practice and assesses it as competent according to certain criteria which virtually require the practitioner to be critical, reflective, and knowledgeable of broader political and social contexts. It is about putting knowledge into practice; and testing knowledge by itself (which a lot of college-based courses do) does not tell us whether a student can use it in practice. So, while there is a danger that competency-based approaches, and accreditation of prior learning in particular, may focus on a narrow range of easily measurable skills, this is not an inevitable result. It will depend, of course, on how the 'competences' are defined, and how they are assessed. It is worth bearing in mind a comment made by the Further Education Unit in 1986:

Defining competence is not an exact or static science, and standard setting is almost by definition an arbitrary - not to say political - process (FEU, 1986 p. 8).

(3) The development of new assessment procedures?

There is no reason, *a priori* why accreditation of prior learning should entail a more detailed or more rigorous system of assessment than a traditional course. However, as was suggested earlier, the fact that in Accreditation the assessment is of an individual candidate's current 'competence' based on evidence of past achievements means that certain types of

assessment based on comparison with peers ('norm' or 'peer'-referenced) or an individual's progress over time ('potential'-based) can not be used. The assessment, therefore, must be 'criterion' or 'perfection'-referenced - i.e. based on comparison with an absolute standard (for discussion of different types of assessment see Heywood, 1989 p. 55). While NCVQ has developed a very neat system of assessment based on dividing 'units of competence' into 'elements of competence', each element of which has associated 'performance criteria' (NCVQ, 1986 (b) p. 2) neither the Federation of Community Work Training Groups nor CETYCW has yet attempted to replicate this for youth and community work. This is not surprising, since what may be appropriate (or, at least, possible) for a BTEC in Computer Literacy, or a City and Guilds in Catering, is probably not for a professional qualification in youth and community work.

The assessment system being used, or proposed, for accreditation of prior learning in youth and community work seems little different from current assessment systems for fieldwork practice used by full-time taught courses. These are generally criterion-based, as can be seen from most guidelines for practice teachers which tend to list areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes to be assessed. For example, the Durham University Community and Youth Work Course's 'Guidelines to fieldwork assessment' lists areas such as:

Does the student know her/his areas of strength/weakness?

Does the student know how to identify issues and needs requiring action?

Can the student encourage, motivate and support others in developing their own programmes/activities?

Has the student shown a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice, taking when necessary appropriate actions in relation to this commitment?

These are broadly similar to the Federation of Community Work Training Groups' list of 'knowledge, skills and learning requirements for community work' and CETYCW's list of 'learning outcomes'. None of these bodies in any of their written guidelines indicates what level of knowledge, skills, etc is required, nor what would count as evidence for each individual item on the list. And this I would argue, is because it is very difficult to do, except in the very broadest of terms. This is not say that more clarity about what is to be assessed, and how, is not required in youth and community work training; it certainly is. But the NCVQ model is not the answer. Further research and documentation about the models and methods of assessment used in youth and community is needed, and it is likely that the development of accreditation or prior learning may contribute to this.

(4) Separation of assessment from the learning process and teaching function.

Accreditation of prior learning and the focus on learning outcomes (as opposed to the process of learning, or curriculum content) enables the assessment of individuals to take place in a totally separate context from where the learning took place. This is a very different function from assessment in youth and community work training courses, which is usually

an integral part of student learning over a period of time during which students are constantly assessing themselves and receiving feedback from tutors. Obviously the process of preparing for accreditation is a learning experience for participants, and is therefore developmental; but this is not its primary aim and there is a danger that this may get lost. This is why Bainbridge argues that Accreditation must be about both the learning process and the learning outcomes.

If college tutors become involved in the assessment role for Accreditation, then they may find themselves doing less 'teaching' and more assessing, and counselling/advising in preparation for assessment. School teachers are already experiencing similar changes in their role as assessment requirements increase. But the separation of assessment from teaching means there is no reason why educational institutions should take on the assessment role for accreditation of prior learning in youth and community work; it could equally be done by employers or separate agencies established for the purpose.

(5) Individualisation of learning

The accreditation of prior learning process obviously involves working with individual candidates to prepare evidence of prior learning and to undergo assessment. It is based on the premise that each individual has had different experiences and will have different levels of knowledge and skills which must be recognised; that there is no point in students undertaking courses of study in areas in which they are already judged 'competent'. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups so far has taken candidates through the Accreditation process individually, with a mentor/consultant advising each person on portfolio preparation. If 'top up' learning is needed, there may be a tendency to use distance or open learning, to match exactly that candidate's needs. This is partly what is meant by describing the process as 'student-centred' - i.e. geared to meet each candidate's/student's learning requirements, rather than to fit them into a predetermined curriculum. Obviously from the student's and employer's point of view this may be beneficial - it is less time consuming and less costly; it encourages self assessment. But, the candidates tend to lose the collective experience of learning in group. The fact that the CETYCW recommendations do include candidates joining a 'portfolio building group' suggests some value placed on sharing and learning from each other.

It should be noted that the fact that learning is individualised does not necessarily mean that it is 'student-centred' in the sense of 'student-controlled'. If the learning outcomes are pre-defined (whether by employers or trainers) then Accreditation can be as rigid and restrictive as a course with a pre-determined curriculum.

(6) Modularisation of courses

If accreditation of prior learning is to be used for exemption from parts of courses, then the courses will need to be broken down into smaller modules, each with their own sets of learning outcomes for which candidates can be accredited. The trend towards modularising courses is growing, as it also facilitates 'Credit Accumulation and Transfer' - an increasingly

popular system designed to allow study or learning obtained in one institution or setting to be credited and transferred to another. While this obviously encourages flexibility of exit and entry and enables people to pick and choose what is appropriate for their needs, this is done at a price. It is worth considering the question raised by the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education:

how far is it possible to break up complex taught courses into smaller learned components without losing overall coherence? The clear danger is that small units will concentrate on narrow objectives which are easily designed, achieved and measured (skills) at the expenses of broader objectives (knowledge and understanding). (UDACE 1989 p. 4).

(7) Broadening access to qualifications/narrowing access to education?

The flexibility mentioned above, the fact that candidates can come forward for accreditation when they are ready, and only study what they need to, are the main ways in which accreditation of prior learning aims to broaden access to qualification - particularly for those highly experienced workers for whom a college course would be either inappropriate and/or impossible financially or practically. But, accreditation does cost money, and unlike a full-time course, does not attract a Local Education Grant. So, will access to Accreditation depend on employers' willingness to pay - leading, perhaps, to difficulties for those working part-time or in the voluntary sector? The Manchester Community Work Training Group Accreditation costs around £700, although there are bursaries available.

A second issue regarding access is whether the availability of Accreditation reinforces the barriers to full-time further education for those very people who have been least well represented - women, black people, disabled people? The two year full-time initial training courses have traditionally had a two-fold aim: to train workers for youth and community work, and to offer access to education to mature adults who had not had the opportunity in the past. These aims may not always sit easily together, and the 'liberal education' function of initial training has often not been appreciated, or even recognised, by many employers or, I suspect, by the Department of Education and Science. But there are certain parts of many initial training courses which might be regarded as 'knowledge for its own sake', for example, aspects of the study of sociology, psychology, and social policy for which tutors do not attempt to make direct, clear, relevant links to practice. This is not to say that such studies do not relate to practice, nor that links should not be made, but that if this was the only aim, then they might be taught in a different way. Some knowledge of sociology as an academic discipline - the key thinkers and theories - may not directly produce a better or 'more competent' worker. But it may have personal development spin offs for a student; and it may help develop a critical, reflective capacity that indirectly influences a workers' practice.

Conclusions

The question as to whether the accreditation of prior learning is, or will be, a progressive or regressive development in youth

and community work education and training has no simple answer. Any answer will depend on what counts as 'progressive', on how Accreditation is used, for what purpose, and by whom.

We have suggested that Accreditation harbours both threats and opportunities, and what may be a threat to one person or interest group, may be an opportunity for another. For example, while threatening the power and role of further education institutions and tutors, Accreditation may increase that of employers and students. Yet, while it may increase access of hitherto 'disadvantaged' groups to qualification, it may tighten up access of the very same people to college-based educational opportunities, and so on.

It has also been suggested that ostensibly the same process - accrediting prior learning - when operated by different groups may have different emphases regarding what is to be accredited. Some may focus primarily on skills, others may have a wider focus on knowledge or integrated practice theory; some are primarily about accrediting the products of learning, others attempt to integrate the learning process. The motivation for promoting and developing Accreditation may stem from egalitarian thinking concerned with access to qualification for 'disadvantaged' groups; or it may stem from a reactionary instrumentalism concerned with the provision of a skilled and qualified workforce to meet the needs of free market capitalism; or it may stem from both. Motives are rarely pure and often contradictory.

What is clear, however, is that the terminology used is confusing: different terms are used for apparently the same process (for example, 'validating learning from experience', 'accrediting prior experiential learning'), while one term (such as 'experiential learning') has different meanings for different people. The apparent 'scientific' rigour of lists of learning outcomes, competences, and performance criteria for assessment, often conceal an underlying lack of clarity and theoretical rigour.

We may conclude that using the accreditation of prior learning towards part or all of a qualification does not necessarily entail the adoption of a narrow, skills-based approach to the work, but given the current climate, it could well be used in that way. Accreditation, like many other features of life, offers both dangers and opportunities. If we are aware of these we may at least be able to use it with care, for the purpose we desire.

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Punishing the Parents

ROB ALLEN

The phrase 'parental responsibility' has recently become something of a watchword as far as social policy is concerned.

The Children Act, enacted last year and due for implementation next, gives much emphasis to the collection of rights, powers, duties and responsibilities held by parents in the care of their offspring¹. So too did Mrs. Thatcher in her first keynote speech of the 1990s, the inaugural George Thomas Society lecture, which drew particular attention to the difficulties faced by one parent families and proposed measures for compelling absent fathers to pay maintenance. Finally, the White Paper, 'Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public' expresses the view that 'it is beneficial for parents to be involved when their children are dealt with for criminal offences'² and proposes a number of specific measures to ensure that they are.

On the surface, this renewed emphasis does not appear controversial. Few would argue with the Children Act's view that parental responsibility is preferable to that of 'parental rights'. Stressing obligations and duties towards rather than powers over children is long overdue in a society in which two thirds of mothers admit to smacking their children before the age of one and almost a quarter of parents of seven year olds admit to using an implement³. The ideas that parents should attend Court appearances with their children and that fathers should exercise a continuing responsibility for their children appear similarly to enjoy almost unanimous support.

Behind this superficial consensus however, lie deeper and more complex points of view. For Mrs. Thatcher, we are witnessing the breakdown of the family unit, which represents 'a new kind of threat to our whole way of life'.⁴ The seeds of this breakdown are seen to have been sown in the permissive sixties with the creation of a dependency culture by an overactive state combined with changes in sexual and social mores. An increase in homelessness, child abuse, crime and drug addiction is seen as the harvest now being reaped. What is needed, according to this view, is the restoration of moral values, above all, in family life. If parents fail to discharge their responsibilities, then they need to be brought forcibly into line as examples to others.

An alternative view suggests that despite claims to be the Party of the family, the social policy of successive Conservative governments since 1979 has had a disastrous effect. Changes in social security entitlements and a failure to tackle the housing crisis have created enormous pressure on families with children, many of whom find themselves in poverty. Rolling back the frontiers of the State has led to the under-resourcing of services provided centrally and locally in the

fields of health, education and personal social services. According to this view, what is needed

is a vast injection of funds into a variety of public provision and a re-ordering of national priorities aimed at giving genuine rather than rhetorical support to parents and children.

Parental responsibility in criminal justice

The conflict of attitudes is illustrated well in the debate on the extent to which parents should be responsible for their children's misdemeanours. The idea that change might be desirable was proposed by John Patten, Minister of State at the Home Office in a letter to the UK Federation of Business and Professional Women on 30th March 1989. He suggested that:

- (i) the law should be extended to make attendance of parents at Court when their children stand trial 'compulsory in the absence of very good reasons for staying away'.⁵
- (ii) 'There may be scope to expand'⁶ the imposition on parents of fines and compensation orders.
- (iii) The Courts should make greater use of their power to bind over parents of juvenile offenders.
- (iv) There should be a debate about the desirability of a new offence of 'failure to prevent child crime'⁷ which could apply to children up to the age of sixteen.

Comments received from organisations and interest groups led to the abandonment of the new offence at an early stage, but the Home Secretary's address to the Party Conference in October 1989 announced measures designed to 'bring parental responsibility back to the centre of the stage'.⁸ The measures were outlined in detail in the White Paper, 'Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public' in February 1990.

The White Paper draws a distinction between 10-15 year olds on the one hand and 16-17 year olds on the other. For the 10-15 year olds the major changes in sentencing arrangements stem directly from the view that parents should have a large measure of responsibility for their children's actions. It is proposed that:

- (a) Legislation will make it a requirement for courts to order parents to attend court with their children unless it would be unreasonable to do so.
- (b) Means of parents should be taken into account when assessing the appropriate level of fines and encouragement should be given to courts to make more use of their power to require parents to pay.
- (c) For children and young people in the care of the local authority, the local authority may be required to pay compensation and fines if the court is satisfied that the offence

followed a failure by the local authority to carry out its duties. (d) The courts should be required to consider binding over the parents of juveniles convicted of criminal offences in every case unless it would be unreasonable in the circumstances. This involves entering into a recognisance of up to £1,000 to take proper care of their children and exercise proper control.

(e) More use should be made of the curfew requirement as a condition of a supervision order, enforcement of which would be made to fall to parents by means of the bindover.

(f) Consideration should be given to parents engaging in intermediate treatment programmes when their children are made subject to IT; local authorities will also be expected to offer advice and guidance to them.⁹

As with all the proposals, it is difficult to know what effect they will actually have on practice in the Juvenile Court. Night restriction for example was first introduced in the 1982 Criminal Justice Act but has only been used by magistrates on a handful of occasions each year. As far as compelling the attendance of parents at court appearances with their children is concerned there is conflicting evidence on how far this is a problem.

A recent letter to the Times from the Chair of an Inner London Branch suggested that it was rare for parents not to attend court.¹⁰ Consideration could be given to holding court hearings in the evenings or at weekends, as happens in Scotland, if it is felt really important to pursue this particular measure.

Since 1983, courts have clearly shown that in the majority of cases it is not appropriate to make parents liable for the payment of fines incurred as a result of their offsprings misbehaviour. The White Paper quotes the fact that in 1988 courts ordered parents to pay in only 13% of cases when juveniles were fined and 21% when they received compensation orders. These relatively low percentages suggest that having heard the full circumstances of the case, it seems seldom reasonable to hold parents responsible in this way. More worrying perhaps is the suggestion that a bindover should be considered in every case.

These proposals stem from the principle that, 'when young people offend, the law has a part to play in reminding parents of their responsibilities'¹¹

Origins and effects

Ironically, such a principle echoes, in part, the radical philosophy which led to the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act. Both place responsibility for juvenile offending firmly at the door of the adult world in general and parents in particular. Mr. John Patten, the Home Office Minister who first flagged up the proposal in March and thinks that 'parents, the first educators of their children, have a duty to teach their children the difference between right and wrong'¹² would have had little argument with the Longford Committee's view, a quarter of a century ago, that delinquency is evidence 'of the lack of care, guidance and opportunities to which every child is entitled'.¹³

Where the New Right of the 1980s parts company with the Fabian Reformers of the 1960s, is over the response of the state to recalcitrant parents. For the latter, the answer lay in

the provision of help and treatment in the form of family based intervention by social workers. Such assistance was to be provided on a voluntary basis although, where compulsory powers needed to be sought, these could be obtained through the civil law. According to the new-classicist principles of the New Right, it is the full weight of criminal proceedings which should be used to bring into line 'the deliberately delinquent parents of delinquent children' and, presumably 'pour encourager les autres'.

What is surprising is that the proposal fits so ill with the measures that are otherwise being pursued by the government in dealing with juvenile crime. Criminal justice policy always has something of a Jekyll and Hyde character, but the political need to maintain a rhetoric of tough, punitive sanctions to satisfy an increasingly authoritarian popular taste has not prevented the adoption of progressive and constructive responses to delinquency. These contradictions are managed by a process of bifurcation or dual track policy in which distinctions are made between a minority of violent, dangerous and persistent offenders, sometimes known as the 'hard core', for whom incarceration is the only option, and the majority of mostly petty property offenders who, it is hoped, can be dealt with by way of non custodial penalties.

As far as juveniles are concerned, the accepted goal of criminal justice policy has become diversion; wherever possible young people are diverted from crime, from prosecution and from custody. Aided by demographic trends which have seen a significant decline in the teenage population, the last five years have seen considerable reductions in the number of offences committed by juveniles, the number of juveniles prosecuted in court and the number sent into custody.

It is this backcloth which makes the government proposals look so odd. John Patten's original suggestion that children under the age of criminal responsibility should be somehow brought into the formal net of social control flies especially hard in the face of recent trends. As it is, children (those between 10 and 13) are deemed 'doli incapax,' not to have reached the age of discretion and therefore incapable of criminal intent. Although rebuttable by the prosecution, it is widely accepted that the full rigours of a court appearance should be avoided as far as possible for this age group, hence the huge increase in cautioning which has seen the proportion of children as opposed to young persons in the juvenile court population nationally fall from 17.5% in 1983 to 11.2% in 1987. The next step would seem to be the raising of the age of criminal responsibility to 14.

Although Mr. Patten might argue that his proposals focus on parents rather than children, the negative processes of stigmatisation and labelling can be avoided only by removing both parties from the criminalising ethos of the juvenile court. For although it is clear that the influence of the home is important in the genesis of delinquent behaviours, and many would agree that policies which encourage the development of improved parenting skills might be useful in helping to prevent it, the idea that the criminal justice system should be used to further such policies is curiously outmoded, showing a naive faith in the power of the court to influence behaviour. This is particularly true given the adversarial arrangements in the juvenile court in which due process and legal formality

play a determinative role in the proceedings. Alternative structures, such as those in existence north of the border and across the channel may be more suited to the promotion of a sense of partnership between the state and the parents of offending children. Such a partnership may form the basis for effective problem solving measures to be worked out and appropriate help to be offered. Until such time as a 'family court' is introduced which deals with criminal as well as civil matters in England and Wales, attempts to enforce parental responsibility through court action may well be in vain.

The characterisation of the issue of parental responsibility as that of wilfully negligent parents colluding with or even commanding their offsprings' misbehaviour seems at best fanciful and at worst a distraction, turning attention away from structural factors, unemployment, bad housing and poor recreational facilities, which create the sorts of pressures in families which can lead to delinquency.

More seriously, the measures may have an opposite effect to that intended. Rather than cause parents suddenly to mend their ways and start to teach their children that it is, in Mr. Patten's words, 'right to tell the truth, to respect other people's property and look after those less fortunate than yourself, wrong to steal, to cheat or to bully',¹⁴ the threat of reality of court action may make it less likely that such admirable precepts take effect. For evidence shows that delinquency prone families often show a high level of disharmony, poor communication and experience weak and strained relationships resulting in inconsistent rule setting and supervision. Such predisposing factors are only likely to be aggravated by the criminalisation of inadequate parenting. That may lead to family breakdown and the youngsters entry into care. Mr. Patten has suggested that certain young people may be better off away from home and has encouraged consideration be given to the use of care proceedings to ensure this. Again, research has shown that the care system is no panacea, with many offenders escalating their delinquency once in the system. A disproportionately high number of young people in custodial institutions are or have been in care.¹⁵

Current practices in working with offenders stress the importance of strengthening the ties of adolescents with the major socialising institutions: the schools, the workplace, constructive leisure pursuits, and of course, the home. Mr. Patten's proposals do not seem to offer anything to encourage that process.

More promising at first glance is the suggestion that parents should accompany their children to intermediate treatment centres. The scope, nature and extent of intermediate treatment has varied enormously across the country since its introduction in the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act, but in recent years a consensus has emerged that their main priority should be the provision of credible community based programmes for serious and persistent offenders who have exhausted other sentencing options and face a spell of detention in a young offender institution. Many of the schemes have proved successful in attracting these serious offenders from the courts, in effect replacing custody. Their continued success may well be jeopardised if they are forced to diversify into work with the parents of the children as well

as the children themselves. Such work may well backfire where delinquency, whilst an annoying nuisance, is in the majority of cases no more than a passing phase, official over-reaction to which may serve to prolong its incidence rather than shorten it. The effectiveness of intervention with less serious offenders is open to question partly because the causes of delinquency are so uncertain or intractable and partly because early efforts which are tried and found wanting may result in a more punitive, costly and ineffective response from sentencers to any future misbehaviour.

Involving parents of delinquent children in intermediate treatment is therefore more problematic than it seems. There are some schemes which already provide help, assistance and social work intervention for the families of young offenders as part of their existing programmes but on a voluntary basis. Whilst this may include attendance at parent's groups, family meetings or even counselling sessions, the willing co-operation of participants is always necessary.

It is difficult to see how it can be any other way. Any genuine attempts to offer help, support and guidance to parents requires their acknowledgement of a need for assistance and a preparedness to talk about the difficulties they are facing in bringing up their children. These are not things which can be compelled by a court.

Conclusion

The government clearly think that compulsion can produce change. Their thinking about criminal justice generally is crystallised around 'punishment in the community': fining parents or ordering them to attend centres is consistent with this approach, which places a high value on the role of sanctions. A recent report on the parents of young offenders in Sheffield has found that parents:

*feel on trial when they accompany their child to court. They feel embarrassed and ashamed when the police keep coming to their homes to interview their children, the feel harassed or angry or upset when the police regularly insist on them coming to the Police Station. They face stigma from relatives, neighbours and friends.*¹⁶

If such feelings are widespread, it would seem important that policies attempt to help parents to hang on to their children, to stand by them as they grow through an adolescent phase which, for the majority, involves offending behaviour.¹⁷ The White Paper proposals may inadvertently give an incentive to parents to cut off their links with their children for fear of being punished on their behalf. With recent estimates suggesting that up to 150,000 young people may be homeless, many of them teenagers living on the streets of Britain,¹⁸ any measures which may endanger the exercise of proper parental responsibility will need careful consideration. Mrs. Thatcher in her recent speech asserted that 'in the past we suffered from social evils, now we suffer from our remedies for them'.¹⁹ Whatever the truth is of that, it is certainly true that social policies can have unintended consequences; coercing parental responsibility may be one example.

The views stated in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the organisation in which he works.

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Youth Work, Youth Service and the Next Few Years

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We make no apologies for writing this article in a hurry. The timescale was not of our making. Neither was it deter-

mined by the editors of this Journal. During the next few months and years the shape and parameters of the Youth Service and the content and structure of much youth work is likely to change beyond recognition. We are writing in a hurry because the speed with which change is being initiated leaves both commentators and participants scant time for reflection or analysis. This is no accident or oversight. The present government quite deliberately orders its affairs so as to minimise the time available for thinking, reflection and analysis. Speed is of the essence for them because the faster events move then the less time opposition has to organise itself.

By opposition we are not talking of the parliamentary variety; a somewhat pathetic group that has predominantly shown itself to be incapable or unwilling to seriously consider what should be the future shape of the Youth Service or what might comprise a coherent youth policy. No, we are identifying here those practitioners, consumers and allies of the Service who given the time, space, opportunity would opt into a genuine debate regarding future policy and provision. It is those whom the government and its allies seek to wrong-foot and marginalise at every stage of the policy process. It is those who are to be excluded from the debates and consultations for fear that what they might argue for would run counter to the largely pre-ordained policies of the Government and Department of Education and Science (DES). We have little expectation that such groups have any real hope of changing the outcomes desired by a brutish, anti-democratic and thoroughly authoritarian government. Nor of pushing aside those who will out of fear, indifference or self-interest give those policies some measure of support and respectability. Rather, it is now vital to begin a process of analysis and debate which will enable a potential opposition to articulate its opinions, further, and most importantly, to prepare for the process of building afresh, in, hopefully, the not too distant future. Few forums currently exist where questions can be asked about the new management-plus orthodoxy and which give individuals and groups the chance to think oppositionally about such developments as a National Curriculum for youth work, the new National Youth Agency and the restructuring of youth work. The creation of these has now become a task of some urgency.

The first error we all make is to forget the underlying purposes behind the current 'reforms' within youth work and those that similarly provided the motivation for the 'reform' of the

schools, higher education, training, local government, the trade unions and so on. We be-

gin from the seemingly logical premise that the reform of youth work or the Youth Service must be about improving the quality of the former and the effectiveness of the latter. It is difficult to imagine a more naive assumption. Such is our inbred faith in leaders, managers and those set above us, that despite all the evidence of history, let alone the past few years, so many of us continue to take such statements at face value. We persist in assuming high rather than base motives. We seem unable to believe that such people can be liars and still live with themselves, even when we know they are, and that they most certainly can. We still naively hold onto a flickering faith that the government, as represented by say a Minister or henchperson, is motivated by a desire to offer a quality service to young people; to meet as effectively as possible the needs of those young people; encourage good 'practice'; and to reward the good worker and reform the bad. We make excuses for them when we should be denouncing them. We are enticed into spending futile hours seeking minuscule rays of hope in their statements and policies. This being always at the expense of time better spent questioning their true intent and purpose.

So what are the government's intentions? If they won't tell us what they are, how are we going to find out? These are two questions an inquisitive reader might well wish to ask. The answer to the initial one has to be that you can only hazard a guess by a careful reading of what is actually said. In particular, we may look for Freudian slips and the ambiguous phraseology so often included in official statements, phrases inserted so as to enable individuals and agencies to lay claim retrospectively to some fig-leaf of integrity if posthumously challenged as to why rhetoric and reality subsequently become separated by so immense a gulf. In the case of the Youth Service a better place to seek an answer to both questions is to scrutinise the outcomes and aims of policies in other more public arenas during the past decade. The small budget and size of the Youth Service has meant that it has hardly been a priority target for the reforming zeal of this, or for that matter, any previous government. Consequently bigger fish have and are being fried and their fate should serve as a warning that only the perennially optimistic can ignore. Before we look at specific services we need to engage with the government's general attack on local government.

The collapse of local democracy

The local state run by elected representatives has always

posed a threat to the capacity of central government to act unchecked. Elected by an identical electorate it has a legitimacy other potential seats of opposition are denied. Indeed, given that councillors serve fixed terms and, that in most areas a third of the members are chosen annually, local authorities are arguably far more responsive to their electorates than central government. Serving smaller constituencies and living within or nearby, councillors also tend to be more accessible to their electorate than MPs. Further, they are more likely to share the same problems, frustrations and concerns. Not surprisingly therefore as Morris, the founder of the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges noted 'local government is . . . a cornerstone of freedom as every dictator realises when, on getting power, he abolishes it' (1943).

It is also within a local arena that parties and groups which can have no hope of securing majority allegiance in the UK Parliament can secure a presence and base; nationalists in Scotland and Wales, Muslims in Lancashire and West Yorkshire, Ulster Unionist, SDLP and Sinn Fein in the six counties of Northern Ireland. Such political organisations although relatively small within the UK are perceived as posing a serious threat to the hegemonic control not only of Westminster but of the three main political parties. In particular, in Northern Ireland this refusal of the population to fall neatly into political line has produced a reaction which has led to the almost total destruction of local government in the six counties. In a period of little more than 20 years virtually every public service of any significance, housing, education, police, planning, social services, health, libraries, public transport, has been transferred to the control of Ministers of the Crown and their direct appointees. The electorate there may still choose councillors but those representatives sit on sham councils, reduced to discussing the trivia of parks, flower beds, refuse collection and how to attract tourists. In many respects the Northern Ireland model has and is being transported to the 'mainland'. As we will notice later on it is no accident that the present plans for the Youth Service can be discerned as having emerged in an experimental form within Northern Ireland. It was there that policies such as a centralised curriculum and contract bidding were initially testbedded (Department of Education [NI] 1987). The explanations for this attack on the local state are not difficult to discern. First, the poor economic performance of Britain has demanded restructuring. For this government that has meant raising the levels of profitability within British industry; reducing the power of trade unions; and opening new opportunities for capital. Local government services with their relatively high rates of unionisation and their potential for privatisation, were prime targets. Residential care for older people is a classic example of this process with Department of Social Security (DSS) payments for voluntary and private residential care and nursing home charges rising from £10m in 1979 to over £1000m in 1989 (Fimister 1991). This constitutes a massive cash transference from the public to the private sectors. Similar transfers have taken place on a smaller scale within the Youth Service (Jeffs & Smith 1988: 57-89). Second, the curtailment of local autonomy enables the government to enforce its writ without having to negotiate with intermediaries, many of whom are

oppositional. Third, as the Labour Party appeared to lose its capacity to win a national election it shifted much of its attention to building, as it did in earlier periods of exclusion, municipal socialism in those localities it controlled (Lansley et al 1989). Given the oft expressed desire of the Prime Minister to destroy socialism as an ideology and the Labour Party as a political force this meant that those bases had to be undermined. Labour controlled the Greater London Council (GLC), Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and the Metropolitan Counties. Therefore they had, if that aim was to be achieved, to be abolished and abolished they were. Although apparently desirable, the complete destruction of local government on the 'mainland' was and is still not politically feasible. Partly because such a policy would be unpopular amongst many rank and file Conservatives especially in the heartlands where the local councils are dominated by often influential supporters of that party. Also because for a government committed, at least at the level of rhetoric, to 'rolling back the state', direct management of services would be ideologically difficult to sustain and administratively taxing and inefficient. The obvious solution was, therefore, privatisation, especially where services are potentially profitable, such as water supply, refuse collection and leisure services. Where profit was less assured then an alternative has been the contracting out of services to quasi-state agencies such as Housing Associations or charitable organisations with the former being pushed increasingly towards securing capital from the money market and the latter from the begging bowl and charges upon clients. It is in this context that we must place the current attempts to restructure youth work.

Making markets and creating consumers

Although much of the current discussion within youth work has centred upon notions of the importation of the concept of a national curriculum, it would be mistaken to see the restructuring of youth work as the simple replication of changes in the school system. Within welfare, there are other models of change that have emerged within the Thatcherite project. Foremost amongst these has been the shift to internal markets within the National Health Service (NHS) (DoH 1989a) and the Griffiths reforms within the personal social services (NISW 1988; DoH 1989b). As the Government has approached the restructuring and commodification of each area of welfare, so it has encountered opposition and contradictions specific to the given area. So encounter both continuities and divergences. In terms of continuities, as Dale has pointed out, the changes sought have been from:

collectivism to individualism;
egalitarianism to hierarchies;
progressivism to modernisation;
conjunctural to structural political rationality;
strong to weak intermediate institutions; consensus
to authoritarianism; and
public interest to national interest (1989: 5)

While ideological, structural and administrative forces provide continuity, within each welfare area unique features are to be found which engender measures of divergence. For example the power of the professional groups, expectations of consumers and the public generally; the influence of organisa-

tional structures; and historical patterns of delivery all impact upon the situation. Youth work is no exception. For instance, whereas within education a high priority has been placed upon the weakening of the teacher unions, this is not the case in relation to youth work where unionism has been historically weak. Similarly, whereas the organisation of schooling facilitates control over the conduct of teachers, the structure of youth work has meant that workers have historically enjoyed a relatively high degree of autonomy. Consequently reforms within youth work have and will concentrate upon increasing levels of accountability and direction.

In order to proceed let us examine in turn three key welfare areas and then highlight what are likely to be points of convergence between each of these and youth work. [It should be noted at this stage that we will not be looking in any detail at proposals for a national curriculum as this is likely to be the subject of a forthcoming Youth and Policy article.]

Lessons from education, health and the personal social services

Education: Education is the largest single item in the local authority budget and the third largest heading in the inventory of government expenditure. It had to be dealt with within the Thatcherite project. As with all sectors of welfare the Government naturally sought to maximise central control over macro policy, while distancing itself from the requirement to implement and frame micro policy. The classic Thatcherite solution was applied to schooling - the creation of 'free markets' within a framework of a strong state (Gamble 1988). Day to day management was devolved to the governing bodies of schools (the Local Management of Schools), whilst control of the curriculum was centralised. For the government it was advantageous to let governors decide which teacher to sack and the 'market' select the school for closure. Funding mechanisms have been established which provide a positive incentive for schools to opt out of the Local Education Authority (LEA) sector and acquire their funding direct from the DES.

The effect of all these change, taken together, will be to diminish, even abolish, personal and local responsibility and to increase the detailed power and control for the Secretary of State. Parents and teachers will find themselves bound to see that children get what the Secretary of State decides. Governors will have the duty to carry out the Secretary of State's wishes. Local authorities will lose all independent responsibility for a local system. (Burgess 1988: 45).

Three implications of these policies need noting here. First in order to monitor the implementation of macro policy the role, size and influence of the Inspectorate has to be increased. Second, monitoring and control demand means of measurement and assessment. The curriculum has, as a consequence, been constructed as much around what can be measured as what is perceived as being required. Similarly funding mechanisms have to be based upon crude performance indicators, in particular, numbers of students, which have a universal application. Finally, within such centrally defined systems there always exists the problem of torpor and

'conservatism'. The risk of experimentation is often too great for the individual unit; it may frighten away the customer; it may be expensive; it may get you into trouble with the Inspectorate. So if inertia is not to gain the upper hand then licensed experimentation is required. Thus, under the 1988 Education Act, with the permission of the Minister (and thus with his/her 'protection'), curriculum experimentation may be carried out. Also experimentation is injected into the system via direct and targeted funding such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) and Educational Support Grants (ESG). These dimensions are of particular significance when considering the future of youth work.

Within a situation of falling rolls schools have also been driven into intense competition to recruit students. To survive, many schools will have to put their neighbours out of business. They have to compete in terms of the service people perceive they offer, and on price. Unit costs have to be kept low so as to leave funds available to provide services which 'add value' in the eyes of potential consumers and their parents, and to pay for the necessary advertising and public relations activities. This has entailed a new mentality in which money talks. The measure of success is profitability rather than the satisfaction of client need. As one head teacher put it 'Sadly, I no longer see pupils coming through the door, but bundles of £1500' (personal communication with the writers). The scale of this process of commodification within education is new within the context of the twentieth century. For youth work the immediate results are highly contradictory. Schools are driving out youth groups that cannot pay the going rate for facilities; whilst on the other hand, a number are entering into aggressive marketing to run, for example, after-hour clubs both for profit and as bait to attract students (Dean 1990). Beyond the school system which Burgess is referring to, the Government has adopted an alternative model within education and training. This comprises the handing over of training budgets from the Training Agency and monies previously allocated to local authorities to Training and Enterprise Council (TECs). These are made up of unelected government appointees drawn from the local business community plus a sprinkling of other worthies. The aim is to place the leadership and ownership of the training system 'where it belongs - with employers' (Department of Employment (DoE) 1988: 46; discussed in Lee et al 1990). Similar transfers of ownership have taken place with respect to further education and what was previously local authority higher education. What is interesting here for our purposes is where in the Government's eyes does the 'ownership' of youth work reside?

Health: Nowhere in welfare is the entrenched power of professionals greater than in the health sector. Clinical freedom for doctors has meant that they have a unique control regarding patient care determining how much is spent on whom, and where. To a lesser extent a mass of other professionals and semi-professionals within the NHS also has the capacity denied other welfare workers to allocate resources. To control and manage their daily practice in homes, hospitals and surgeries is (currently) beyond the capacity of the state. Therefore, commodification and budgetary control has, within the NHS, followed a different path. What the

Government has sought to do has been to construct internal markets - designed to encourage hospitals to compete for resources; to cash limit GPs by changing them to budget holders; to turn patients into consumers; and, paralleling the school system, tie the income of the practice and the doctor more closely to the number of patients served. There is, however, an additional twist to the health service model, namely it provides a real incentive for GPs to discourage or remove from their lists expensive or potentially expensive patients. Again three familiar dynamics underpin the policy changes with regard to superstructure, form and content. There is the same desire for central control, the encouragement of commodification and competition, and the targeting of particular groups deemed to be in special need. This process of commodification and the attempt to turn users into consumers of services is of particular importance when considering youth work and, indeed, the future of the personal services.

The personal social services: While the position has become somewhat cloudy, the drift into the packaging of services and the focus on targeting has been replicated within the personal social services. Again the pattern of provision proposed and developed has been specific to the situation encountered. With moral panics surrounding child abuse, the rise of the single parent family, the ageing population and juvenile crime there has been a shift from generic to specific, and from preventative to crisis-orientated, social work interventions. For example, in intermediate treatment this has entailed a move towards the intensive training programme, a shift which has provided an opportunity to relocate resources from local authorities to voluntary agencies such as Save the Children Fund, Barnados and National Childrens' Homes (Pitts 1988). What has been constructed is a prime example of the mixed economy of welfare. It may be seen as a precursor for the changes planned for the much greater numbers requiring care within both the community and residential settings. Here, as we have already seen, there has been a massive expansion of private provision in the form of nursing homes and the like, combined with a parallel growth in the range and scale of services supplied by voluntary and non-profit organisations.

Care in the community was one area where the Government was initially driven back, against their ideological predilection, to using local authorities as the conduit for financing and monitoring service (DoH 1989b). They seemingly could not resist the economic and administrative logic of using local authorities outlined in the Griffiths Report (NISW 1988). However, the Government has now backtracked on these proposals, delaying the implementation of the main aspects of this programme until April 1993. There has also been some suggestion that this is the first step in eliminating substantive areas of the programme. Furthermore, the whole programme represented something of a Pyrrhic victory for local authorities as it has been structured in such a way as to provide an additional pressure on them to dispose of their own residential facilities (Sinclair & Brown 1991). Above all else it must be recalled that community care and Griffiths have been driven forwards by a commitment to:

a managerial imperative - economy and efficiency -

linked with the pseudo-consumerism of the New Right's approach to social welfare. As in competitive tendering over mowing the council's grass, it is the local authority which will have the choice over placing the contracts. Old people will not be the contractors, they will be the grass. (Jordan 1991)

Local authorities may or may not eventually secure the power to allocate such contracts, but either way this will not fundamentally alter the relationship between the allocator and the recipient of the contract; the provider and the client. The position for young people is not likely to be any different in this respect to older people: they too will be the grass, rather than the contractors.

Movements in youth work

For some time we have been arguing that the Youth Service as a distinctive entity was in great danger of disappearing (Jeffs & Smith 1987; 1988; Smith 1988). Current trends appear to be confirming this. Within youth work there has been a considerable shift both in organisational location and in the range of practice forms embraced. In part these have arisen in response to important social changes.

We need to begin with an obvious point. There are not the number of young people around that there were. The proportion of the population under 20 has declined for more than 150 years. At the time when the YMCA, the first modern youth organisation, was founded in 1841 this age group accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the population; by 1911 the figure was just under 33 per cent and today it is below 16 per cent. The number of teenagers in 1994 will be 4.6 million compared with 6.3 in 1980. Put another way, a club with 50 members in 1980 would have 36 members in 1994 (Jeffs and Smith 1990: 26-68).

Yet it isn't only the falling number of young people that is affecting the Youth Service. The range and sophistication of leisure opportunities open to young people has deepened alongside a general rise in living standards. We have seen the development of sports centres and specialist sports venues; of theme pubs and clubs; of clothing and consumer goods; of shopping malls; and a massive expansion in home-based entertainment. In many respects the rise of the home as a centre for leisure activity is one of the most marked changes. It isn't simply that video and audio technology has developed. Something as straightforward as the spread of central heating combined with the decline in family size is of fundamental importance. It means that young people have much more usable space to themselves. The club as a temporary escape from the overcrowded home is no longer required, neither can it now compete with the sophisticated provision of the commercial sector.

Other things are also changing. Personal and social education, the specialism that youth workers claimed as their own, now takes place in over 90 per cent of secondary schools. We also have to recognise that formal education plays a growing role in young people's lives. In 1959 most young people in the designated age range of the Youth Service had jobs. With the raising of the school-leaving age to sixteen and increased levels of voluntary staying-on and take up of further education and training, the majority of the effective client group is now

in full-time education. If the age range of the Youth Service is designated as 13 to 19 years then by the mid-1990's it is probable that less than ten per cent of the potential client group will be in traditional full time employment.

Lastly, in this brief survey, we also need to take stock of the claims that the Youth Service has made in the past in respect of crime prevention. Successive governments since the early 1970s have been suspicious of the impact of the Youth Service in this area. The priority has been to put money into more directly targeted forms of provision such as intermediate treatment and policing.

These changes combined with developments in the formal education sector and in social policy generally have nudged the DES into thinking about the future of youth work. In addition, approaching 70 per cent of local education authorities have conducted a full-blown review of their services since 1982 (Smith 1989). Partly as a result of this, we are in the midst of a great hype around the so called 'youth work curriculum' and a series of ministerial conferences.

At the first of these conferences the Minister announced:

This conference bears an important responsibility; its success - and indeed the future shape of the Youth Service itself - rests in our hands. (Alan Howarth addressing the First Ministerial Conference with the Youth Service, 13 December 1989)

He was signalling that things will have change. He went on to say:

I know that the Youth Service, in some quarters, prides itself on making universal provision, open to all. Is this necessary, in the light of other provision available, or indeed realistic, given limited resources? . . . Should the Youth Service, rather, aim for a 'deficit model'. Should it concentrate on those who are failed by other services and systems; who are prevented in some way from benefiting from them; or who simply can't afford them? Or, as a further option, is the Youth Service talking about a 'value added model'? Is its strength as a complement to other provision - supporting, reinforcing, or adding to the work of other providers . . . The Government is convinced that a directed fusillade is better than a scatter-gun approach.

The message given is clear. The Government is no longer interested in funding a universal service. Rather it wants either 'a safety net for schools' or 'something complementary to formal education, either in the sense of reinforcing the work of formal education or in the sense of adding something which schools cannot hope to provide'. (These are the Minister's words). In this we can detect the familiar theme of targeting, already encountered in respect of the reform of the NHS, personal social services, social security and housing. A significant feature in this statement is the extent to which it parallels a number of the practice developments that have been occurring within the field. In particular, the moves to working in and around schools, and the shift towards more casework orientated forms of intervention. Schools have been attractive sites for youth work for two reasons. Firstly, they can often offer facilities which are not available within youth centres and clubs. They have often been the only

facilities that youth organisations could get reasonable access to in many areas. However, with the introduction of the local management of schools, as we have seen this resource may well become prohibitively expensive for many youth groups. Secondly, schools offer clients. They are the place where we can find the greatest concentration of young people. It is relatively easy for workers to make contact with young people during the day. Not only that, being linked to the institution of the school, youth activities seemed to be seen as somehow safer or more attractive to many young people and their parents. In London, for example, it is noticeable that by and large, school based youth work attracts more young people than does free standing work. Certainly consistently more young women are attracted to school based provision. In a number of authorities youth workers have been brought into mainstream teaching areas such as personal and social education. Their approach being seen as more flexible, informal and group centred, and as an alternative way of working with some 'difficult' groups. The latter is often seen as a 'safety net' and as an addition to the pastoral and control system of the school. With growing Governmental concern about discipline in, and attendance at, schools, youth workers are likely to be increasingly drawn into forms of intervention aimed at 'disruptive pupils' (DES 1989). Indeed a number of local authorities have appointed specialist youth workers attached to schools specifically to work with 'troublesome groups' (and provide a 'safety net'). At present these workers tend to be within the Youth Service, but with local management of schools there is no reason why they shouldn't be directly employed within the school.

The second area of development has been what might be called informal casework and more social work orientated forms of intervention. For some years a number of people leaving youth and community work training courses have gone to work in intermediate treatment projects and the like. This trend has quickened of late. Increasingly the informal educational skills of youth workers are seen as relevant to residential work. In addition, a number of social work agencies such as Barnardo's, Save the Children Fund and the Family Service Units are appointing youth and community workers to local social work teams in order to complement their casework programme. Local social service departments are also employing youth workers. These are noteworthy changes. It may be that youth work will become like community work - with workers spread across different departments and agencies. However, the employment of youth workers within social work agencies isn't the only change here. Within the Youth Service itself, there has been some growth in casework approaches. One of the most obvious shifts is the growth of counselling and advice services. There has also been an increased usage of youth workers in informal casework around such concerns as prostitution, homelessness and substance abuse.

This last shift is part of a very significant trend - the targeting of groups of young people who are defined as being in some special social need. This is what the minister means by adopting a 'directed fusillade'. Interventions have been organised around HIV/AIDS; unemployment; substance use; learning difficulties and physical impairments; sexual abuse;

the needs of young women; and the needs of different cultural groupings. In some local authority reorganisations this has meant the total relocating of staff into, for example, neighbourhood teams each member having some specialism. Such developments have been particularly noticeable in London, partly fuelled by the demise of the large open youth centre. The character of these interventions varies. Some have been educational, others have had more of social work orientation.

The future shape of youth work

It is now possible to predict with a measure of certainty what the future shape of youth work will be. While the emphasis and detail may alter, what has, and is, happening in other arenas of welfare provides clear indicators. There is an element of consistency partly because of the particular ideological disposition of the Government and its servants towards the creation of markets and the opportunities for entrepreneurialism on the one hand, and the maintenance of a strong central state on the other. However, what also has to be recognised is that departments are drawing on research and advice from common sources when framing their policy responses. Here we might cite the activities of the Audit Commission and the use of a select group of private consultancy firms such as Peat Marwick, Price Waterhouse, and Coopers and Lybrand. As we write, the latter company are undertaking a study on behalf of the DES of the management and organisation of resources within youth work. This has involved examining the activities of a representative group of local youth services. Coopers and Lybrand have been involved in similar examinations of other sectors (for example in recommendations concerning the local management of schools) and in furnishing the Government with possible organisational and policy positions. Given the scale of contracts awarded by government departments it is inevitable that the reports furnished by these consultants tend to be precisely what the purchaser wishes to hear.

So what is the future organisational shape of youth work? In what we say here there is a degree of speculation, but from what can be gathered from other arenas, combined with available comment from within the DES and elsewhere, a pattern is emerging.

First, the erosion of the number of welfare and other functions managed by local authorities will continue. The Government wishes to divert powers and resources away from this sector. Thus, it is likely that monies for youth work will no longer be automatically part of any central government grant to local authorities. Essentially what will occur is that the only money which local authorities will retain any significant degree of discretion over will be that raised through the community charge or other activities. In order to receive monies for youth work from central government (including much current local authority provision), they will have to submit costed programmes of work. This will be to either a local or regional co-ordinating agency such as, or resembling, the TECs. The new regional Arts Councils have been an example of this development. Alternatively, programmes will be submitted directly to those government ministries, such as DES, DSS, DoH, Home Office and Department of Environment, who currently disperse monies for youth related projects. The advantage of

the former is that they will distance ministers from unpopular decisions; give control to central government (particularly the Treasury) over the size of the national allocation; and allow for local flexibility and for greater degrees of agency and programmes integration (much as Griffiths proposed for care packages). The problem with this solution for the DES and other ministries is that it erodes their power. In addition, whereas the Arts Council/TEC model allows for horizontal integration, it makes vertical integration of the type sought by the Home Office and DES problematic.

Second, it will not matter in key respects which of these models is adopted. Each is grounded upon a model of resource allocation to the field that is based upon notions of the market and the mixed economy of welfare. In the market will be local authorities, voluntary organisations, commercial groups and quasi-independent agencies such as individual schools. However, the structure of the markets will not be as clean cut as this list suggests. For what will occur is that within local authorities, for example, there will be competition between different departments, sections and individual units. It will open the possibility of social services departments bidding to provide services to targeted groups of young people. While some local voluntary youth organisations may applaud the chance to compete, what it will in effect do is open up youth work to four major players: schools who under Local Management of Schools (LMS) will be able to employ directly youth workers; the big national voluntary organisations such as Save the Children, Barnados, National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO), National Children's Homes, the Children's Society, and the Family Service Units; the police; and private enterprise. In other words, there will be a fundamental shift with local authorities bidding against other agencies for monies that were formerly theirs.

Third, to receive funding agencies, departments and authorities will have to manufacture packages for approval much as has happened in Northern Ireland. These will have to demonstrate how they will meet predetermined criteria concerning, for example:

- ★ the target group;
- ★ expected outcomes and how they will be measured (performance indicators);
- ★ compliance with the mission statement/aims of youth work as defined by the government; and
- ★ expenditure targets and budgetary controls.

It is here that the role of the curriculum become clear. For it is essential to set out some guidelines as to content, but most importantly, to offer those awarding contracts criteria for initial acceptance or rejection, intermediate monitoring and finally, the measurement of success or failure. Such a curriculum will doubtless contain honeyed words about anti-racism, positive practice and countering oppression. It will superficially appear to leave ample room for 'radical practice' but what this misses is that the 'curriculum' will be applied in particular contexts and according to a particular ideological paradigm. What will occur is that the Government will highlight certain key target groups and issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, school non-attendance, juvenile crime, single parent families, family breakdown, public racial conflict and

any other future moral panics. It is to these elements that the curriculum is then applied. Thus, working with young women under the present Government would most certainly be linked to their family policy. It would, therefore, be orientated towards the reduction of the number of single parents, the control of prostitution, reduction in family breakdown and the production of more effective mothers. When the Minister stresses that what is required will be 'a directed fusillade' rather than a 'scatter-gun approach' it is a clear indication that the curriculum although probably vague regarding terminology and content will have to be contextualised in relation to clear policy outcomes. The determination of the latter will not be left to the discretion of either practitioners or agencies.

As a footnote to this discussion of targeted provision and the creation of packages of services it is necessary to note one further, logical development. Within social work the construction of care packages is an individualised activity. Care managers buy in a range of different services to make a package for a particular individual. There is growing pressure from right wing institutions such as the Social Affairs Unit to extend this way of thinking into other spheres. In particular, Sengalman and Marsland (1989) have praised the Swiss benefit arrangements whereby locally-based workers work with claimants to draw up individual contracts specifying what the claimant and workers will do to get the claimant back to 'independence'. This is part of a package to abandon national benefit rates. The implications for youth work are clear. To receive funding it may not only be necessary to target certain defined groups for intervention, but also named individuals. Fourth, innovative youth work and action-research orientated projects will as in other welfare areas be more directly controlled by central government as the funding capacity of local authorities and to a lesser extent higher education diminishes. Invariably such work, where it occurs, will be funded by short-term contracts; be subjected to careful and continuous monitoring; and be designed to complement the Government's 'fusillade'. As those who have sought to research the implementation of the Social Fund and the recent welfare initiatives have discovered, unhelpful and potentially critical investigations will be denied funding and what is published will be meticulously monitored. The determination of the government to control carefully this area of youth work has already been spelt out: 'it is conceivable that, in the longer term and once the [National Youth] Agency is more fully developed, some responsibility for the disbursement of discrete funds for the development of work in the Youth Service field might be delegated to it' (DES 1990). However, according to the same letter, until that agency has proved its trustworthiness such monies will continue to be dispersed by the DES via ESG and Local Education Authority Training Grants (LEATGS) funds. The unnatural haste with which NYA has progressed from being a glint in the eye of the DES to the advertisement appearing for a Director has restricted the opportunities for public debate regarding its role and function. At the time of writing much confusion is encountered as to what the writ of the Agency will be. What is known is that it will be designated a Non-Departmental Government Body (NDPB); overwhelmingly dependent upon central government funding and, therefore, like its predecessor

the NYB safe and docile; and that it will have a management committee of which appointees of the Minister, plus those they choose in turn co-opt will comprise a clear majority. Such a body will offer a much safer conduit for the distribution and allocation of 'developmental monies' than local authorities. In the not too distant future it is likely that the NYA will begin to dispense funding in a direct fashion in similar fashion to the Training Commission and the MSC before it. In the long-term one wonders if this function may be transferred to TECs or their youth work alternatives, and that the NYA might in a number of respects be a transitional solution.

Fifth, the large national voluntary organisations such as the uniformed organisations who currently receive little direct money will continue in their own way. Occasional applications for monies to support specialist projects will be made while in certain areas they will be clear beneficiaries of both the new funding arrangements and the ideological climate. A recent example of this has been the action of the new Conservative administration in Ealing in cutting grants to more oppositional youth groups such as the Southall Youth Movement and giving new monies to Brownies, Sea Cadets and Scouts (Burke 1990). It is unlikely that most of the large national voluntary youth organisations will express any deep opposition to the new arrangements. A number will probably be delighted to see the further erosion of local authority control. The cosy and in some cases totally immoral relationship of certain voluntary agencies in the recent past with the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) provides graphic evidence that some would take money from any source and be prepared to compromise any residual principle in the process.

Sixth, we are heading for a massive growth in short-term contracting. Workers will in more and more instances only be appointed for one, three or five years. The numbers employed by local authorities will drop as other players enter the market. They are being forced by legislation to sell off, close or contract out leisure centres. In the not too distant future they may also be similarly forced to unload youth and community centres along with homes for the elderly and handicapped. Those attached to, or integrated with, schools are likely to be transferred from local authority control if the present Government wins the next election. Free standing units will be offered to voluntary organisations, community groups or youth workers who might organise the equivalent of 'management buy-outs'. Irrespective of who secures ownership it will involve a move out of local authority employment and a deterioration in service conditions. We are certain to encounter the growth of part-time, job-share and temporary employment. Taken together these help employers to reduce overheads and the costs of maternity leave, pensions, sickness and redundancy. The position of the public sector trade unions will be further eroded and that of management enhanced. Patterns of employment will emerge that both statutory and voluntary employers will find increasingly attractive. Some workers will find such terms of employment acceptable, even an exciting prospect. However, their gain will have to be set beside the catastrophic loss of employee rights for many of their colleagues.

Seventh, it is likely the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC)

will no longer be a significant reference point in determining appointments. The shift in emphasis in youth work, combined with the growing presence of schools, social work agencies and the police in the field, will bring teaching and social work qualifications more to the fore. These being the currency in which these agencies are used to dealing in. Also changes in the nature of the work, not least the already mentioned rise of short-term contracts, will erode the attractiveness of the youth work qualifications for full-time employment. Particularly as it falls between two stalls, being neither a narrowly focused qualification such as a diploma in counselling or family therapy, nor generic or flexible such as a degree in social administration or education. Unlike the latter the youth and community certificate does not confer a comparable capacity for movement between various areas of welfare and non-welfare 'person' work. The longevity of the JNC may be temporarily extended by accommodations with bodies such as Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW), but the abolition of the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW) and the transfer of its duties to the NYA does not provide much comfort. Certainly transferring control over training to the NYA will encourage more direct interference by central government. Also it is likely to predicate a greater degree of prescription regarding course content based upon closer linkages to the youth work curriculum.

Again, this may be a temporary role for the NYA. Higher education institutions are rapidly moving towards modular diploma and degree programmes. They are likely to use their self-validating powers to produce graduates who will be qualified to enter a wide variety of welfare work. Their graduates will be academically qualified and without, in many cases, 'recognition' from the respective professional body such as CETYCW. In more and more instances, as the youth work labour market fragments, the former will take precedence over the latter with employers seeking, at least for management posts academic qualification and occupational flexibility. The capacity of agencies such as CETYCW to control what is taught and where it is delivered has already been weakened. The ESG Apprenticeship training scheme initiated by the DES with the collusion of the NYB made a mockery of the whole approval programme of CETYCW. Courses were starting before full validation and the whole scheme was rushed through with 'back-of-the-envelope' course planning taking place in many areas. After that fiasco one might well ask who needs CETYCW anyway? Such a question is not, however, now totally irrelevant for it serves as a precursor for the next one on the agenda: do we need NYA interference in training? The answer is almost certainly 'no'. It is impossible to conceive what it might possibly contribute towards the raising of standards within either full- or part-time training.

Specific youth work qualifications will be increasingly irrelevant within the new 'free market'. Employers in the sphere of youth work, like their compatriots in schools and further education will be just as free to engage who they want; not whom the JNC or NYA prescribe. The low regard many employers have held much initial training in for many years will mean that many will seek graduates of other training and

degree programmes which have a higher reputation for academic and professional rigour. A policy that will be linked to the purchasing of in-service training packages designed to meet the needs of specific projects, plus the use of National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) as the validating agency for both full- and part-time workers. The current structure of training, constructed in the long ago age of the teacher training college, is based upon a model of both higher education and the field that is melting before our eyes. The old certainties have gone and with it the *raison d'être* for the two year Certificate programme.

Lastly, it should be noted that these changes and others herald the end of the statutory - voluntary partnership which has been the corner-stone of youth work since 1944, a structure which can be traced back to even earlier legislation. Already the language has changed in recognition of this shift and the expected demise of the local authority sector as presently constituted. Now the Government talks of the maintained rather than the statutory sector. This re-designation is of more than linguistic significance. It represents a new 'partnership' between a strong central state and a range of agencies and organisations competing in the market for consumers and for funding. Into this market come local players like schools, but also state institutions such as the police; private enterprise; and large national social welfare organisations such as the Save the Children Fund. The role of local authorities as the key player on the 'statutory' side and the significance of voluntary youth organisations on the non-governmental side will diminish. The Youth Service as we have known it is disappearing. Youth work will continue, but located within an increasing array of institutions.

In conclusion

These are the type of changes that are in the offing. We have presented a fairly strong version of them. There could be all sorts of intermediate arrangements. However, these possibilities are real. They were hinted at in the correspondence that led to the setting up of NYA and they have appeared in other guises. In a number of respects the development of the ESG scheme (both the trainee scheme particularly and those concerned with social and moral responsibility) are a fair indicator of the sort of direction we will be headed both in terms of organisation and content. The scale and scope of these changes makes the current fascination with the content of the national curriculum somewhat peripheral.

In the short-run it is difficult to envisage that the DES will not secure what it wants. However, this should not be read as an acceptance that they will achieve the ends they desire. Highly centralised and dictatorial planning has a high rate of failure. The price extracted for a failure to secure meaningful consensus and the co-operation of those who must implement your policy is that you work from a poor knowledge base concerning the reality of practice. An excellent example of this is the way that implementation problems have forced the government to back-track on testing and the compulsory elements of the national curriculum for schools. Also, such modes of policy construction create new forms of opposition such as that involved in the rise of regionalism; the advocacy of citizenship; the massive refusal to pay what is adjudged to be an

unfair tax; and the conflict with the European welfare system. Such movements and tensions will eventually undo much of the harm done to welfare provision policies by the present government. In the meantime it is essential to offer the maximum levels of opposition. For just as their reforms of the social security system were supposedly implemented to secure better management of resources, greater efficiency and more effective targeting of need, so it will be with youth work. What emerged in the former and will emerge, if implemented in the latter, is meaner, nastier and more repressive provision.

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I ntermediate Treatment - a Radical Practice

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Recently I reported my research (Rogowski 1990) into whether a radical intermediate treatment (I.T.) practice was possible. I

argued that although I.T. has moved a long way since its introduction by the Children and Young Person's Act 1969 - not least the welcome introduction of system management strategies to keep young people out of the juvenile justice system and alternative to incarceration schemes being developed for heavy end offenders - it is still a conservative practice. Thus, it is essentially an element of social control and, especially bearing in mind the triumph of Thatcherite 'law and order' ideology and the rise of the justice model in the 1980's (Hudson 1987), it does little to meet young people's immediate needs and is even less concerned with aiming towards a more just and equal society. Radical I.T. has to involve precisely this. My research however indicated that apart from some very ad hoc and limited examples, no adequate model for a radical I.T. exists. Current practice largely consists of versions of the correctional curriculum (Thorpe et al 1980 and Denman 1982) but also increasingly more controlling/punishment oriented practice such as tracking and reparation. This paper attempts to remedy this situation by outlining a model for a radical I.T. practice.

This paper adopts an orthodox Marxist position in relation to crime and delinquency, a perspective which stresses the importance of class and does perhaps neglect more recent work in relation to, for example, race and gender. I do not want to play down the importance of race and gender issues and I do refer to them, albeit in passing, later in this paper. Nevertheless I think that class is the over-riding consideration, not least because it is possible to argue that the issues surrounding race and gender can be tackled *within* present society. However, the issues surrounding class cannot be addressed without profoundly jolting the present system and ultimately fundamentally changing it! Be that as it may, I will now go on to outline a model for a radical I.T.

It has to be stressed that there are difficulties, both theoretical and practical, in pursuing radical I.T. Following Marxist theories of the state, for example, it can be argued I.T. practitioners are merely involved in buttressing capitalism. As Quinney puts it (Quinney 1980);

Whether the specific programmes, strategies and techniques of criminal justice are explicitly repressive and coercive (incarceration), or whether they are more subtle and seemingly more humanistic (I.T.) the agreed upon purpose is a system of control for preserving capitalism.

Even those practitioners in my research who saw the possi-

bilities of a radical I.T. stressed the problems and difficulties in actually implementing it - the fear

of not being seen as credible or of being accused of indoctrination or, ultimately, of being disciplined and dismissed because of what can be seen as subversive practice. The strength of such arguments have to be acknowledged but there are ways forward, some possibilities for a radical I.T. practice, involving aspects of radical social work and groupwork.

This is not the place to go into detail about Marxist theories of the state but it is worth noting that, despite the current questioning and even dismantling of the welfare state, it can still be argued that its role in general and personal social services in particular, including social workers and I.T. practitioners, is to deflect attention from the structural failure of capitalism by focussing on individual, family or community pathology. Nevertheless, struggles and contradictions do exist and although on balance the state and its apparatus exist to defend the dominant economic interests (those of the ruling class), it also reflects struggles as well as the status quo, for example the welfare state itself. The problem, and opportunity I would argue, is that of working in and against the state and this, more precisely, involves turning our routine contact with the state apparatus against the form of social relations which the apparatus is trying to impose on our actions (London-Edinburgh Weekend Group 1980). The state for example would like to emphasise and strengthen the ideology of the reproduction of the male working class labour force and also the reproduction of women and children as dependents of the male wage labourer, with all the power and authority centralised in the man. This form of patriarchal authority, leading of course to the oppression of women, is necessary for capitalism. However, social workers can question, debate and ultimately refute this view in dealings with clients. This is not to say that social workers alone are going to bring about the emancipation of women but merely that there are some opportunities in their work for questioning aspects of dominant ideology. This brief example, and others I will give later in relation to radical I.T., must of course be linked to more widescale attempts at change - trade unions, political parties and community groups. In short it means working towards a more just and equal society based on socialist times. This is what a radical I.T. has to involve.

At another theoretical level it can be argued that some of the Marxists (Taylor et al 1973 and 1975) manoeuvred themselves into too tight a theoretical position where immediate moral and political questions are not even on the agenda.

Their position was essentially that anything short of fundamental transformation of society amounted to individual correctionalism and had to be avoided. This put social workers in an intolerable position as they were being asked to subscribe to theories which actually cast them as being at least partly responsible for crime and delinquency not least by propping up and delaying the transformation of society which lay at the root of the problem. And, of course, labelling theory argues their involvement actually contributed to the amplification of deviancy. I would add, however, that you cannot simply sit back, do nothing and wait for the revolution. In the meantime, there are casualties of society, including young people in trouble, and help cannot simply be suspended until the new society is attained. Instead, help has to be offered but in terms of some vision of a more just and equal society. This amounts to 'moral pragmatism' (Cohen 1985) which involves both individual concern about private troubles but also a commitment to socialist change of the public issues which cause these troubles.

At this point in time it may seem to be naive idealism to think in terms of change as outlined above. There is considerable pessimism, even on the far left, about the possibility of fundamentally transforming society on more just and equal lines. The triumph of Thatcherism has been associated with and followed by an ideological offensive of great effectiveness whereby dominant ideology has been incorporated within the working class. Against an alliance of a Thatcherite government and a managed mass media the possibilities of even collective action and resistance, much less radical social work or I.T., bringing about a restructuring of society may seem remote.

Nevertheless, a start has to be made and, referring to the old adage, if one is about to start a long journey then one must begin with a small step forward.

At a more practical level, I think I.T. practitioners are being unduly fearful when they talk of losing credibility, of being dismissed or disciplined if discovered pursuing a radical I.T. It is no doubt true, especially with the current domination of 'law and order' ideology that genuine, credible alternatives to incarceration are required, and that because of this ideology such things as control and punishment will have to be emphasised at the expense of the welfare and rehabilitation of young people when selling the alternatives to the courts or, for that matter, to one's own organisational hierarchy. The values of the justice model will have to be to the fore. The point here however is that what is sold in order to obtain the supervision order (I.T. or specified activities) merely provides the framework, the parameters for what the I.T. practitioner actually does with the young people in his/her face to face work with them. Thus, although control (attendance at an I.T. Centre) and punishment (e.g. reparation) may have to take place in order for the scheme to appear credible and be allowed to continue, ample space for a radical I.T. practice can be created within it. To be blunt, when carrying out a correctional curriculum, the actual length of time involved and the intensity of work are in the hands of the individual practitioner. The curriculum can take ten minutes of a two hour group work session with the rest of the time being used for radical I.T., based on notions such as empowerment,

politicisation and conscientisation.

Although the most sophisticated theoretical exposition of I.T. 's development has been made by Thorpe and his colleagues (Thorpe et al 1980) a number of other writers have made valuable contributions to the subject, in particular in attempting to develop a more radical perspective, and I will now briefly refer to them.

Ward et al (Ward 1982) have tried to move from a concentration on the individual young person in trouble or at most his family to an examination of economic pressures and environmental conditions, from private troubles to public issues. They argue that delinquency follows not from personal abnormality, nor is it the inevitable outcome of living amid structural inequalities in society, but rather that an element of choice is involved, and because of economic and material pressures, working class young people's choice is severely restricted. Their lack of money, lack of recreation facilities, etc., mean that some choose delinquency in order to obtain material rewards, excitement, status, friendship and so on. To combat this a social action groupwork approach is adopted using social education to examine personal development and inter-personal relationships but also with an emphasis on young people acting collectively to achieve material changes and gain an understanding of their ability to intervene in the political, organisational and social pressures that affect them. Various examples of such an approach are quoted, one being a group which stated that a lack of recreational facilities was one of the main factors in their being in trouble. As a result, petitions were collected, public meetings held, contact made with the local council and media, and eventually a youth club was obtained. They also complained about the local policing on the estate, saying they were being harassed. A meeting was held with the police which resulted in different men being put on duty on the estate with the young people agreeing to adopt a less obstructive attitude.

Beresford and Croft (1982) also attempt to move away from a focus on the individual young person in trouble arguing that this underplays the structural issues bearing on young people in general. I.T. they go on, by its focus on young people in trouble, redefines severe and generalised problems for young people as a whole to a small delinquent group, this serving to defuse the problem and direct attention away.

Finally, as far as I am aware, there has only been one attempt explicitly to link some aspects of radical criminology to I.T. practice and as such Holt's book (Holt 1985) is welcome. One of the main themes is that law and order ideology must be made explicit and challenged by, for example, I.T. practitioners being advocates for offenders under their jurisdiction using law whenever possible to protect offenders, the use of appeals, monitoring the juvenile justice system, and local and national practitioners organisations debating, publicising and campaigning.

Although these are valuable contributions to the development of I.T., criticisms can be made. Ward et al are probably nearest to the development of a radical I.T. practice but they perhaps over-emphasise the element of choice which working class young people actually have, and in addition they do not adopt a Marxist position, thereby not fundamentally questioning present society. At another level their groups

include non-offenders and so do not function as alternatives to incarceration. However, perhaps such groups, organised by youth workers for example, could be used by young people in trouble after they have completed their alternative to incarceration I.T. programme. In spite of these reservations the social action approach does have attractions and aspects of this can be incorporated into a radical I.T. practice. As for Beresford and Croft, they make a valid point, but although the structural pressures they refer to have a far reaching effect on a whole range of young people, those in trouble and about to be incarcerated have the obvious further problems of the punitive effects of the juvenile justice system. Holt does not address a radical I.T. practice, in terms of face to face work with young people, which confronts the inequalities of wealth and power in society which he seemingly acknowledges lies at the the root of delinquency. Perhaps though his latest work can be used, a point I will return to.

Before moving more specifically to a radical I.T. practice a comment has to be made about the justice model which is, as indicated, in the ascendancy. This model has been co-opted by the Thatcherite law and order ideology strengthening the hard incarcerative end of social control which is complemented by the increased soft end. Thus, for example, many alternative to incarceration schemes, in order to be credible to the courts, have emphasised their controlling punishing, confrontational and offence focussed aspects of their work to the exclusion of their help, welfare, rehabilitative and compensatory aspects, so as to not appear soft on delinquency. There is a real danger of alternative incarcerations rather than alternatives to incarceration being developed. It is worth noting that 'new rehabilitationists' are beginning to emerge (Hudson 1987) not least because of this danger.

Perhaps after all a qualified justice model is appropriate. In relation to I.T. this would still mean minimum intervention in young people's lives as far as delinquency is concerned, but when help and advice was needed this would be provided on a voluntary basis and, more appropriately, by the youth and education service. If intervention was required via I.T. it would be limited to those about to be incarcerated. Although it might be necessary to emphasise the controlling/punishment as opposed to the welfare/rehabilitative aspects of the alternative to incarceration schemes in order to sell it to the courts, these aspects would in fact be reversed in the actual programme. But we are beginning to anticipate a radical I.T., and before that, a comment about systems management.

No doubt proper systems management strategies are essential aspects of I.T. practice, but the point has also to be made that it is not enough simply to manage and manipulate the juvenile justice system. There is great danger that the sole object of intervention will be the system itself and little attention will be given to the quality of people's lives, and even trying to help will be abandoned. Systems management alone also ignores the argument of the juvenile justice system itself being an area of the class struggle (Pitts 1988). Having mentioned this caveat, systems management is important in diverting young people from the juvenile justice system, not least because it goes some way to ensuring wherever possible that young people are not subject to domination and control by the ruling class's state apparatus, in the front of the juvenile justice

system.

Moving to radical I.T., it surely goes without saying, that wherever possible young people in trouble should be diverted from the juvenile justice system, and only when they are about to be incarcerated should intervention by I.T. occur as an alternative. At present such I.T. practice consists largely of the correctional curriculum, with even the compensatory aspects of I.T. being eclipsed in many areas, this fitting in with the justice model. As the very word 'correctional' implies, the curriculum is designed to correct the behaviour of individual young people. No matter how its proponents try to justify it by saying it enables young people to make more informed choices, it ultimately rests upon helping them to adjust or cope with their present situation in existing society, with perhaps some attempt at providing assistance to families. The question of whether the present situation and society itself is good enough or whether it is the so called well-adjusted who may need help to make them feel less satisfied and demand improvements and changes rather than meekly accept their situation is not addressed. The correctional curriculum ignores the transparent immorality of the inequalities of wealth, power and rewards in capitalist society. Instead it merely attempts to achieve a more desirable state of social functioning, a functioning which reinforces the status quo. For radical I.T. practitioners, face to face work with young people in trouble has to involve more than this. It has to empower them, increase their consciousness and extend their ability to control their own lives, linked with broader movements aimed at totally transforming the economic and political interests of society. As one youth worker put it:

The awesome job of the practitioners to socialise, or more appropriately, politicise young people into the morality of collective responsibility and obligations, into a recognition of the justice of equality between black and white, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, disabled and able-bodied, into a commitment to the class struggle
(Taylor 1987)

Of course this, as has always been the case with radical social work, is easier said than done, and the question that now confronts us is how is it to be done?

Radical I.T. practice must involve a groupwork approach for the obvious reason that the individualised or casework approach, which unfortunately some I.T. schemes are turning to, has an inherent tendency to pathologise problems and difficulties without acknowledging their root in the external world, society itself. Incidentally, it is sometimes argued that if radical I.T. was to be limited to those who would otherwise face incarceration then, because of the success of systems management strategies, there would actually be too few young people to form a group. It has to be pointed out that a group can consist of as few as three young people and if, as advocated below, a rolling groupwork programme is adopted then this number problem is unlikely to be unsurmountable. In any case groupwork by introducing young people to others in similar circumstances can help them to sustain their self respect and make them aware of wider problems and issues, the latter being a key aim. It can also give confidence, solidarity and a sense of common

oppression and while dealing with personal problems and difficulties this is done in a way which locates solutions in the wider economic and political sphere. Although most groupwork can be characterised as being geared to individual change and adjustment, it is possible to have external change and understanding as a primary objective. Such a view is often common in community work but it can be incorporated into social work, including I.T., as Mullender and Ward (Mullender and Ward 1985) show. The values underpinning such an approach include: starting from people's own life experiences; regarding the vast majority of people as emotionally sound and free from any pathological condition or behaviour requiring treatment or help; seeing that people lack power rather than skills or desirable personal qualities; and seeing that they can redress the balance of power and take control over their lives at least to some extent, by questioning other's attitudes towards themselves, by being actively involved in decision making and by challenging the prejudicial aspects of societal norms.

Of particular importance in this groupwork model is conscientisation and the work of Friere (1975) drawn from his experience of teaching. He argues that the world is not a given reality which must be accepted and to which people should adjust but rather it is a problem to be worked on and solved. People should not be mere objects responding to the changes occurring around them but should take on the struggle to change structures of society which at present oppress them. There is no such thing as a neutral education process, or for that matter a neutral groupwork process, it either functions as an instrument to facilitate the integration of young people to the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or as a means by which they deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of society. Conscientisation is about learning to perceive economic, political and social situations and contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality. He goes on to discuss critically the banking concept of education whereby teachers, in a one-way process, make deposits in young people's minds. Instead there should be a more equal relationship, a partnership, and a resulting two-way process whereby young people are not integrated into the structure of oppression, but (instead) transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves (Friere 1975).

This fits in well with Mullender and Ward's model which they call self-directed groupwork. Essentially the worker works alongside the group facilitating it to set its own agenda of issues - asking the question what? This moves on to analysing why? The problem on the agenda exists and then how? to deal with them. At a practical level they give various examples of such groups, the one of particular interest being the young people's groups referred to by Ward et al above.

Holt's latest work (Ball et al 1987) gives a practical example of a groupwork programme which can be incorporated into a radical I.T. practice. This gives details and guidelines for the running of an open group involving a rolling programme of sessions which can thus provide a flexible service to the courts and, more importantly, to young people who are facing incarceration. Much is written about emphasising risk-taking

and empowering the young people, as opposed to control and discipline, together with a recognition of the societal pressures that young people in trouble are under. There is also an emphasis on equal relationship between the workers and the young people, and of starting from the real world which they inhabit and of enabling them to exercise more power over their own lives.

The writers also eschew the more usual groupwork techniques of behaviour modification or a concentration on members' feelings, perceptions and self-expression which can slip into introspective therapy. Although not without criticisms, the programme can be incorporated into a radical I.T. programme. Returning to Mullender and Ward's what?, why? and how?, a typical problem likely to be brought up by young people in trouble will be unemployment. The why? can be examined in terms of the changes in the political economy since the 1970's, and the how? could be the enabling or facilitation of campaigns and protests regarding the unemployment issue, linking with unemployment groups, claimants unions and the trade unions themselves. Indeed I have actually had experience of this when a representative of a local unemployment centre became involved with a group of young people I was working with. We had already used the services of a local careers officer who had come along to sell the palliatives offered by the state to unemployed young people, i.e. the various training schemes. The young people however were not impressed arguing that such schemes did not provide real training but rather provided cheap labour for employers. The representative from the unemployment centre acknowledged the views, that unemployment did not have to be accepted or the so called training schemes. Instead society could be organised differently on more just and equal lines, and in the meantime this had to be fought for via the afore-mentioned campaigns and protests.

Another problem likely to be raised by young people, as Ward et al found, is the lack of recreational facilities. A radical I.T. group would concentrate on the why?, again in terms of the public expenditure cutbacks and changes in the political economy, as well as the how? question which Ward and his colleagues successfully addressed. Or again, young people will certainly complain about the inadequacy of income support, the introduction of the social fund and Department of Social Security changes in general. The why? can again locate these changes within the political economy with the how? being addressed by, for example, forging links with local claimants unions.

Mention ought to be made about the young people riots of the 1980's which repeatedly cropped up in my discussions with respondents during my research (Rogowski, 1990). Although most did not see a role for I.T. practitioners in relation to them, it has to be pointed out that Atlee himself wrote that every social worker is almost certain to be also an agitator (Cypher 1975). While it is probably wrong to rule out completely the use of violence in order to overthrow an oppressive system, it may perhaps be beyond the remit of a radical I.T. practice to encourage it. However, the responses to the oppressive situation of young people in Toxteth, Brixton and elsewhere provides a valuable case study which, it occurs to me, could be used in a radical I.T. practice. Rather

than vehemently condemning the riots, which orthodox I.T. practitioners no doubt would, they should be placed in the context of the increasing powerlessness and marginalisation of young people, in particular those who are black and working class. Such discussions would lead young people to a greater understanding of their predicament and their position in society. This in turn could lead to other forms of protest such as campaigns, marches and civil disobedience in general, as well as using the more orthodox channels of contacting councillors and M.P.'s. Indeed, these are some of the aims of a radical I.T. practice.

The most difficult of the questions is how?, as can be seen from the problems referred to above which can only be properly eradicated when society has been fundamentally transformed. Nevertheless, consciousness raising itself, as opposed to consciousness raising resulting in immediate practical gains, is of value. Leonard (1984) for example points out that the theory of consciousness raising, or for that matter Friere's conscientisation rests on a conception of praxis, that is unifying theory and practice by reflecting on the world and changing it within the same process. But as such there are two models: action-orientated practice which emphasises the achievement of material changes through collective action, such as most of trade union activity; and consciousness-orientated practice which emphasises the changes in consciousness which are necessary before effective action can take place, i.e. an understanding of oneself within the social order, for example, women's groups. The first, therefore, focusses on material relations and the second on ideological struggle, though there is no clear dividing line between the two.

It may well be that radical I.T. practice will usually involve consciousness-oriented practice, simply because of the time limited nature of the groups. However, on completion of the programme the young people may well want to continue their work and they can be put in touch with their local youth and community groups where the more action-orientated practice can be developed further.

Again referring to my research many respondents frequently suggested that radical I.T. may be found in youth work. There is certainly an element of political education within youth work which is concerned with encouraging and enabling young people to look at their position in society, and included in this is anti-sexist and ant-racist work which can be incorporated into a radical I.T., although time and space prevent further elaboration here.

At this point I would like to place the groupwork I am advocating as a basis for radical I.T. within the context of a more orthodox social work practice theory, that is system theory as expounded by Pincus and Minahan (Pincus and Minahan 1973). Although they lack a class analysis, nor take note of the power distribution within and between systems, the value of their theory is that it shifts the focus of attention from individual pathology, and, so far as the change agent is concerned, provides a wider focus for social work activity. They argue that the worker can clarify his/her purpose and relations with the people he/she deals with by classifying them as members of one or more types of system. These systems are: the change agent system, which is the worker

and his/her agency; the client system, which is the person(s) who ask for help or who are the beneficiaries of the change agent; the target system, which are the people or structures which need to in order to accomplish the goals or structures which need to be changed in order to accomplish the goals of the change agent; and the action system, which is the change agent and the people he/she works with in order to accomplish his/her goals and influence the target systems. The usefulness of the theory can surely be seen in relation to the systems management strategies mentioned earlier - the need to influence the decisions of the police, courts, other departments, etc. - whereby the target system is not the client system at all. When the client system becomes the target system, as an alternative to incarceration via I.T., the action system will be the group but can also include community work elements as in some of the specific examples quoted, e.g. obtaining recreational facilities. Indeed, the community itself can become the target with the need to make it more tolerant of its own young people, especially those who happen to be in trouble. And, of course, at the end of the day the target will be present society itself.

Mention of the community brings me neatly to NACRO's work (NACRO 1987) which emphasises: the increased involvement of schools and youth services in dealing with the vast majority of young people in trouble in the community; making youth provision a statutory responsibility of local authorities; and establishing in every local authority a body for planning, co-ordinating and reviewing approaches to young people in trouble and the contributions of each of the agencies involved. At one level they address crime prevention by advocating better street lighting, improving house security, etc., and on another level aim to target resources for young people in the community. These initiatives, provided their limitations are acknowledged and understood, are welcomed in that they attempt to deal with delinquency without resorting to incarceration strategies. They leave untouched however, the source of crime and delinquency - and this cannot be repeated too often - the inequalities of wealth and power in capitalist society. Nevertheless, in the short-term these proposals can be supported.

Instead of the resources being ploughed into incarcerative facilities more should be spent on ensuring that young people have a better quality of life including better educational and recreational facilities. It surely goes without saying that in the longer term fundamental structural change of society is necessary, in order to eradicate unemployment, poverty and injustice in general.

It is towards the longer term structural transformation of society that a radical I.T. should aim. Or as Taylor (Taylor 1981) puts it:

So it is to some version of socialist transformation of the mode of production that teachers and youth workers (and social workers and I.T. practitioners!!) must increasingly turn as a solution to their own everyday problems and the real problems confronting their youthful charges.

To this end a radical I.T. involves diverting youngsters from the juvenile justice system wherever possible and only intervening on a compulsory basis as an alternative to incarceration

via I.T. I.T. for the radical will be groupwork involving empowering, politicisation and consciousness raising, dealing with young people's individual problems and difficulties but locating their solution in the wider political and economic context. The difficulties both theoretical and practical are formidable but opportunities exist. Although such work will not be at the forefront of fundamental societal change, a start can be made by I.T practitioners in their face to face work with young people in trouble. If such practitioners do not respond the way is left clear for those who are concerned about delinquency to the exclusion of concern for the young people in trouble. This work has, of course, to go hand in hand with involvement in wider movements for fundamental change including political parties and most importantly the organised working class in the trade unions.

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Working Space

Why Do The Young Homeless Leave Home?

DAVID WHYNES and JOHN FERRIS

Homeless Young People In Hostels - Some Practical Considerations

SUSAN HUTTON and MARK LIDDIARD

Why do the Young Homeless Leave Home?

Introduction

The provision of accommodation for the homeless is governed by the 1985 Housing Act, which charges local authorities with the responsibility of the provision of shelter to households deemed to be in priority need. A recent survey of the implementation of the Act (Thomas and Niner, 1989) has concluded that its provisions were being implemented in a reasonably efficient way although it excludes from practical assistance non-priority groups who may be literally without a home (p.158-9). Whilst such excluded groups may make applications to statutory agencies they are generally referred on to the voluntary sector for the practical assistance necessary.

In that they are the subjects of local authority policy the priority need groups are also the subjects of official recording. In contrast, very little is known about the characteristics of the excluded groups and, with such an end in view, the Community Policy Research Unit undertook a survey of non-priority need shelter applications made to both statutory and voluntary sector agencies in the City of Nottingham during the first half of 1988. These agencies included the City Housing Department, the Probation Service and all of the larger hostels in the City, including those operated by the Salvation Army and the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders. In total, some 1800 records were obtained, detailing, for each applicant, housing histories and socio-economic characteristics. The age range of the full sample extended from teens to the sixties and seventies, although one in five (19 per cent) was in the range 16-18 years. Indeed, the modes for both female and male age distributions lay within this age range (17 and 18 years respectively).

One of the most significant amendments to social security provision incorporated into the 1988 Social Security Act was the raising of the minimum age of entitlement to Income Support from 16 to 18 years. The policy was clearly based upon the presumption that young people in this particular age range typically reside in the parental home; in the words of the Social Security Advisory Committee, it is generally right for the benefit system to reflect the fact that at 16 or 17 the vast majority of young people will be living with their parents (quoted by Harris, 1988, p.520). The many young people numbered amongst the Nottingham homeless clearly do not constitute a part of this vast majority, and this paper attempts to identify the circumstances which cause such young people to leave home and to declare themselves homeless. The paper opens by presenting the results of the shelter applications survey with respect to young people (defined as those aged

between 16 and 18 years, inclusive), focussing particularly on the reasons given for

homelessness. The quantitative data are then complemented by the results of interviews conducted with twenty young people, each of whom had experienced accommodation difficulties; again, the emphasis is on reasons for leaving home.

Results of the characteristics survey

The age/gender distribution of the 16-18 sample is displayed in Table 1. Only one individual (male) in the entire group was married. The proportion of respondents defining themselves as UK Europe was 86.1 per cent, Afro-Caribbeans comprising 10.4 per cent. The employment rate was 20.1 per cent, employment in this respect including participation in the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). 16.3 per cent had had some work experience other than YTS, although much of this was of a casual or a part-time nature. Most work experiences (83.3 per cent) had been in Nottingham. A total of 68 applicants (20.0 per cent) reported a history of institutional care, 57 in children's homes and 11 in prison. Only 2.5 per cent of the sample reported any physical, mental or social health problems.

The prevailing housing situation faced by the sample is presented in Tables 2 to 5. Table 2 displays housing status data i.e. whether the applicant declares that he or she is currently without accommodation of any form, whether he or she expects to be homeless in the near future (e.g. owing to threatened eviction), or whether he or she is experiencing difficulties in the current accommodation. Table 3 displays the principal declared reason for the applicants' current housing situations. Table 4 indicates the form of accommodation in which the previous night was spent, Table 5 identifying its location. Note that the category other in Table 4 means, essentially, sleeping rough. The picture which emerges is of a relatively low-mobility homeless population, centred on the City, although males display a higher tendency towards migration than do females - 5 out of 6 females were Nottingham residents prior to application. The majority of young people (3 out of 5) had spent the night prior to application with friends or relatives; in the case of females, the proportion was 4 out of 5. At least one in ten of both sexes had spent the previous night sleeping rough. The inability or unwillingness of friends or relatives to continue accommodating the individual was, by far, the most common reason for homelessness given (more frequently by females), although the breakdown of cohabitation relationships emerged as a clear

secondary factor. Few individuals, not surprisingly, reported the history of accommodation insecurity which might be expected amongst an older homeless population. Sixteen individuals attributed their homeless state to discharge from care and slightly more (27) to the loss of bed and breakfast, lodgings or their own public or private sector accommodation.

Results of the interviews

All interviewees were between the ages of 16 and 18 at the time of interview. Fourteen (numbered 1-14) were residents of six of the City's voluntary sector hostels, hostels selected on the basis of a preponderance of young persons in the clientele. The remaining six respondents (numbered 15-20) were clients of a YTS placement centre in the City; these were selected on the basis of a common history of accommodation difficulties. The interviews were semi-structured and designed to elicit responses relating, *inter alia*, to family and accommodation background (particularly reasons for accommodation difficulties) and aspirations for future accommodation. The responses are summarised below, gender being designated M (Male) and F (Female).

Accommodation Background

1. (F, aged 18): Ran away from home at 14 following parents' separation; returned to father and stepmother; remained with stepmother after second separation; moved area and tried to return to stepmother but was turned away (it was her boyfriend's choice, not hers).

2. (M, aged 18): Asked to leave by parent at age 16 'I was at my Mum's she gave me seven days' notice to get out'. Since then has used hostels and experience of Youth Custody.

3. (M, aged 17): Left mother voluntarily to live with father, then left father 'We had an argument and he kicked me out'; has spent time in a children's home.

4. (F, aged 17): In care at 15; since then has experienced her own flat, a hostel, a friend's flat and a period of Youth Custody.

5. (M, aged 16): Left parental home after very bad problems with younger brother. Has slept rough and stayed briefly again with uncle 'I got kicked out because I didn't have a job'. Evicted from flat owing to non-payment of rent.

6. (M, aged 18): In care from the age of 14; left care over 12 months prior to interview, and has been a regular hostel user since then.

7. (F, aged 17): History of care. Has stayed with friends and in own bedsit but left after an assault. 'They (The Police) told me to go home, but Mum didn't want no trouble down there so I had to come here (The Hostel)'.

8. (M, aged 17): Left home at 15 'I was chucked out, basically for not being at school. I wouldn't go back now, but they (Parents) wouldn't let me anyway'; left own flat owing to non-payment of rent.

9. (F, aged 16): 'I was kicked out. I had an argument with my Dad and he hit me a couple of times . . . Then I found the bed and breakfast for a card in a window . . . I left because I couldn't pay the rent. I didn't have any money, that's when I came here (Hostel). I went to the police to see if they could get me anywhere, and they found me this place . . . My Dad'll not let

me back.'

10. (F, aged 18): Left home for reasons she refused to disclose other than the food was horrible and has used hostels since then.

11. (M, aged 17): 'When the family split up the whole thing dropped to pieces. I moved to Nottingham with my Mum when they split, then back to Bradford to my Dad, then to stay with Mum, back to Dad, then my Mum again, then the last time in care for three or four months, then foster care for over a year'.

12. (M, aged 18): 'They (Parents) threatened to kick me out because I lost my job and then they did. I got thrown out, then I went to my friend's place for one week, then I found out about this place (Hostel)'.

13. (F, aged 18): 'I ran away from home because my Dad wouldn't let me out. When he moved to live with his girlfriend he wouldn't let me out at all. He was too protective, over-protective you might say . . . They kicked me out into a bedsit and then they didn't help me. I got kicked out of the bedsit because they didn't help me with my money'. Spent some time with her aunt and her grandmother, went to boyfriend's mother 'but she drinks a lot' and was referred to the hostel by her probation officer.

14. (M, aged 18): Discharged from the Army owing to illness, returned to parental home and then 'I was kicked out. She wanted me to go so I didn't argue, I just went. She said I could come back but I don't want to, not at the moment. There's some trouble back at home at the moment, if I were to go back it would start up again'. Mother is widowed, unemployed, and has three other sons living at home.

15. (M, aged 18): Resides in Board and Lodging accommodation after argument with mother; would like to return home 'I tried once but she wouldn't have me back. Now I think I might succeed. She's thinking about it'.

16. (M, aged 17): Parents separated when he was 10 and he remained with father; then 'I ran away from home and me Dad wouldn't have me back, so I landed on the streets for a bit'. Presently lives with mother, father 'won't have me back anyway' but faces eviction 'Mum says I've got 'til Friday to look for somewhere. I want to live there but she won't let me, because I don't get on with her boyfriend . . . he drinks and beats me up'.

17. (M, aged 17): 'They (Parents) found me a bedsit and said if you don't like it we'll get another. In other words, go away, we don't want you around here'. Evicted from bedsit owing to non-payment of rent, has slept rough and is now in another bedsit. Parents have asked him to return home but require contribution to living expenses which he is reluctant to pay.

18. (M, aged 18): Left home because 'Dad was doing up the house and I didn't want to get in the way'; moved to sister's house but required to leave and presently resides with uncle; 'I think Dad'll take me back, I'm not sure . . . I'm seeing Dad tonight to talk about it'.

19. (F, aged 17): 'I got kicked out because I came home late one night drunk and I had an argument with my Mum. She kept threatening to chuck me out but I didn't think she would, and she did'. She presently resides in a bed and breakfast and is unwilling to return home 'I don't get on with my Mum, we were always having arguments. I'm getting on better now I'm

not living at home. When I went up on Saturday she was really nice to me. She said if you've got any problems ring me. She was really nice. I'm happy now'.

20. (M, aged 16): First ran away from home owing to violent father over a year ago but has returned regularly; most recently 'Dad started kicking me over and things like that, so I left'.

Currently lives in his uncle's vacant flat but will be obliged to find new accommodation in the near future when uncle is discharged from hospital. He does not intend to return home.

Future aspirations

1. 'I definitely want to be independent again, live on my own'. Is applying for Employment Training and is looking for a flat in the private rental sector 'If I don't get a council flat I'll end up staying here and saving for a down payment, and then I'll leave'.

2. 'I want a place of my own, obviously'. Also wants a job, 'not a dead end job, something with prospects'.

3. Hopes to find his own flat 'settle down first, get a job . . . I just want a job so I can get some money in my pocket'.

4. Wants to work in an old people's home and would like a 'normal flat'.

5. Believes that anyone should be able to leave home at 16 ' . . . whenever they like, whenever it feels best. Nobody under 16 because there's no way they could cope while they're at school. You should be able to have somewhere that's nice, where you can enjoy yourself with people you get on with. It's best to be with other people, but you should have a choice'.

6. 'I'd like to have my own flat . . . in a couple of years I will have it'.

7. 'Being at home is best because you get your food, unless your parents chuck you out because you've got no money. Places like this hostel are better than nothing'. For the future, 'a flat with boyfriend, or by myself'.

8. 'I think the best place for young people is at home. If they can't stay at home it's going to have to be a flat. If I couldn't stay here (Hostel) I'd be on the streets'.

9. 'You should get a flat from the authorities, then when you learn to keep it tidy you might get a house'.

10. 'It's better to have your own place . . . I don't want a trampy place, I don't want a horrible place'.

11. 'From what I see it's (Hostel) OK . . . It's the first time I've lived on my own. You can stay for up to a year. When you move out there's guaranteed to be a flat'.

12. 'I suppose a bedsit would be OK but some of them I've seen are not very good. A nice bedsit would be OK'.

13. 'A proper flat is best, not sharing . . . We should have more flats built for your people, and say they don't need to have a job to have somewhere to live. They could get a job if they had somewhere to live'.

14. 'In the end I'd like to settle down and have a house of my own . . . I could do an office job, but that's not something I want to do. Really I want to go to University'.

15. Does not like present Board and Lodging accommodation 'because they keep you awake at night' and would prefer to return home.

16. Would prefer 'lodgings with a key, like probation give you', although he is not on probation. 'I want a flat but they're

not easy to get, are they? I'll just end up on the street again like I done before'.

17. Is 'not really happy' with his bedsit and is considering returning home. 'It depends if they (Parents) give me a key to the house and stop moaning about the times I get in. I've got used to living on my own now'.

18. Would like his own flat but is considering returning home or to his sister's house.

19. ' . . . a flat of my own, that's my next step. I'm going to put my name down'.

20. 'Really I'd just like my own accommodation where I can live on my own. I find it better on my own. I'm just waiting, hoping for them to come up with a flat'.

Of the twenty interview subjects, twelve had most recently left the parental home as a result of some degree of pressure being placed upon them by parent or parents. In most cases the circumstances surrounding the departure were acrimonious - subjects reported being 'kicked out' after family arguments relating to life-styles (e.g. 8,13) or employment position (e.g. 12). Six subjects (5,10,11,15,18,20) left the parental home of their own volition, again as a consequence of domestic arguments and, in one case (20), violence. The remaining two subjects (4,6) had been placed in care at least two years prior to interview - their decision to move towards extra-parental living had thus been made for them at some time in the past. Only three subjects (15,17,18), all YTS clients as opposed to hostel residents, believed that, in their case, a successful return to the parental home would be possible. Several subjects (e.g. 7,8,9,14,16) were adamant that any attempt to so return would not be welcomed by their parents. With respect to aspirations for future accommodation, none of the subjects saw their current circumstances as desirable for the longer term. A clear majority felt that some form of independent living - in a flat for preference - was the appropriate goal i.e. such individuals felt, in a very real sense, that they had 'left home'. Only four (7,8,15,17) believed that the parental home, in abstract if not in specific terms, was the best place for a young person in their circumstances to be. For two out of the four (15,17) this aspiration appeared feasible if only, in one case (17), with conditions attached.

In addition, it is worth noting that the interviews conducted with hostel-dwellers produced evidence of a positive attitude towards the facilities being provided. The provision of basic care, and assistance with obtaining employment and welfare benefits, were generally appreciated and many saw the hostel as their only alternative to sleeping rough. Hostels were also valued for the simple provision of company - loneliness was a common experience amongst the young homeless interviewed. Setting this attitude in context, it should be borne in mind that the majority of hostel accommodation is very much of the survival kind. Hostels cannot be regarded as comfortable living environments in absolute terms, and their clients are certainly not 'feather-bedded'. By contrast, attitudes towards the provision of benefits were generally more negative. Causes of perceived dissatisfaction ranged from undue delays in benefit receipt to inadequate benefit levels. the denial of Income Support to those not in a YTS placement was seen as particularly unfair - 'they don't seem to realise that most of the people here (the hostel) have been chucked out by their

families'.

Recent policy changes

The raising of the minimum age of entitlement for Income Support in 1988 was greeted with dismay in many quarters; Harris (1988), for example, has seen it as contributing to the enforced dependency of young people on their families, inhibiting their transition to adulthood. For those making recourse to the hostels, a decline in their expected incomes would naturally contribute to their already substantial stock of problems. With respect to these young homeless as opposed to young people in general, however, it is surely significant that modifications to government policy were very soon effected. In March 1989, in reply to a Parliamentary Question, the Minister for Social Security announced the following: 'Our policy is the correct one for the vast majority of 16 and 17 year olds; it would be irresponsible to provide a perverse incentive for people of this age to leave home needlessly. However, our monitoring and our discussions with representatives of the voluntary sector and the Local Authority associations reveal that a minority are facing real difficulties' (DSS, 1989, p.1). The Minister went on to announce a series of reforms targeted directly at the homeless 16-18 age group: (i) increases in Housing Benefit, (ii) extensions of the period of entitlement to Income Support for young people genuinely estranged from their families, (iii) automatic consideration of young persons in nightshelters under the severe hardship considerations of the Act, (iv) training of officials to deal more effectively with estranged young people. The full impact of these changes remains to be seen although they should surely be welcomed by the young homeless, the majority of whom appear, on the basis of our evidence at least, to be homeless owing to genuine estrangement rather than perverse incentive.

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TABLE 1:
Age/Gender Composition (number of cases)

Age (years)	Males	Females	Total	% Males
16	21	13	34	61.8
17	79	74	153	51.6
18	97	58	155	62.6
Total	197	145	342	57.6

TABLE 2:
Current Housing Status %

	Males	Females	Total
Actually homeless	62.1	55.6	59.4
Imminently homeless	21.1	19.5	20.4
Experiencing difficulties	14.2	20.3	16.7
Other	2.6	4.6	3.5

TABLE 3:
Reasons for application%

	Males	Females	Total
Social Security problems	3.2	0.0	1.8
Friends/relatives cannot accommodate	54.7	62.5	58.0
Marriage/relationship breakdown	17.4	11.0	14.7
Domestic violence	1.1	3.7	2.1
Loss of bed and breakfast	6.8	4.4	5.8
Loss of tenancy	2.6	1.5	2.1
Never had secure accommodation	1.6	1.5	1.5
Discharge from children's home	5.3	3.7	4.6
Discharge from prison/penal institution	2.1	0.0	1.2
Other	5.3	11.8	8.0

TABLE 4:
Previous Night's Accommodation%

	Males	Females	Total
Hostel	6.9	6.0	6.5
With friend(s)	17.6	38.1	26.1
With relative(s)	36.7	40.3	38.2
Lodgings	8.0	3.0	5.9
Prison	6.4	0.0	3.7
Police Cells	4.3	1.5	3.1
Emergency accommodation	3.7	0.7	2.5
Other	16.5	10.4	14.0

TABLE 5:
Location of Last Permanent Address %

	Males	Females	Total
City of Nottingham	67.0	83.6	74.1
Nottinghamshire	23.1	7.4	16.4
Midlands	2.8	3.8	3.2
Outside the Midlands	7.1	5.2	6.3

Homeless Young People in Hostels - Some practical considerations

Young homeless people have now become part of the London scene due to media coverage over the last eighteen months. Most members of the general public would now agree that a problem exists, in the capital, at least, and that these youngsters are at risk. This account of James, a 17 year old boy from Cardiff, who left home following family arguments, can match many others:

I slept in a telephone box, sitting on the thing where they put the telephone books with my feet against the door to stop myself falling off. . . I had two quid on me to last me four days and I spent it all on 10 cigarettes and a pie and chips on the first day which was all gone in a couple of hours.

What we hear less of, in public, is the problems that hostel living creates for those few youngsters who gain access to it. James, after sleeping rough for four days and staying with his sister was found a place, by the probation service, in a voluntary hostel. Here, James felt quite negative about his life even though food and shelter were no longer a problem. Speaking of hostel life he says:

Sometimes we act like little kids. But the more they try and treat us like kids the more we go against the rules. . . Neither side can win really. It's like war - between the staff and the people who are here, there's always aggro..

Hostel living can be difficult for clients. It can also create considerable problems for hostel workers. As one agency worker says, in desperation:

Some could be smashing the building up. We say 'We'll put you in a Bed and Breakfast for two to three days. We'll look for permanent accommodation.' Some put their fingers up. . . Some are homeless by choice. Short of putting them in a straight jacket, what can we do?

It is with these problems and tensions in hostel accommodation for homeless young people - both emergency and longer-term provision - that this paper is concerned. It is based on four months research for a National Children's Charity in Wales. The main objective of the research was to establish the extent and circumstances of runaways and homeless people under 18 in view of setting up a residential project. In keeping with this brief, we spoke to 80 workers in the statutory and voluntary sector; 23 young people; and visited 21 residential projects.

Until now, much of the publicity and research in the area of youth homelessness has been concerned with establishing and delineating the problems¹. The focus has been on issues such as housing, benefit and youth unemployment. Such an emphasis is essential to gain funding and to influence policy for, ultimately, it is in Government policy that the solution to the problem lies.

However, it became clear to us, when listening to agency workers and their young clients that there is a need, in the short term, to bring out into the open some of the tensions that this kind of residential provision can create and to be aware of the often conflicting expectation of clients, workers and managers in this field. It is unlikely that voluntary

agencies, who depend for their funds on the collecting box, will easily air their problems in public. However, it is through highlighting these problems, that this paper calls for a sharing, on a national basis, of the expertise and good practice that undoubtedly exists at a local level.

Part of the pressure under which agency workers work in this field is dealing with difficult young people under the gaze of the public - first the neighbours, councillors - who can be joint funders - and ultimately the local citizens through the local press. We were told: We are treading a tightrope and: We're sitting on dynamite. We were told how the labels of crime, sex or drugs could be easily attached to hostels.

No project can ignore these concerns as a good name is essential for goodwill, funding and even a tenancy. It is obvious that these considerations can necessitate a strong degree of control over clients and measures to keep out the most unruly. For example, one agency worker told us that she was unable to accept high risk referrals because of the risk they would pose to the public reputation of the project. As she said:

We need to protect the tenancy of the place in order for it to flourish. . . It's like sowing the seed for better provision.

It was clear that there was often a mismatch between what young people wanted in accommodation projects and what hostel workers expected. One such area of contention was over house rules. House-rules are a necessary part of any residential project. Young people only choose to come into projects, or are admitted, if they are willing to comply with the rules. This young person's account of house-rules show some fairly typical demands:

Drugs are not allowed; no loud music; no parties. Keep the place tidy.

Sometimes, but not always, rules were taken over from residential child care where they were principally designed for younger teenagers. This was most likely to happen where the homeless hostel had arisen from an earlier Children's home or where staff had moved from one to the other.

It was clear that house-rules make projects workable and, also, that they are an important mechanism in keeping out those clients who are difficult to control or are felt to be unlikely to benefit from the facilities on offer. In this way house-rules target scarce resources to deserving clients². However, such rules, such as no sex in the bedrooms, no visitors and early curfews do not appear to reflect either what the client of such projects usually seeks nor the situation typical of their contemporaries living at home, where adolescents can negotiate an individual regime of control within the family³. It was also clear, particularly in emergency and short-term accommodation, that house-rules served to make the accommodation uncomfortable thus encouraging the client to move on.

Communal areas were a second area of contention within hostels. Colin, a 19 year old from Swansea, who had lived for three months in a tent before being found a room in a hostel paints a gloomy picture:

Nobody does the washing up. Nobody cleans the grill and you have to do it yourself. If you don't do your jobs, someone else has to do it and you fall out,

then, with other people.

The same client's comments on independence training are, perhaps, predictable:

We have 'Home Meetings' - how to cater for yourself and budgeting - but, since some people have come in, it's just complaints.

Here, again, there is a **mismatch** between what young people expect and what agencies have to offer. We are told, for example, that young people acted largely as **consumers**. As one agency worker said:

They want the keys to the penthouse flat.

Yet in all projects, young people were expected to participate - doing, at the very least, the washing up. Some projects use contracts which required the young person to show that they were seeking work and accommodation themselves by, for example, buying newspapers, making phone calls and going for interviews. In this way the young person was seen to be making an effort which, after all, indicates an achievement in independence, discipline and initiative. It was easier to notch up success on this scale than to actually find a job or a flat in the parts of the country we were considering. In this way, contracts were, undoubtedly, important for the morale of staff, working in a fluid and difficult situation, but they did not, nevertheless, reflect what some of these young people were seeking.

Some young people never approach projects. What one worker called the disenchanted clientele may keep away, not just because of the house-rules and the nature of the provision but also through fear of the involvement with the authorities which agency contact can bring. As one statutory worker said:

There's a need to provide young people with access to housing and help they will accept - not stigmatised by the dead hand of the local authority . . . We cannot engage them. We cannot provide something acceptable, despite the range of services.

On the other hand some young people will not approach many projects because they are seen to cater for people with problems. As Colin said:

I'd heard it (the nightshelter) was full of druggies and alcoholics . . . I didn't have the bottle to approach them (agencies). Also, I knew something would happen . . . I preferred to live in my tent.

For many young people, who ended up in hostel accommodation, it was clear that this was the type of accommodation they wanted. James wanted to live in a house:

Somewhere on my own . . . Somewhere where there's not someone looking over my shoulder all the time, like this place . . . The staff here are always behind you making sure what you're doing's right. It's annoying . . . There's nowhere else to go unless you've got money.

Helen also wanted independent accommodation but her objections to hostel living, after several years in care, were more vague. When asked if she was satisfied with the hostel, she said:

No, not really. It's really nice but . . . you don't belong. You don't know where you're going or where you're coming from.

Her friend, however, qualified this statement by the remark:

I don't think anyone seems to bother to dwell on it. Sharon, living in a hostel after several years in care and unsatisfactory bedsits, also wanted a place of her own but was well aware of the difficulties of a young single person having access to such accommodation. As she said:

It's a bit of a Catch 22. Because you're living here (in a hostel), you're not classed as being homeless . . . They more or less tell you - if you haven't got a kid or are out on the streets, you've got no chance of getting a flat.

Before we move on to look at some of the underlying issues behind their problems, we would like to point out that some young people were satisfied with the provision offered. This feeling was expressed by a 17 year old boy who saw the emergency accommodation project he had moved in and out of over the last six months as the keep-house of the town. In setting out some of the problems of accommodation projects for this age group as they were presented to us, we do not wish to criticise, in particular or in general. We would like to point out three issues which lie behind many of these complaints. An understanding of these issues could prevent agency workers from blaming themselves for problems which arise more from the structure of the situation than from poor management.

Firstly, many project workers because of the nature of their clientele and because of their training and commitment, face a particularly difficult dilemma. While they know that they do not have the structures or the resources to deal with these unwilling clients and, moreover, cannot risk the good name of the project in so doing, most remain concerned about these young people who, as they well know, are both homeless and at risk. They are, after all, the clients whom they are there to serve. Moreover, agency workers know that the regime they provide attracts or repels potential clients. Decisions about running projects are, therefore, often made with an eye to the problem outside as well as practicalities inside. Overall, this is not a simple or easy situation.

Secondly, we suggest that, in general, the young people who end up at residential projects may not be representative of homeless young people in general. We were told by agency workers that their clients tended to be the non-copers, those with special problems. Partly because of the referral system, it seems that many young people living in hostels have a background in care and offending records⁴. Such clients do not always suit the image of the headquarters of voluntary agencies pressing for action on a wider arena. Agency workers, in some accommodation projects, are far removed from the general issues of homelessness, which are played out in the media, on a national scene. Agency workers are left at the sharp end providing, in essence, a home for some very vulnerable and sometimes difficult young people. Such workers are often isolated, under-resourced and, always, under pressure.

Thirdly, at present, residential care has something of a Cinderella status. The philosophy behind it runs against many current social work ideas and, in many areas, resources are being withdrawn from it. It is not surprising, therefore, that workers in this sector sometimes feel isolated.

There is the obvious question - why, if they create problems for workers and clients, are hostels opened for young homeless people? The crux of the answer lies in the age of the clients. Many are under 18, thus falling below the age of majority which the law in Britain accedes gradually, and particularly between 16 and 18⁵. For this reason, some hostels for homeless young people are, in fact, an extension of residential child care services - under the guise of independent and adult living. Some form of statutory control is also necessary in hostels used by the probation services. Hostels are often used to sift young people into other facilities. Another reason favouring hostel provision is the fact that they are self-contained and relatively straight forward to set up, finance and run. They are also good material for publicity as they are clear evidence that something is being done.

We have presented the problems, as they appeared to us as researchers, and not as experts in the provision of services. Nor have we, here, given examples of the many schemes which are already trying to overcome the difficulties mentioned here - for example, the self-build scheme for young people in Scotland; the Centrepoint bed-sit scheme in London; the supported landlady schemes throughout the country run by the probation service; social work support in Bed and Breakfast in Cardiff and the topping up of benefits of young people, over 16, bought into voluntary care in Clwyd and Gwent.

We are, here, asking for an opening up of the debate around youth homelessness to include the short term issue of the practical provision of accommodation and welfare to young

people. There is a need to be honest about and aware of the problems of running accommodation projects for this age group - for the sake of clients and also for staff morale. There is a need to share the expertise which exists on a local level between the many different agencies who work in this field, both within regions and nationally.

This article calls for a careful examination of the structure of accommodation schemes for homeless young people and, in particular, a recognition of the problems which perpetually face agency workers in these projects. The need, in the end, is to give James, and others like him, a chance to:

. . . *Live in a house, somewhere on my own . . .
Somewhere where there's not someone looking
over my shoulder all the time . . .*

References & Notes

1. O'Mahoney B. *A Capital Offence: The Plight of Young Single Homeless in London*, Routledge/Barnardos, 1988.
2. Matza D. 'The Disreputable Poor' in Bendix R. and Lipset S. *Class, Status and Power*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.
3. Hutson S. and Jenkins R. *Taking the Strain: Families, Unemployment and the Transition to Adulthood*, Open University, 1989.
4. From a London nightshelter, 23% of young clients had a care background; 30% of clients had previous offending records. Estimates from the Welsh research would put both these figures over 50%.
5. The law requires a young person to be in the care of a parent, guardian or the Local Authority up to the age of 16. The police have powers to return to home or care anyone under 17, if they are believed to be beyond parental control or in danger.

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Philip Cooke (ed.)
Unwin Hyman

YOUTH POLICY: SPICERS EUROPEAN POLICY REPORTS

Gordon Blackely
Routledge in association with University of Bradford & Spicers Centre for Europe, 1990.

£75 pbk., pp. 101 ISBN 0-415-03832-4

In case you think the above contains a proof-reading error let me confirm that the price really is £75. Also although the Routledge catalogue informs the unwary that this text is 192 pp may I also confirm that it is in fact a mere 101 pages. So what do you get for that sort of money? Well pages 1 to 5 comprise a puff for the series which is totally dispensable blather. Pages 6 to 10 contain a potted history and description of the EC. This tells you very little, if anything, that your informed Guardian reader does not already know. It is the sort of bland, factual material that can be obtained from any basic text. It could have been produced by a passably competent 'A' level student. Pages 13-50 amount to a totally uncritical Public Relations tour of the different programmes, articles and initiatives that the EC has produced and which in some way relate to young people. To give you a flavour of the sort dross to be encountered try this: 'A very wide-ranging committee touches on youth affairs in the European Parliament: this is the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport (YCEIS). This catch-all committee produces many reports and several are translated into resolutions or recommendations. A recent proposal in the areas of social education has emerged around the growing desire to see more productive use of town twinning and civic linking agreements'. No critical analysis is offered to guide the reader at any point in this section. All it amounts to is a straightforward re-working or precis of the original EC documentation. Pages 53 to 60 contain a list of documents and decisions all of which were covered in the previous section. The final forty pages are appendices made up of abstracts from various documents.

This book is a total rip-off. I couldn't be bothered to count the words but the original text, as opposed to the filler, is in the region of 13,000 words. If the purpose had been to inform the public then the whole text would have been produced for a fraction of the price and would have been worth say £5. Obviously the information is of some value and it does help to have

it in one volume but why pay a ludicrous sum for what is readily obtained from numerous other sources with the minimum of effort.

It is scandalous that a university should lend its name and devalue its reputation by linking itself to such a publication. This is a prime example of what the profit-motive, greed and Thatcherism are doing to Higher Education. One is also amazed that a reputable publisher should produce such a grotesquely over-priced book and imagine that it will not damage their reputation for offering value for money. It will and rightly so.

According to the foreword you are purchasing 'a comprehensive and up-to-date guide to what the Community is doing, or propose to do' in the area of Youth Policy. Don't be fooled you are not. What you are getting is a poorly written text that never digs beneath the surface plus material and address lists readily at hand for the cost of a phone call, postage stamp or visit to the library. This text is a total waste of £75 and I hope no library, community or youth organisation or individual wastes their own or public money on it.

Tony Jeffs

REALLY USEFUL KNOWLEDGE: PHOTOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL STUDIES IN THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL

Philip Cohen
Trentham Books 1990
ISBN 0-948080-29-9
(no price attached)
pp 46

Phil Cohen has consistently pioneered new approaches to educational and cultural work with working class young people for the past two decades. At times, his analysis has been esoteric and rather impenetrable for all but like-thinking cultural academics (see *Rethinking the Youth Questions*, PSEC 1986). At other times, his work has displayed a rare capacity to be read (and 'read') at two levels, even if readers may have struggled to forge the desired connections between its theory and practice (see *Knuckle Sandwich*, with Dave Robins, Penguin 1978). Reading Cohen has always been hard work,

though to his credit he has always endeavoured to make concrete links between his theoretical position and real work with young people, using specific practical work he has undertaken to underpin his advocacy of new forms of youth work and educational practice. The ease with which Cohen moves from grounded evidence and anecdotes to theoretical contention (and back again) is both his strength and weakness. It all depends on whether or not the reader is persuaded of his fundamental starting point - that most educational practice systematically disempowers and alienates working class youth and that effective social and political education can only start from their own real and important cultural experiences of apprenticeship (growing up) and inheritance (being working class), which are so often devalued, even denied, within formal, conventional education. If one subscribes to this view, his arguments for practice are, at minimum, credible; if not, they are likely to be dismissed as just yet more self-indulgent rhetoric from a 'left-wing academic'.

Really Useful Knowledge starts by addressing the various strands which form the components of Cohen's later argument and analysis. He examines the various traditions of using photography in education, pointing to its (usually neglected) 'subversive' possibilities but suggesting that the starting point for practice had to be 'taking seriously the role which photography already played in their [working class young people's] lives, chiefly in the form of holiday snapshots and the family album, and working outwards from there' (p.3). This was, he concedes, a version of an 'apprenticeship' model, but one which paved the way for young people to display their social and cultural control (curiously, Cohen uses the word 'mastery') over the process of representation. Photography therefore offered a basis for developing a 'cultural studies model of pre-vocational education', providing a critical focus on major aspects of the youth question (the varieties of working class experience of family, school and community transition, as this was constructed through the interplay of gender, generation and race).

The group with which Cohen and a colleague worked (seven young men, three young women) did not fit neatly into conventional sociological categories. They were neither Willis' 'lads' nor 'ear'oles' (see *Learning to Labour*, Saxon House 1977) but were more akin, if anything, to Jenkins' 'ordinary kids' (see *Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids*, RKP 1983) - the silent majority of working class youth. Moreover, individual and group work, collating and re-ordering life experiences through words and photos, brought hidden feelings and aspirations to the surface, including some of the more hidden injuries inflicted on those who have to grow up working class. Cohen maintains that this process helps to peel away the hard-edged image of male counter-school culture and open up some suggestive approaches to an alternative practice of vocational guidance and counselling.

Cohen proceeds to identify the differences between this 'cultural studies' model and more conventional approaches to pre-vocational education. He is also forthright about the problems

encountered in implementing it, not least the inherent tensions between the different expectations of academics, classroom teachers and students. Even in the receptive school where the work took place, the implementation and progress of the course was secured only through a series of trade-offs and compromises. Yet Cohen argues that the versatility of the 'cultural studies' approach, and its negotiated process (over goals, rules and time setting), has potential application across a range of educational and training courses: CPVE, PSE, Careers education, YTS, social education in youth work, GCSE, A level. Its strength, Cohen argues, lies in the way it can engage with the

lived experience of young people outside the classroom - in their families, peer groups and part time workplaces; if these sites of common understanding are to be transformed into really useful knowledge, then they have to be recognised for what they are - the product of a complex negotiation between official ideologies and popular cultures, between dominant discourse and subordinate codes (p.14).

A vocationalised cultural studies does not eliminate such tension, but uses it as a primary educational resource, through opening up a space of representation for young people's own concerns - a space which so many of the 'new vocationalists' have done their best to close down.

Careers education, social studies, even social education have too often colluded (if unintentionally) with this closing down of space, collaborating in the 'vocationalisation' of education through their acceptance of misplaced assumptions about the 'deficit model' of working class youth and its need for (re)socialisation into the brave new world of 'skills' and 'competencies' relevant to the changed economic and industrial needs of the 1990s. Cohen, predictably, adopts a different viewpoint, arguing for the hidden skills and knowledge which must be encouraged to surface so that young people themselves can make their own 'reading' of this 'brave new world' they are about to enter. He and his co-workers sought to enable young people to question and challenge the 'official signposts' of transition. The course was not another form of 'schooling for the dole'. Students not only constructed their own documentaries of visits to work settings and training schemes but also compiled personal 'biographies' through home work (photographic and written depictions of the critical sites of their real and imaginary - fantasy - lives). Ultimately, they wove these two elements of the course together into a critical 'reading' of occupational, personal and domestic transition.

Or at least Cohen offers us a 'reading' of this cultural work. His close analysis of the work of two individuals certainly supports his contention that such photographic work draws out critical dimensions of culture, gender and race in growing up working class. But it also left me wondering about the other eight - did they also lend themselves so precisely to Cohen's theoretical propositions?

Cohen himself discusses many of the problems in reaching the point at which the young people themselves could make the connections between their social observations and documentation and their own experience, oppression and futures. Too often they adopted what Cohen calls 'dissociation strategies': where they encountered painful experiences of the reality of 'slave labour' they distanced it in terms of age and gender - it was OK for the middle-aged women in the factory, but it would never be for them.

My concerns are somewhat different. Even if such a course may face difficulties in realising some of its most ambitious goals, it undoubtedly opens up space for both the exercise of young people's imagination and the critical examination of issues which affect their everyday lives - both now and in the future. Such social and political education has outcomes which, whatever Cohen may say in his conclusion about the educational and vocational relevance of cultural studies, poses enormous threats to conservative (and obviously Conservative) educationalists. Opening the window on the harsh realities of growing up working class and, crucially, examining the real causes of that oppression (as well as, significantly in Cohen's view, the 'little differences' in personal biographies which 'can make a big difference to outcomes within limits and conditions fixed by social formation' (p.37) can but politicise working class youth, one way or another. That, I am sure, is Cohen's hardly hidden agenda, but it is not an agenda likely to find favour with those currently responsible for the management and delivery of contemporary vocational education.

On a personal note, I was staggered to discover that while Cohen clearly had a firm grasp of the academic semiological and textual work on photography (Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes), until the start of this course he had no practical knowledge of either the science of developing film or the art of printing. My own experience is the other way around - having acquired the necessary technical skills, I have become increasingly inquisitive about the social and cultural uses of photography. In that sense, my experience rests more closely with that of the young people with whom Cohen worked, and I can see quite clearly what Cohen was aiming to achieve. Photography - as one mechanism of cultural production - is certainly an effective starting point for broader social and political educational objectives. I know that from my own youth work practice. Cohen's work builds on the earlier work of Dewdney and Lister (*Youth, Culture and Photography*, MacMillan 1988) and should be read in conjunction with it. Really Useful Knowledge should also be connected to Paul Willis' recent work which analyses the diversity of cultural work by young people, but which only briefly discusses the implications for its practical application in education and training (see *Common Culture*, Open University Press 1990). My concerns lie not with Cohen's analysis per se, but with his view that a 'cultural studies' approach can be a central method within contemporary pre-vocational education. However rational and constructive his arguments may be

for the personal development and politicisation of working class young people, such objectives are not currently the driving force behind policy-making and practice in transitions from school to the labour market.

Howard Williamson

LOCALITIES: THE CHANGING FACE OF URBAN BRITAIN

Philip Cooke (ed)

Unwin Hyman (London), 1989

ISBN 0-04-445300-0

£11.95 pp xiv + 320

Written for the 'policy community', and for interested laypersons as much as for the academic community, *Localities* provides a valuable and thoroughly interesting account of the restructuring of local economies in contemporary Britain. It is well researched; indeed the volume is the first to be published as a consequence of the Economic and Social Research Council's Changing Urban and Regional System research programme, established in 1984. Contained in the volume are introductory and concluding chapters of a contextual and conceptual nature by the research co-ordinator and editor, Philip Cooke, and seven highly informative case-study chapters prepared by individuals and local teams drawn from multi-disciplinary backgrounds.

The opening sentence proper apparently defines the ambitious scope of the project: 'This book sets out to answer a difficult question about life in the late twentieth century. While people's lives continue to be mainly circumscribed by the localities in which they live and work, can they exert an influence on the fate of those places given that so much of their destiny is increasingly controlled by global political and economic forces?' (p.1). In reality, partly because the biography of social movements remains relatively weakly developed in the individual case-study presentations, the focus tends to be sharpest on the more modest but immensely worthwhile examination of 'how seven very different localities have been coping with the vagaries of Britain's long-term industrial decline. Specifically, it is concerned with the ways in which economic restructuring has interacted with the study localities over the period beginning in 1970.' (p.3). These localities are Middlesbrough, Lancaster, outer Liverpool, south-west Birmingham, Cheltenham, Swindon and Thanet.

Cooke's opening chapter sets the framework for accommodating the locality studies. It addresses the definition of the term locality, preferred ahead of community (because of the latter's alleged failure to denote place, its emphasis on stability and continuity and its reactive, inward-looking orientation) and ahead of locale (territorial imprecision, passivity and absence of specific social meaning being its three alleged deficiencies). For the principal author, 'locality is the space within which the larger part of most citizens' daily working and consuming lives is lived. It is the base for a large measure of individual and social mobilisation to activate,

extend or defend those (. . . civil, political and social . . .) rights, not simply in the political sphere but more generally in the areas of cultural, economic and social life. Locality is thus a base from which subjects can exercise their capacity for pro-activity by making effective individual and collective interventions within and beyond that base'. (p. 12). Locality is then accommodated, somewhat uncomfortably and unconvincingly at times, alongside economic restructuring and world development. Central themes are the global agenda, the changing urban and regional system in the UK and, finally, local accounts and local specificities.

It is, however, in the individual locality studies that the volume comes to life. Each of these essays describes in turn the processes of economic decline and restructuring in the particular locality: Swindon ('living in the fast lane'), Cheltenham ('affluence amid recession'), Lancaster, the Isle of Thanet ('restructuring and municipal conservatism'), Merseyside ('Paradise postponed'), Birmingham ('not getting on, just getting by') and Teesside ('it's all falling apart here'). All are at least interesting; the better chapters are truly excellent. Far from being restrained within a theoretical straitjacket, the richness of the locality studies is allowed to prompt and inform the reader's own speculation and conceptualisation.

Of course one has doubts about some of it. The very selection of these seven localities raises significant issues. How, in truth, can seven English case-studies be equated with the changing face of urban Britain, the book's sub-title? There are no examples from Northern Ireland, from Scotland or from Wales. And to argue that, 'in the south, and for these purposes Wales can be included in this category . . .' (p. 29) appears gratuitously insensitive to some of the territorial dimensions of identity in the UK! Even the distribution of localities in England itself is a little odd. There is nothing from the South East with the exception of Thanet, which is acknowledged to be isolated and remote from mainstream South East England anyway. There is nothing from London. In effect, the locality studies provide an account of 'white' urban England. Example of other ethnic concentrations are absent. Even the Birmingham study concentrates on the overwhelmingly white, south-west suburbs of the city including Longbridge and Bournville. Indeed the authors acknowledge that these seven localities cannot be taken as statistically representative of 334 (UK) travel-to-work areas; even so, arguments are advanced to justify the drawing of generalisations from them. My own feeling remains that important territorial, socio-economic and political dimensions are neglected.

However the seven case studies which are presented do provide a set of valuable documentary analyses drawing on diverse source material: academic and applied, statistic and opinion. The extent to which these analyses are genuinely comparative though is not easy to assess. Of course they form parts of a wider research programme and there is helpful and unlaboured cross-referencing within the individual chapters. However, there is not a com-

mon format to the locality studies described even at the mundane level of the inclusion or otherwise of a location map. More importantly the volume lacks a detailed statement of methodology and methods which might explicitly inform the reader's understanding of the processes by which the collection has been assembled.

Even so, common themes rattle in impressive succession from the twenty-eight different authors: the decline of traditional bases of economic activity, corporate restructuring processes (often international), changing labour markets, responses of the local state - all documented in specifics. Generally, the volume is well presented; I detected some twenty or so proof-reading errors, including the isolated mis-spelling of Middlesbrough, the Office of Population Consensus and Surveys (sic) and linoleum in Lancaster proving especially problematic! There can be little doubt, however, that *Localities* represents an exceptionally useful volume for all concerned with processes of local economic restructuring and one to which they will probably return.

Ken Harrop

I N SHORT

In Short is a new section which aims to provide a short guide to selected recent legislation, legislation in progress and miscellaneous information on statistics and new reports. Entries will vary each quarter

BENEFITS

Income Support/Hostels

Social Services Minister Gillian Shepherd announced that from 21.5.90, all hostel and night shelter proprietors will be able to receive direct payments of Income Support for service charges, including meals, from the start of a claimant's stay.

(Source Housing Association Weekly 18.5.90)

Housing Benefit/Students

Junior Social Security Minister, Gillian Shepherd, announced that the withdrawal of housing benefit from students would save £29 million this year. Next year savings were estimated at £51 million but the reduction would be offset against £200 million in student loans and access schemes.

(Source Hansard 5.6.90 col 568-9)

Social Fund

Social Security Minister, Nicholas Scott, gave details of all applications for community care grants, budgeting loans and crisis loans that were refused. A regional breakdown was also given.

(Source Hansard 5.6.90. col. 562-566)

EDUCATION

City Technology Colleges

The Government conceded the need for local consultation over the programme for the City Technology Programme. The Programme was proposed four years ago by Kenneth Baker (then Education Secretary) although only three of the proposed twenty are under way.

Geography Syllabus

The National Curriculum Working Group published a slimmed down geography curriculum. Statutory consultation will be carried out via the National Curriculum Council

(Source The Independent 7.6.90)

National Curriculum

Statutory Instrument, bringing an act or part of an act into force, 1109, The Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) (Amendment) Regulations 1990.

Coming into force 21.6.90

EUROPE

Social Charter

Michael Howard launched a campaign to oppose the first batch of E.C. Social Charter legislation. The proposals on June 6th are to include regulations governing social security benefits, severance payments, protection for part-time workers and temporary employees. About a third of the directives, on health and safety, will be supported by Britain.

(Source The Guardian 25.5.90)

Skills Training

Britain lags behind the rest of Europe in providing skills training with a vocational qualification. An E.C. study showed that the proportion of the work force in industrial companies with a vocational qualification ranged from between 76% and 80% in Italy, the Netherlands and France to 38% in Britain.

(Source The Independent 6.6.90)

HEALTH

Care In The Community

The House of Lords defeated the Government by a one vote margin by approving an amendment to the NHS and Community Care Bill. The amendment is intended to encourage councils who are housing authorities to state how the accommodation needs of people affected by care in the community are to be met. The change applies only to councils who provide both housing and social services i.e., metropolitan authorities and London boroughs.

(For a full list of the proposed amendments to be moved at Report Stage see HMSO, marshalled list, National Health Service and Community Care Bill 0 10 875550 9.)

Kenneth Clarke indicated the Government's intention to seek to overturn the defeat by the House of Lords.

(Source The Independent 6.6.90)

Hospital Opt-Outs

Health Secretary Kenneth Clarke announced the Government's intentions to override votes by consultants against their hospitals becoming opted-out, self-governing trusts. Health Authority deficits were also to be cleared before April 1991.

Toxic Shock Syndrome

In a written reply, Eric Forth the Consumer Affairs Minister, said that tampon manufacturers will be asked to include advisory leaflets in their products to alert women to the symptoms of Toxic Shock Syndrome. Concern has mounted over the rising incidence of Syndrome victims.

(Source The Independent 6.6.90)

HOUSING

Aids Allocations

Housing Minister, Michael Spicer, said capital allocations to housing authorities enabled them to take account of the special needs of people with AIDS. The Housing Corporation, acting on behalf of housing associations and the voluntary housing movement, will consider bids from housing authorities on behalf of people with AIDS.

(Source Inside Housing 15.6.90)

Renovation Grants

Revised rules for renovation grants come into force on 1st July. Leaflets outlining the new rules will be available from advice bureaux and C.A.B.'s. The new rules introduce a means test based on £20 above Housing Benefit thresholds. Above that threshold people will be expected to devote 20% of their income to financing a loan to top up the grant.

(For more information see the Statutory Instrument S.I. 1990 No. 1189 Housing Renovation Grants (reduction of grant regulations 1990), form H.M.S.O.)

Tenants' Choice/Advertising Complaints

The Advertising Standards Authority is looking into complaints made by Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations about newspaper adverts for Tenants' Choice. The tenants groups allege that the adverts are misleading since they imply that tenants do not lose their statutory rights by transferring to another landlord. The ASA originally refused to consider the case.

(Source Inside Housing 15.6.90)

LAW

Crime Prevention

Tentative plans were unveiled to give local

authorities a greater role in crime prevention. Local plans are expected from authorities by the end of October.

Published statutes

10th May. Title-Family law; filing instructions and contents list No. 31.

(Available from Statutory Publications Office, no charge).

4th June Statutory Instrument, bringing into operation an act or part of an act, 1145 (C32). The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Commencement No. 11) Order 1990.

(Available H.M.S.O.)

Coming into force 5.6.90

POLL TAX

Proposed Changes

The Government is reportedly gathering evidence via DoE officials on what changes are practicable to the poll tax. The proposals are likely to concentrate on ways of reducing the extra burden involved in collection. A cabinet sub-committee will report at the end of June possible options.

(Source The Observer 27.5.90)

Business Rate And Lodgers

The Government proposed to table regulations to exempt bed and breakfast proprietors, private homes and hotels from paying the business rate payments where accommodation is available for less than 100 days a year. A DoE spokesperson reported that these changes were unlikely to benefit boarders.

(Source Housing Association Weekly 18.5.90)

Capping/Legality

19 charge capped councils attended the High Court for a Judicial Review of the Environment secretary, Chris Patten's, actions over community charge capping. 11 authorities intend to stress the significance of capping on their education services. The councils are Avon, Barnsley, Basildon, Brent, Bristol, Calderdale, Camden, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Greenwich, Hamersmith, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, North Tyneside, Rochdale, Rotherham, St. Helen's, Southwark.

(Source The Independent 6.6.90)

The 19 Councils failed to obtain a Judicial Review in their favour. They are now seeking an appeal.

(13.6.90)

3 teaching unions applied to the High Court to prevent the Government from charge capping their authorities where councils are also local education authorities. Led by the N.U.T., teaching unions have contended that the limits on levels of poll tax are unlawful since they contravene the Government's recent school reforms. Judgment was reserved for at least a week.

(Source The Guardian 9.6.90)

POVERTY

Recent studies commissioned for the House of Commons Social Services Committee include: Households and families below average income:

a regional analysis 1980-1985. House of Commons Papers 378-1 No. 0 10 237490 2.

The Income Support system and the distribution of income in 1987. House of Commons Papers 378 No. 0 10 290390.

Statistics

Michael Meacher, Labour's Social Security spokesperson, issued figures from a new analysis of poverty by the European Commission. The figures are indicative of a higher percentage of people living in Britain that the Government has previously admitted.

The table below represents comparative E.C. relative poverty levels.

Skills Centres

The new privatised Skills Training Agency announced a 20% cut of its 1,950 staff, four months after a buy-out by ex civil servants.

Out of Step

The U.K. has not participated in European Commission proposals to offer skills training, as a right, to all individuals in their working lives. (Source The Independent 6.6.90).

RELATIVE LEVELS OF POVERTY IN THE EEC

Individuals living below 50% of average earnings					
Country	Year	%	1985 poverty level (1=highest)	1980-85 % increase or decrease	Highest % rise in poverty (1=highest)
Belgium	1980	7.6	12	-5.25	12
	1985	7.2			
Denmark	1980	13.0	6	+13.08	5
	1985	14.7			
France	1979	17.7	5	-1.13	10
	1985	17.5			
Germany	1978	6.7	9	+26.87	3
	1985	8.5			
Greece	1981	24.2	2	-0.03	9
	1985	24.0			
Ireland	1980	16.9	3	+30.18	2
	1985	22.0			
Italy	1980	9.4	8	+24.47	4
	1984	11.7			
Luxembourg	1980	7.9	10	No change	8
	1985	7.9			
Netherlands	1981	7.0	11	+5.71	6
	1985	7.4			
Portugal	1981	27.8	1	+0.72	7
	1985	28.0			
Spain	1980	20.5	4	-2.47	11
	1985	20.0			
UK	1980	9.2	7	+30.43	1
	1985	12.0			

Sources: First two columns EC report 'Poverty in Europe'; remainder by Labour Party researchers

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YOUTH AND POLICY

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Submission Details

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