YOUTH AND POLICY

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YOUTH
AND
POLICY

Special Issue

YOUTH AND THE RIOTS

We sell contraceptives to the Third World because the poor there cannot feed themselves. Perhaps we should just send food to them and ship the condoms into our worst estates (London Evening Standard, 9th December 1991).[1]

In this issue of Youth and Policy we examine events which have excited national and international press interest, academic speculation and political controversy, and which have generated noisy condemnation of young people in the North East of England and other parts of the country. The riots on Tyneside's Meadow Well estate, and in the West End of Newcastle, followed swiftly on the heels of civil disturbances in Oxford in which young people were also the key players.

These riots brought young people back to the heart of political debate, if only temporarily. The debate remains stultified, boring and prejudiced and there are few serious analyses of the youth disturbances of late 1991. We hope in this edition to stimulate a more coherent debate and to reassert the place of young people high on the policy agenda. Are the youth of Meadow Well and Blackbird Leys' estates victims of poverty reacting against oppressive circumstances or are they 'evil kids', as some commentators would have it, simply having fun? Are they part of a new 'underclass' celebrating their moral and cultural separation from 'normal' society or are they just young members of the working-class deprived of work? What was the role of car crime and consumerism and of the police and the media in these events?

Whatever the answer to these questions, and to the questions posed by our contributors, it remains true that neither of the main political parties has a coherent or convincing approach to youth affairs. Bob Hollands argued in **Youth and Policy** last year (issue 33) that the Labour Party's traditional welfarist policies mean little to young people, and it is perhaps doubtful that a fourth term of Conservative rule will bring John Major's classless ladders of opportunity to the youth of the depressed outer-estates, the declining inner-cities and to the marginalised areas of the country.

This issue of Youth and Policy includes three quite different contributions to this debate but they all have an overriding concern to understand the youth riots of last year, particularly those in Tyneside. The first piece, from Dick Hobbs, a criminologist at Durham University, is deliberately polemical and provides a short introduction to the following articles. Elaine Conway, a researcher at the University of Newcastle, then digs a little deeper into these youth disorders and develops a more extensive survey of the Tyneside riots highlighting issues of class, underclass, community and policing. Finally, Chris Wharton and John Fenwick from Newcastle Polytechnic examine the often complex relationship between the events in question and the media reporting of the riots. Together we hope these papers provide a first step towards a more considered and more powerful analysis of youth and the riots.

Note

(1)   This quotation was brought to my attention by Mike Presdee, who uses it in his paper 'Doing Right, Doing Wrong, Doing Crime', which he recently presented to the British Sociological Association.

Robert MacDonald, for the Editorial Group.

1

A WHITE RIOT

or
The Sound of Breaking Class?

Meadow Well 1991

DICK HOBBS

The chattering classes have become accustomed to dealing with riots over the morning Guardian and multi-vitamin tablet. Its location - the inner city, its personnel - black youth assisted by alienated whites, the motivation - general racial discrimination particularly amongst the police, societal response - heavy militaristic policing followed by brief avalanche of highly publicised government money.

However, the Meadow Well disturbance of September 1991 broke this mould, a mould which had been cast as recently as 1981. When Toxteth, Brixton, St Pauls, Handsworth, Mosside and others vented their youthful spleen during 1981-82, it was largely a case of black youth versus the police. By the time a police officer was slaughtered at Broadwater Farm during October 1985, the shape, form and likely result of the modern British urban riot was well established. Public order policing as a specialism within the police service was also established during this era, and its organisation refined during the 1984-85 miners' strike. What was regarded as timidity by many members of the force preceding the debacle at Broadwater Farm, was soon compensated for by ferocious activity, first under floodlights at Wapping, and then with more beneficial camera angles at Trafalgar Square.

Yet during this tumultuous period the North East of England remained quiet, culturally and politically adrift from the apparently not so soft south. Life North of Darlington drifted calmly in a sea of assumptions - assumptions with their genesis in the buttressed portals of long demolished Miners Lodges, in council chambers now ripe with the complacent stench of undead cliche, and in homes built on a trust that proved like many of the local beaches to consist of sand and coal dust.

Local politicians and police officers explained the lack of rioting in the North East during the 1980s purely in terms of race. Conversations with senior police officers during the winter of 1990/91 consistently explained the regions lack of a major public order problem with a lack of a coherent, visible black population. Blacks equal trouble was a sentiment also cited to me on several occasions by local politicians and media personnel, often with a rider concerning the lack of a drugs problem in the North East stemming from a dearth of Afro-Caribbeans. These explanations were usually preempted by the obligatory Not that I am racist, but... .

The Meadow Well riot buried these cosy assumptions for good. Meadow Well is no cosy working class community built on the dignity of male sweat and maintained by the gritty compassion of its womenfolk. Nor is it a community formed around an inner-city proletarian elite of skilled workers now blighted by the contemporary economic order. The Meadow Well is an outer city estate built on stigma. Constructed in the early 1930s to re-house the people of North Shields' Bank Sides, The Ridges were initially populated by families from the south bank of the Tyne and were shunned by the Northern dwellers. When, on the 9th September, the youthful ancestors of the Bank Siders deliberately orchestrated an anti-police riot, the context was 60 years of stigma, 86% unemployment and a neglect by local and central government that ensured an anonymity of poverty that permeates every brick. The local library closed in the early summer of 1991, 25% of the estates' houses are boarded up and 80% of inhabited houses require repairs. It is a difficult to let estate.

It would appear that Meadow Well had been a riot waiting to happen for some time before two young car thieves died when crashing a car during a police chase. Rumours that the police had rammed their car quickly circulated, and the next few days featured the vandalism of telephone control boxes and a series of attacks on police officers. None of this was reported in the mass media, which suggests still more collusion with the myth that life in The Great North is just fine.

However, there are two aspects of the subsequent riot that do need highlighting. First of all is the apparent restraint shown by the police, a restraint that is in

contrast to the heavy-handedness displayed by other forces in similar situations notably by the Thames Valley Constabulary in Oxford just days before. The full facts of the police tactics at Meadow Well are yet to be disclosed, and it is hoped that this much-needed research will be carried out by institutions non-aligned to the Northumbria Police. As the situation stands, six months after the riot, often contradictory rumours abound as to whether the restraint shown by officers was the result of tactical awareness or indecision shown by a Chief Constable days away from retirement. The Northumbria Police's new management team have the opportunity to publicly put the record straight, let's hope that it is done independently.

The second aspect is the reluctance of any local politician to support the Meadow Well youth. Other urban riots have always spawned spokespersons for the rioters offering explanations that move beyond individual pathology. Not so in North Shields, local councillors and MPs queued up to insult the rioters, their mothers, fathers and anyone else who dared to suggest that maybe there were some deep-lying reasons for what happened on the 9th September. In career terms they have missed the boat; who had heard of Bernie Grant before the Broadwater Farm riot? As a consequence of this conspiracy of outrage, a conspiracy with its roots in the region's obsession with public relations, the community itself had to find its own spokesperson. Margaret Nolan, a resident of the Meadow Well who works in the local Credit Union, suddenly found herself the voice of the estate. She fielded interviews and enquiries from the world's media with a fluency and grace that put the local MPs, in particular, to shame. She explained the estate's youth culture in terms of long-term unemployment, the attractions of an alternative career as a ram raider in the context of the lack of opportunity on the estate, and an all-pervading resentment in relation to the manner in which business and local government have colluded to ignore the needs of the estate's residents and engage in grandiose development schemes the like of which have been tried, tested and found wanting in other parts of the U.K.

It is probably time to consider what really happened on the Meadow Well. A lot of damage was caused, but there was not one serious injury either on the estate or during subsequent related rioting in west Newcastle. Asian businesses were prime targets on the 9th September yet the lie that race is not an issue in the North East continues. The police are now practising community policing but it is unclear what this means in terms of long term strategy and accountability. Ten years on, football and cricket matches between the police and something called the community still take place in Brixton, Toxteth and St Pauls. Yet the structural conditions that created the riots of the early 1980s persist and the crime rate doubled during that sorry decade. While all major political parties conspire with the myth that more police equals efficient police, we can continue to pretend in the face of contrary research findings that police officers in uniform patrolling the streets have any effect upon crime. Of course such tactics will inevitably target youth, for it is they that are on the streets outside the chip shops and on street corners. Meanwhile genuine professional criminals, not the few indigenous ram raiders who are now incarcerated (thus cleaning up a problem) can ply their trades unhindered by an increasingly overworked detective branch.

Meadow Well's youth grew up in an era that offered them little more than crumbs off the table; it is hardly surprising that some decided to saw the table's legs off. They were also told to get on their bikes, instead they got someone else's GTi. Crime offers status, a relief from the stupefying boredom of life on the dole, and if you are really good, it might lead to a way out. A queer ladder of mobility it may be, but is it any stranger that spending years on a scheme training for a job that doesn't exist?

The sloppy shorthand for the youth of the Meadow Well has been underclass, a term that has, in its most recent embodiment, been imported from American policy debates and the usage of which has reached new heights of inanity. The inappropriate use of this concept/metaphor deserves far more attention than is available here. However, it must be said the Meadow Well is not a ghetto is the same way as parts of Los Angeles, Chicago or Detroit. It is a working class housing estate where residents' primary task is to survive using any permutation from employment, dole, crime, self employment and cash in hand work. They are poor but not helpless, the manner in which female residents in particular are actively exploiting government schemes that may enable them to gain some measure of autonomy vividly demonstrates this.

We are at the very early stages of understanding why, after generations of criminal neglect, an estate erupts. The two papers that follow will assist us enormously in this task and remind us that had the youth of Meadow Well not rioted last September we would be none the wiser.

DIGGING INTO DISORDER

Some Initial Reflections on the Tyneside Riots

ELAINE CONWAY

INTRODUCTION

Riots on the Meadow Well estate in North Shields and in the West End of Newcastle in September 1991 brought the North East to the forefront of last summer's disturbances. For the first time in the recent history of civil disorder, Tyneside experienced what happened in Oxford, Birmingham and Cardiff a few weeks earlier and in Brixton, Toxteth and Handsworth in the 1980s.

Digging a little deeper into accusations that the police had 'murdered' two young car thieves (see Chronology below), the article seeks to show that whilst the search for a single cause of the riots provokes much debate in the media, the phenomena of car crime and civil disorder are complex. They can only be effectively understood in terms of the cultures and economic conditions of the communities in which they take place, and their relationship to the culture and economic conditions of the wider society. Before examining these themes, some description of the events and the areas in which they occured is necessary.

1. *A LAY PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE RIOT AREAS*

Meadow Well estate is in North Shields, 5 miles east of Newcastle where the River Tyne meets the North Sea. The town's local history as a fishing port is now a residual part of the local economy. Even when fishing was in its heyday, many workers travelled up or across the river to work in shipyards. The estate was built as 'The Ridges' in 1930s' slum clearance programmes and the original residents were subjected to mass de-lousing before being allowed to live there. Since its inception the estate has housed poorer sections of the working-class; artisan industrial workers having been housed in rented property developed by industrialists and speculators from the end of the 19th century (North Tyneside CDP 1978). It was re-named 'Meadow Well' after riots on the estate in 1969 and targeted for priority investment in the 1970s. Its residents are mainly white working-class people and media reports on the riots suggest there is a sense of pride in local identity. Conversely, there are historical divisions between residents of the North and South sides of the estate.

The West End of Newcastle is 7 miles west of North Shields up the River Tyne. Its riverside boundary along Scotswood Road, once dominated by coalmining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering is now reduced to military manufacturing and business parks. The area is loosely divisible into 'inner' and 'outer' West End districts, representing relative proximity along the river to Newcastle City centre.

The inner West End districts of Benwell and Elswick were rapidly developed by large industrialists and other speculators in the late-19th century to provide rented housing for artisan workers in the above industries. Meanwhile, the poorer sections of the working-class were left to rot in City Centre slums (Benwell Community Project 1983). The inner West End's artisan housing (mainly Tyneside flats - 2 flats one on top of the other which look like terraced houses with two doors) now provides low standard rented homes for poorer sections of the working-class and students together with lower end of the market owner-occupiers. There are also pockets of wealth and 1970s redeveloped local authority estates. It has, in comparison to other areas of Newcastle, an ethnically diverse population, consisting mainly of poorer Asian families.

Scotswood, in the outer West End, has, among other housing tenures, two large Local Authority housing estates built in 1930s' slum clearance programmes and, compared to the inner-West End, a higher proportion of white working-class.

One further comparative feature to note here is that Benwell and North Shields were two of the Home Office's Community Development Project (CDP) areas in the 1970s.

This crude description of the areas hides many economic, social and cultural complexities rooted in local histories, but hopefully it gives the reader unfamiliar with Tyneside some idea of the socio-economic background of the areas which experienced public disorder in September 1991.

2. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS [1]

Friday 7th September 2 young men from the Meadow Well estate, Dale Robson and Colin Atkins, were killed following a high speed car chase with the police. The stolen car they were driving set on fire after crashing into a lamp post.

Monday 9th September A hate note: ('Scum like you deserve to die. I hope it was slow and painful') which was left at the scene of the crash over the weekend received headline coverage in the local press. Families of the dead young men lodged a complaint against the police, claiming the police had rammed the stolen car off the road and protesting at police labelling of Dale and Colin as idiots. Graffiti on the estate accused police of murder and promised revenge.

9pm-2am Meadow Well experienced 5 hours of arson, barricading, etc. with large gangs of young people amassed on the streets. Emergency services were attacked. Collingwood Youth Centre and an electricity sub-station were among the first buildings to be set alight. Police strategy was of containment, rather than to move in straight away: crowds were dispersed at 2am.

Tuesday 10th September Dale's father's appeal for calm went unheeded. He disassociated himself and his dead son from the riots. There were further outbreaks of violence, arson and stoning of the police on Meadow Well, with 10 arrests made. Parallel incidents of arson in other dispossessed areas of Tyneside included a showpiece community primary school and 4 empty houses in inner and outer districts of the West End respectively. Firefighters reported a new phenomenon of violent attacks on their crews in the West End.

Wednesday 11th September Meadow Well was relatively quiet: intensive police presence dispersed groups of young people. Further arrests were made. Isolated incidents elswhere on Tyneside included a community centre burned down in nearby Wallsend.

7pm-2.15am Inner West End incidents increased - there were more than 200 calls to the fire service. Attacks on crews continued. A derelict pub in the inner West End was set alight, and a van stolen from Meadow Well was burned out nearby. Petrol bombs were thrown at houses. Displays of 'hotting' (stunt driving of stolen cars) took place on Elswick Road. 300 young people were said to be gathered. Crowds were dispersed from midnight. 2.15am - an arson attack on an educational development centre took place at the other end of inner West End.

Thursday 12th September Police claimed they were in control on Meadow Well. The launch of the 'Meadow Well Initiative' report (a joint local and central state regeneration venture) was brought forward. Isolated incidents elsewhere included an arson attack on a school.

West End troubles intensified in Scotswood where a post office was gutted with 200 young people cheering. Burning of stolen cars and 'hotting' displays continued, including a skid pan created from a vandalised fire hydrant. Confrontations with the police were reported. Inner West End crowds gathered and there was some stoning of riot police, but violence was said to be contained. A teenager was burned whilst attempting a petrol bomb attack. Shop and office windows were smashed. Further 'hotting' displays took place.

Friday 13th September The funeral of Colin Atkins included an appeal by his family for calm. The clean up of West End streets began. Massive Special Patrol Group (SPG) presence was said to have deterred gangs of young people from gathering. Minor fires at a shop and flats in Elswick were put out without attacks on fire crews. A 7 year-old was hurt playing with a petrol bomb in West End. There were no reports of major incidents. Isolated arson incidents took place elsewhere on Tyneside. More than 100 arrests had been made since Monday night.

Sunday 15th September There were several incidents of arson in the West End and elsewhere on Tyneside, including one on Meadow Well. Attempts at mass assembly by gangs of young people were thwarted by SPG pro-active swamp tactics in several areas, including Pottery Bank, Walker (see context below).

3. PLACING EVENTS IN CONTEXT

These events did not happen 'out of the blue'. The immediate context of disorders elsewhere has already been alluded to. Locally, media reports of the death of the two young car thieves were parallelled in one newspaper with a typification of Pottery Bank, another dispossessed riverside estate 3 miles away, as 'a riot waiting to happen'. On this estate there had been incidents of stolen cars being burned and confrontation with the police and firefighters on Monday

September 2nd. The police had claimed they were aware of potential trouble and had the resources to deal with them (Journal 7/9/91).

In recent years, quantitative and qualitative change in car crime has featured prominently both in the local illegal economy and among policing concerns. There has been extensive local media coverage about 'ram-raiding' (the smashing of shop windows with stolen cars and stealing the contents for sale in the illegal economy), and deaths and injuries of both 'joy-riders' and innocent victims. In Scotswood, for example, a 10-month old baby was killed by a stolen car in November 1990 and this was recalled along with other incidents during coverage of the deaths of Colin Atkins and Dale Robson (Chronicle 7/9/91).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a contemporary history of arson and other attacks on local services such as shops and firefighters on the Meadow Well estate. In Tyneside folklore it is a 'no-go' area. In Scotswood, stolen cars being driven at high speed through local streets and harassment of residents and community activists by gangs of local youths have for several years contributed to a climate of fear along with burglaries and vandalism of empty properties. In Benwell and Elswick, a long history of racist attacks on local black people complicate a similar picture to Scotswood. Earlier in the summer of 1991, a series of arson attacks included one on a centre for black people's groups in Elswick (Echo 12/9/91). Further examples are included in the discussion on racism below.

EXPLAINING THE RIOTS 1:
It's this, it's that

There was a plethora of discussion in the local and national media in the weeks immediately following the riots. A cursory examination of views and commentaries (as expressed in the mass media) on the causes of the riots reveals a tendency to cite single causes of the riots. Nonetheless, taken together these views are wide-ranging and reflect a spectrum of sociological theories.

1. *THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF DEVIANCE*

A framework for summarising such theories is that put forward by two American writers Rubington & Weinberg (1989). I am using their framework for the sake of brevity, but recognise that British criminology may provide a more appropriate framework.

The authors delineate six perspectives: social pathology, social disorganisation, value conflict, deviant behaviour, labelling and critical.

Pathologists' theories advocate resocialisation and/or eugenics to break patterns of generational criminality - individuals are seen as the site of problems even when institutions are seen to play a causative role.

Disorganisation theorists want to slow down social change, since it is seen as having negative consequences and threatens some assumed previous harmonious order. In individuals, normlessness can result among other disorders which causes deviance.

Value Conflict theories argue that different groups have competing values and interests and these conflicts cause social problems. Whilst recognising a role for 'naked power' in their resolution, this only comes into play after democratic means of resolution fail. Conflicts of interest caused by societal structural arrangements do not feature: it is a liberal pluralistic perspective of conflict in society and is therefore subsumed under an over-arching consensual view of society.

Deviant behaviour and labelling theories arose simultaneously: Harvard sociologists developed disorganisation theories in a structuralist framework while Chicago scholars turned to micro-processes, and coined interactionist labelling theory.

The former's 'differential association' theory states that lower class groups in society are denied opportunities to achieve material success (society's goal) by legitimate means. Criminality depends on the presence of opportunities for crime in the individual's environment, as well as the disorganising condition.

Labelling theorists (or interactionists) argue that social problems are not caused by conditions in society: they are caused by one group labelling a behaviour deviant. Secondary deviance is thus assured as an individual so-labelled will experience societal pressures towards fulfillment of the label.

Critical theory gained ground in the 1970s and represents a fusion of Marxist concepts with American conflict theory. Alienation results from inequality which is structurally determined by the social relationships of production. Capitalism's structure causes a wide range of social problems.

2. EXPLANATIONS OF THE RIOTS IN PRACTICE AND LINKS TO THEORY

An examination of the comments made by a number of public figures reflect not only the search for a single causal factor, but at the same time the different perspectives outlined above. For example Neville Trotter MP (Conservative MP for Tynemouth which includes the Meadow Well estate) stated that unemployment and social deprivation had little to do with the issue. Rather, he saw lawless thugs and criminality at the heart of the problem (Guardian 11/9/91). Similarly, the Home Secretary blamed irresponsible parenting (Chronicle 24/9/91). The vicar of Elswick espoused the view that pre-planned wilful wickedness precipitated the riots, brought about by breakdowns in morality, Christian values and the family. He also commented that deprivation in the 1930s had not led to people living in fear of riots (Chronicle 20/9/91).

The explanations proffered by Mr Trotter can be seen as falling firmly within the pathologist theoretical framework, with wickedness and thuggery counterposed as phenomena unlinked to the societal problems of deprivation. While Mr Baker's and the vicar of Elswick's views are consistent with aspects of both pathology and disorganisation perspectives. Both theories look back romantically to a presumed golden age of moral consensus and conformity. Individuals or social change contribute to its breakdown.

In contrast, the vicar of Meadow Well said: 'People on the estate are part of our community. They shouldn't be outsiders, but in economic and social ways they are made outsiders' (Journal 11/9/91). He went on to delineate factors of unemployment, cuts due to poll-tax capping, changes in benefit laws and refusals of credit to residents. These factors worsened poverty, and, in conjunction with Meadow Well's 'history of struggle against social problems', bred hopelessness. Consequently, 'people express these stresses in ways which aren't popular, getting angry about things'. This account reflects facets of critical, deviant behaviour and labelling theories.

Dick Hobbs, (see this issue) blamed the existence of an economic blackspot (Meadow Well) in a relatively affluent area (North Shields/Tynemouth) for causing stigmatisation and consequential deviance in the form of 'alternative careers'. He expressed surprise that the riots had not happened earlier on what he labels a 'sink estate' with its young people's economic position being singled out as a generational experience

(Journal 11/9/91). These views accord with aspects of value-conflict, labelling and deviant behaviour perspectives, differing from the previous analysis in being a-historical.

On the other hand Sir Stanley Bailey's, the then Chief Constable views on the riots included the following: If the first night of rioting was 'ram-raiders' revenge', this was stupid; constructive action rather than riots was needed to help young people on the estate (Chronicle 10/9/91); as troubles spread, he called rioters 'uncaring, stupid, ignorant and criminal' (Chronicle 12/9/91).

At various points he emphasised the law-abiding nature of the majority of people, distinguishing them from a few ringleaders. For example, he said that unemployment could not be a factor, since many unemployed do not commit crimes (Chronicle 23/9/91).

His description of his operational strategy as 'the iron fist in a velvet glove' accords with this view. Containment rather than arrests at the scene was partly facilitated by using videos of events to make arrests after order was restored: 'The velvet glove is coming off for the right people at the right time' (Chronicle 14/9/91). Reacting to criticism of his policy, he stated that unlimited powers of arrest and detention would have cleared the streets more quickly, but 'then you would not have me as your Chief Constable' (Journal 13/9/91).

The above portrayal accords with pathology and disorganisation perspectives, but Sir Stanley's comments and general policymaking are more tempered than the 'lock 'em up and throw away the key' lobby which can be associated with these perspectives.

A clear reflection of the 'critical' perspective can be seen in the views of The Archbishop of Canterbury who stated that the criminal behaviour was inextricably linked to social deprivation, poverty, poor housing and illiteracy (Chronicle 20/9/91). Dr Carey's explanations were supported by the Bishop of Newcastle but also provoked a backlash from several quarters, including other church leaders and prominent local and national politicians (Guardian, Chronicle 20/9/91).

Non-rioting residents' reactions, as portrayed by the media, were as varied as those above. Several were shocked, whilst others expressed a lack of surprise, given underlying tensions in the riot areas including relationships with the police.

EXPLAINING THE RIOTS 2:
Digging into themes

Whilst there are many theoretical criticisms which can be levelled at single cause explanations and theories, concepts and themes from them can be explored in particular case studies. In this section, links between a marginalised underclass and dialectics of the culture of consumerism are in turn related to police-underclass relationships. In the final section, the role of community development is briefly examined.

1. CREATION OR REPRODUCTION OF THE UNDERCLASS?

Implicit in explanations and perspectives examined above is a notion of the existence of an underclass, variously caused by individual pathologies or interactions on the one hand or structurally-determined conflicts on the other. Robert Reiner, commenting on the riots, suggested the emergence of an underclass (Channel 4 News 12/9/91). The phenomena of riots and car theft may be indicators of a growing gap between the 'haves' who may participate in society and the 'have-nots' who may not. Some commentators, including a Newcastle councillor, have spoken of a 'North-North' divide (Guardian 18/9/91). However, the contemporary debate about the emergence of an underclass is in danger of being contextualised too narrowly and a-historically.

Affluence among young people was far from universal in the 1950s and 1960s; the working-class did not disappear: it underwent a period of accelerated fragmentation and reconstruction (see for example Clarke J et al 1975; Goldthorpe JH et al 1969). Economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s may have further reformulated divisions within the working-class as well as those between classes. Pearson argues that capitalism necessarily reproduces a residual underclass, who pose a constant threat to the status quo (cited in Reiner 1990).

Cohen's work on policing illuminated divisions within the working-class due to changes in forces of production (Cohen P 1979). (The consequences for policing will be examined below.) Parallel historical divisions in Tyneside's working class between artisan and lesser-valued male workers have been traced above in terms of housing provision (see guide to areas). Clarke et al's account of mid-century inter and intra class re-construction (Clarke J et al 1975) together with debunking of embourgeiosement theories (Goldthorpe JH et al 1969) illustrate Pearson's theory of continual creation of an underclass and this provides a theoretical framework in which to locate local current phenomena of car crime and civil disorder.

The underclass and crime

Reiner summarises Dahrendorf's theory of anomia, itself being an update of Durkheim's anomie (Reiner 1990). Dahrendorf hypothesises that 'the main structural precondition of growing crime is....the growth of an underclass' (Reiner 1990:55). The return of long-term structural unemployment has created the conditions in which sections of the working-class will be permanently denied citizenship.

Dahrendorf explains counter-trends of rising crime under affluence in terms of increased opportunities for crime. These opportunities are themselves a product of a failure of society to socialise the working-class into not committing crime. Dahrendorf subsumes all other explanations under this rubric, and so comes full circle to accord with pathology and disorganisation theories (see Explanations 1 above).

This is perhaps the fundamental problem with single-cause explanations: in asserting hierarchical relationships between factors, they fail to see that horizontal linkages between factors may be determined by particular historical experiences of general conditions. In other words, these theories see symptoms as causes and fail to connect with fundamental causation.

These criticisms aside, the suggestion that working-class incorporation and fuller employment conditions are associated with lower crime rates provides an interesting backdrop for examining Tyneside, where structural long-term unemployment has been a feature of division within the working-class throughout the 20th century. Reiner further explains connections with references to Box's work who suggested that the meaning and duration of unemployment are important in examining links between unemployment and crime. This too, holds promise for empirical work and connects with the notion of underclass.

Thus, it is not simply a case of a decade of Thatcherism *creating* an underclass, as some commentators have implied. Rather, the last 15 years or so have seen a sharpening and reshaping of economic divisions within the working-class and between the working-class and

the middle-class, and this may have recreated the underclass in the form of the young people whose actions are under scrutiny in this article.

Several explanations of the riots portrayed in the media allude to the concept of the underclass, but differ not only in their sites of causation, but in their historical framework. Socio-economic data would give indications into the plausibility of such a typification of an underclass, but the concept of consumerism, if understood as a dialectic, can provide insights in this article.

2. THE CULTURE OF CONSUMERISM AND THE UNDERCLASS

Some explanations (eg Hobbs) have commented on the increased hyping and pervasiveness of consumerism: the glittering prizes constantly portrayed as needed and available which are simultaneously denied to the economic underclass.

Reiner connects Bonger's theory of a culture of egoism created by economic advance with the present 'amorally materialistic culture' (Reiner 1990:58). He is referring here to an accentuation of individualistic consumerism by the present (at the time of writing) Government's economic and social policies. Many will be familiar with the trend in the 1980s of growing poverty accompanied by increased affluence for the few (eg the proverbial yuppie). It is artefacts of the latter's culture which seem to have underpinned the creation of desired wants by advertising in the 1980s.

But are these objects purely an artefact of media portrayal (glossy adverts for fast cars, for example), or are some necessary for participation in modern society? The motor car is perhaps the symbol par excellence of a 'glittering necessity'. That is, participation in modern society is increasingly impossible without one.

The trend towards out-of-town centralised shopping is an example vividly illustrated on Tyneside. The Metrocentre, the largest shopping centre in Europe, was luxuriously built in the 1980s on derelict industrial land outside Gateshead, and hailed as a symbol of the Great North revival. It is constantly portrayed on TV as belonging to the people, but these people are those who can afford to participate. At the same time, the Metrocentre has attracted business away from both smaller shopping centres in residential areas and easily accessible town centres. It sits directly on the

opposite side of the river to the West End of Newcastle, and whilst bus services exist, many cannot even afford the bus fare whilst the adverts on TV proclaim 'it's yours'. Further, there are no second-hand shops in the Metrocentre. Similarly, very few on the Meadow Well estate own cars.

The objective relationship between affluence and poverty cannot be proved here, but can be stated simply: as the rich get richer the poor get poorer. However, the concept of the underclass allows insights into the other, subjective side of the equation: what happens to those who can't afford the means (eg a car) to gain an (albeit very unequal) share in the spoils of capitalist production? In this case-study, patterns of theft and use of high performance cars by those denied participation need examining. Interviews with young people who engage in 'joyriding' and/or 'ram-raiding' would give insights into the possible existence of 'alternative careers', as illustrations of an 'innovation' reponse in differential association theory (see perspectives above).

Possible indications of this are given by the following example. Dale Robson's father, as well as distancing himself from the riots, was indignant at the label 'joyrider' being attached to his son. Dale had a history of stealing cars, he said, but they were always in connection with 'ram-raids': he did it for the money (Echo 11/9/91). There are numerous other comments by local people in all the riot areas which delineate the economic function of criminal behaviour in this context: further work will catalogue these.

Culture and Class

Before turning to the relationship between the police and the underclass, a brief connection can be made between the above and the dialectics of culture in a broader sense.

There is prima facie evidence of a sub-culture of 'alternative pride' in the indignation shown by those close to the two young men who were killed being labelled 'joyriders'. The cultural significance of the corrective statements that they were professional car thieves should not be overlooked.

Hall and others (Hall S & Jefferson T (eds) 1975) studied post-war youth subcultures and provided a framework of relationships between the sub-culture (of young people), the parent culture (of the communities to which young people belong) and the dominant culture of society. The theory also decribes

conditions for the development of counter-cultures. Further work will deploy this framework but for now two points can be noted.

Firstly, the framework holds the potential for relating economic explanations of car crime with the 'search for excitement; the thrill' school, which would also provide insights into benefits of anti-social behaviour for those who rioted.

Such 'leisure' functions of actions are often unanalysed or counter-posed to, say, economic functions: 'It was just a bit of fun'. I believe that the two are intertwined. The more affluent in society not only have greater possession of more legitimate forms of leisure, but participation in such pursuits is subjectively denied to the underclass. For example, even when leisure/ community centres are provided in areas geographically accessible to the underclass, they are seen as symbols of a society which holds no gains for them. There is no sense of ownership for the underclass, therefore facilities are rejected.

These ideas on participation cannot be fully developed here, but are implicit in the discussion of imposition in the section on community development below. They are also open to empirical testing in further research, and connect with folk-lore in youth work circles where it is often acknowledged that the service fails to attract the most marginalised. The philosophy of detached youth work is premised on such concerns.

Secondly, in terms of policing, the existence of counter-intelligence networks may represent an emergent counter-culture attempt at rectifying inequalities in technology between the police and the policed. Radio frequency 'scanners' (sometimes the target product of 'ram raids' on electrical stores) are in widespread use in the riot areas to monitor police radio communications. This 'counter-intelligence' network may begin to explain why a claim that the police had 'murdered' the two young men was credible to enough people for long enough for it to become the focus of the disaffected until critical mass was achieved. The relationship between the police and the underclass will now be examined in a broader sense.

3. THE POLICE AND THE UNDERCLASS

Several studies have identified police culture which divides the public into the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. For example, in the PSI research police used the terms 'respectables' and 'slags' (Smith & Gray 1983). Similarly, Baldwin and Kinsey (1982) found

'civilised' and 'garbage'. Locally, Malcolm Young, (a serving police officer/ researcher), speaks of categories of 'prigs'/'scum' and 'unwitting civvies' (Young 1991).

Whilst labelling theory offers the notion that such labels produce secondary deviance in the form of conforming to typecast roles, the solution of removing the labels (Rubington and Weinberg 1989) does not appear to have much historical significance. Cohen's seminal historical study of policing in Islington provides the material explanation for this division in police culture. Early universal opposition to modern policing gave way at the turn of the century to those sections of the working-class who stood to gain from shifts in the labour force forming an alliance with the police against those who did not stand to gain (Cohen P 1979).

The incident which appears to have sparked the first night of rioting on the Meadow Well estate included suspicions that the police had 'murdered' two young car thieves by ramming their stolen car off the road at high speed (see Chronology above). The police categorically denied the accusation, stating that officers kept a half-mile distance from the stolen car (Chronicle 9/9/91). I have already implied that 'counter-intelligence' networks may have played a role, and graffiti on the estate is prima facie evidence of the event as catalyst (see Chronology above).

Irrespective of the facts surrounding Dale's and Colin's deaths, the *suspicion* that police caused them to die indicates that relationships between the police and at least the economically marginal sections of the communities in the West End and Meadow Well have underlying tensions.

In the context of the riots, the stated intention of some on the first night was to goad the police onto the estate and have a show-down (own interview tape; Guardian 11/9/91). This 'revenge intention' was also expressed by some rioters in subsequent events in the West End (Chronicle 12/9/91). Again, one young man from the West End said the riots would stop if the police stopped hassling young people (Channel 4 News 11/9/91). Another said whilst observing 'hotting' displays in Scotswood that 'It's brilliant. If the police dare come down here, we'll stone them' (Chronicle 13/9/91). This remark is indicative of both excitment at events and of police being perceived as the enemy. Relationships between the police and the routinely policed may be determined not only by the style of interaction in arrest situations, but by the simple objective function of the police to restore order and

curtail illicit leisure pursuits of the underclass (see above on culture). The tactics of intervention will be discussed below.

It would appear that at least in part, the deaths of the two young men may have provided a focal opportunity for the disaffected to confront the police and so address long-standing grievances, perhaps siezing on the idea of a riot from events in Oxford, Birmingham and Cardiff.

Local young people on the Meadow Well estate spoke of 'the Fatty Squad': CID officers who come on the estate calling them 'scum' (Guardian 11/9/91). Such labelling, by the police and others (eg employers and credit agencies) at once affirms that agents of mainstream society recognise a socio-economic underclass. The phenomenon of being labelled outcasts was the subject of a report on 'Right to Reply' (Channel 4 28/9/91).

The vicar of Meadow Well's comments (see Explanations 1 above) indicate that labelling does not come out of the blue but is linked to the material position of economic outcasts. Cohen's work links police attitudes firmly to such economic divisions within the working-class (Cohen P 1979). One resident summed up the situation on the Meadow Well estate: 'The way we feel here is that we just don't exist to nobody' (Journal 11/9/91). The vicar of Meadow Well suggested that anger borne of these experiences may get expressed in the form of riots.

4. INTERPRETATIONS OF POLICE OPERATIONAL POLICY

One feature of the policing of the riots on Tyneside which provoked controversy was the length of time before police intervention. After the first riot on the Meadow Well estate Sir Stanley Bailey defended the decision to wait 5 hours before moving in to disperse the rioters, claiming a 'successful' operation (BBC Newsnight 10/9/91).

Other witnesses and commentators expressed frustration at the delay before police intervention (own interview tape; BBC Newsnight 10/9/91). This frustration, experienced by local residents among others, was echoed by some after the West End disturbances of Wednesday and Thursday September 11th and 12th (Chronicle 12/9/91). Similar tactics and reactions had occured in events in Handsworth the week before the Tyneside riots (Guardian 4/9/91).

The decision to delay intervention has been explained by some in terms of resource shortage, but Sir Stanley Bailey refuted the Shadow Home Secretary's claims that there was a staffing resource issue at the heart of the policy (Tyne Tees TV Northern Life 13/9/91). One explanation may be that hinted at in the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidelines (Guardian 11/9/91), which points to a dilemma. If the police intervene too quickly or too slowly they will be open to criticism. Intervention should be delayed until suffcent resources and intelligence are gathered, which is not the same as saying there is a shortage of resources.

Chief Constable Owen (President ACPO) stated that some delay was inevitable, given that there is no CRS-type '3rd force' lying in wait for a riot to happen (BBC Newsnight 10/9/91). In other words, the mutual support systems take time to gather and to be properly briefed for an efficient policing operation. The deployment of SPGs later in the week to thwart attempts at mass gatherings (see Chronology) would seem to bear this out.

One further factor may also be relevant. Sir Stanley Bailey's comments on his 'iron fist in velvet glove' policy (see Explanations 1 above) indicate that advances in the technology of intelligence gathering (including the use of videos) partially obviates the need for swamp-type arrest operations at the scene. He also implied, though, a distaste for unlimited powers of arrest without sufficient evidence.

A local lecturer, Vic Jupp, suggested that the police have learned some lessons from instant response/saturation styles of policing riots in the 1980s including the phenomenon of such styles resulting in further offences being committed (Journal 11/9/91). Jefferson (1990) examined policing of public disorder, and showed how aggressive policing of public order situations contributes to the amplification of disorder. If this was a feature in the decision to delay intervention, then it was not echoed in policing styles on the Meadow Well estate according to one local resident and community worker, who commented on the aggression used with residents who were non-participants in the riots (BBC Newsnight 10/9/91, BBC Radio Newcastle 10/9/91). Research by the PSI showed that experience of police aggression in stop-and-search interactions can result in hostile attitudes to the police (Smith DJ & Gray J 1983). Further, previous case-study research on Tyneside suggests that in such interactions, amplification of deviance can occur. Irrespective of the original reason for stop-

and-search, suspects can end up being arrested for their reaction to police hostility (Bridges Project 1986).

This suggests that operational efficency, rather any concern about the quality of police-public relationships, were the police's prime concern in the 'iron fist in the velvet glove' strategy. This is understandable in the charged atmosphere of policing public disorder, and no exact correlation between these events and everyday 'stop-and-search' policing is implied. However, it appears that at least some connection is possible insofar as many of the recipients of both everyday and public disorder policing in this case-study may be the same people.

5. THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The rise and fall of community development projects

The full historical significance of North Tyneside and Benwell CDPs (and the absence of one in Scotswood) for the present case-study have yet to be worked out, but some points are noted here. Firstly, the CDPs represented a major plank (perhaps the zenith) of progressive community development, having been set up by the Home Office to examine causes of urban poverty in an era of other initiatives such as Educational Priority Areas.

In many respects, however, they differed from the latter in the degree of involvement with the local community in determining reform agendas. In community work folk-lore, left-wing workers 'hijacked' the projects. According to some accounts (eg Loney 1983), the CDPs were closed precisely because they resulted in increased demands on the local state at a time of retrenchment, and because the site of problems was often located in state control.

Collective community development, the great hope and main strategy of CDP workers, has been devastated *ideologically* by 15 years' sharpened individualism (which itself fuels alienation) and *economically* by cuts to programmes such as Inner City Partnership (ICP) schemes, mainstream and voluntary sector youth and community provision etc. ICPs, the 1980s successors to CDPs, were set up very differently from the latter. They were from the start firmly in the control of central government which increasingly dictated both the remit and scope to the local state and had final say in judging bids for projects in what became a capped budget.

Whilst some workers struggled within these constraints to retain remnants of local accountability and radical practice, even this truncated form of community development is in decline. It is being replaced by schemes such as City Challenge. The casualty list of Tyneside's defunct or emaciated community projects is long.

Participation by all: one community?

However the extent of community participation in community development is a complex and debatable issue which has arisen again as a result of the riots. In media debates around the riots, the failure of 'throw money at the problem' schemes was explained as a failure to include the community in their formation and implementation.

Margaret Nolan, a community worker and resident of the Meadow Well estate, said that the local community need to have a real say in the direction of schemes aimed at improving their lives, rather than having such schemes imposed upon them (BBC Look North 11/9/91). A genuine dialogue is needed with all sections of the community, including the routinely-policed rioters, who need to have a real say in the agenda for debate. This is, of course, no less than a call for genuine community development.

Community activists in both areas pointed to a devastation of local facilities and community development partly brought about by funding constraints imposed on Local Authorities. Thus, whilst some may see the burning down of Collingwood Youth Centre on the North side of the Meadow Well estate (see Chronology) as an act of self-harm, others would see it as an expression of anger at another symbol of loss of hope in the area. But this incident has another angle to do with historical divisions within the community.

One resident pointed to divisions on the estate between North and South, with only young people from the North side feeling welcome at the club (Journal 11/9/91). She located the origins of this rivalry in the 1969 re-naming of the estate as North and South Meadow Well. Other sources indicate historical inequality of treatment in housing renovation with the North side gaining the lion's share of provision (North Tyneside CDP 1978). Another resident called the building a 'sore thumb', and said some residents were thinking of asking for its demolition before the riots (Guardian

11/9/91). It is uncertain whether the latter group live on the North or South side of the estate.

These residents' views indicate that areas such as the Meadow Well estate cannot be simplistically viewed as one 'community', with provision of facilities in a geographical area necessarily serving all people who live in that area. Rivalry between the two groups of young people on the North and South sides of the Meadow Well estate may be linked to the historical development of the estate.

This implies that local people's perceptions of 'their' community are a product of complex biographical and historical structural processes which are not addressed by a geographical notion of 'community' underpinning much Local Authority provision and community policing initiatives. The needs of the routinely-policed have to be addressed as do those who suffer from their actions. Provision of community centres and other facilities has to take account of divisions within the community.

These potential dichotomies of need within dispossessed communities do not, however, necessarily represent contradictions of interest. Indeed, these divisions are perhaps best seen as united in the over-arching need for investment in communities which is potentially sensitive to conflicting groups' needs. This potential may be realised if democratic forms of organisation ensure local people have a real say in what is provided, for whom and how. As suggested in this article, this organisation must from the outset include all sections of the community. There are, of course, many other issues to do with 'divide and rule' which cannot be delineated here, but which would need identifying and addressing before local people's control could be ensured.

Community development: Prospects for current projects

Whilst this section has focused on the overall lack of embracing community development in local and central state policymaking, there are examples of community development strategies at local state level and on the ground. As one community worker put it to me: 'All the issues are there in the CDP reports'. On the Meadow Well estate, some community activists have reshaped a partnership with the local authority in the form of the Meadow Well Initiative (see Chronology above). As already indicated, community workers have stressed the need for community involvement in determining reforms.

In Scotswood, community workers have for several years been working with local people to re-chart issues in the light of present conditions and have developed an Area Strategy to deal with local problems of crime, housing, jobs etc. This has included negotiating a structure in which senior representatives of the police and the local authority sit on committees set up as part of the strategy. These committees are specifically accountable to residents' groups. At the time of writing, the Scotswood project has succeeded in gaining City Challenge funding to begin to address needs identified in local issues.

Whilst initiatives on the Meadow Well and Scotswood are co-ordinated responses, they remain ad hoc to specific projects and areas. However, the lack of a total strategy for community development (which would be applicable to all dispossessed communities) on the part of the local and central state is fed by the dominant ideology of individualism and economic constraint. Current projects are implicitly 'special cases' and, in terms of funding, set in competition with one another: a classic case of dividing and ruling the poor. As the recession deepens, these trends can be expected to continue. Ultimately, a lack of State support for overarching community development is perhaps inevitable since the existence of such a scheme would threaten the economic relations which spawn the inequalities of which dispossessed communities are a product. Within these constraints, grass-roots initiatives have much potential for challenging the dominant order.

CONCLUSIONS

The policing of the riots cannot be effectively commented on without reference to ongoing policing patterns in the riot areas, and this requires examination of relationships between the police and all sections of the communities they serve, including the policed. Discussion of policing styles and organisation and ongoing interactions itself needs to be informed by an understanding of the underpinning socio-economic relationships and the role of the police in their maintenance.

I suggest that addressing these issues needs to take place in the context of a much wider programme of reform for dispossessed communities which is directed by all sections of those communities. Any such programme which fails to address the alienation of the marginalised underclass is likely to fail. Whilst

absolute improvements for communities may accrue from programmes which take account of the above factors, such improvements will not address the underlying conditions which continually recreate inequalities both within dispossessed communities, and between those communities and the relatively affluent sectors of society.

Whilst the popular media has covered a breadth of explanation, there remains the task of depth in explanation. Criminality, unemployment, thuggery, social deprivation, racism, yobbery, wickedness, lack/breakdown of morality, failures of parental control, poverty, policing and alienation have all been suggested as causal factors, with some connections and many counterpositions. The search for single cause explanations of the riots denies the complex reality of rioters' lives and the history of their communities.

Some or all of the factors in the above list may be relevant in explaining the riots. This article has attempted to suggest that case-study analysis which takes as its starting point explanations from within the communities may begin to uncover the problems giving rise to tensions behind recent events. Ethnographic research is more likely to uncover which conditions created the likelihood of riots and what circumstances provided the catalyst. In any event, dismissal of rioters' actions and suspicions of the police as 'stupid' and 'ignorant' by authority figures such as the then Chief Constable (Chronicle 12/9/91) will probably only serve to intensify the alienation and marginalisation so vividly felt by the young people who rioted on Tyneside.

Notes

(1). This record is drawn from local newspaper reports and should not be taken as a definitive description of events. Local newspaper titles viz. 'The Newcastle Journal', 'Newcastle Evening Chronicle' and 'The Northern Echo' are shortened in referencing to 'Journal' 'Chronicle' and 'Echo' respectively.

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WAITING TO HAPPEN

Urban Disorder on Tyneside 1991

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the role of the local media in reporting the social disorders which spread across Tyneside in the second week of September 1991. The week has become known both locally and nationally, inside and outside of the media, as the 'riot week' when gangs of youths from impoverished working class areas fire-bombed property, looted shops and attacked police and fire-fighters.[1]

The week of 'riot' behaviour - the actual chain of events - was primarily defined in the local news media as beginning late on the night of Friday the sixth of September. A fatal crash of a stolen car on Newcastle's coast road, the main motorway link between the Tynemouth/North Shields coastal area and Newcastle city centre, killed two youths from North Shields. By the following weekend many of the working class estates of the region were witness to acts of violence, theft and arson. 'Copycat behaviour' was again on the media agenda. 'COPYCAT FIRE BUGS HIT WEST END' (Evening Chronicle, 11th September.)

The purpose of this paper is to put forward a tentative analysis of the interaction between the event and the reporting of that event in the pages of the local news media.

Although the primary focus of the discussion will be news reporting and its significance in constructing a reality of events, it is recognised that wider theoretical and political debates remain crucially important too. In particular, the significance of the 'inner city issue' to politicians of all political parties, the continuing policy debates about public and private provision of housing, the theoretical debates within Marxism about the link between collective consumption and social order, and the alleged emergence of New Times are background features throughout the discussion. New Times are perhaps especially contentious, whether taken as a description of the new economic relationships characteristic of 'post Fordist' society, or as a new apparatus for approaching the understanding of late capitalism. We suggest that an interpretive framework for the events of September 1991 on Tyneside can be drawn from the elements of critical media analysis, non-deterministic phenomenologies of human action and meaning, and theories of discourse and ideology. We suggest that the applicability of New Times to an area such as the Meadow Well, on the level either of description or of apparatus, is highly arguable. Disorder, marginality, and conflict over whose account of events is to prevail in shaping perceptions of every day life are not the product of recent or changed social relations, but of a long-term and deeply-embedded distribution of power.

Throughout the second week of September 1991, the local press, in the main comprised of The Journal a daily morning newspaper and its sister paper The Evening Chronicle published by the Newcastle Chronicle and Journal Limited from Thomson House in Newcastle's city centre, reported the car deaths and subsequent events which spread from the initial site of unrest, the Meadow Well estate, out and beyond its boundaries and into similar housing estates. The Meadow Well is a working class/under class housing estate in North Shields with an unemployment rate, according to media reporting of local perceptions, of 85%. Here the two young men who died in the car crash appear to have had a heroic status amongst certain sections of the youth of the area. The disturbances spread through housing estates sandwiched between the coast road and the River Tyne, including those of Walker and Byker. Similar behaviour was reported in the West End of the city by the weekend of Friday the thirteenth and Saturday the fourteenth of September. These events appeared tidily as a weeks news package for the local and national media alike.

The question is whether we can apply a common analytical framework to this series of events: were the events of North Shields and the Elswick area of Newcastle sufficiently similar to allow such a common analysis? While 'the events' in a descriptive sense may have appeared similar from reported accounts in local news media, this does not mean that similar

processes were necessarily present, nor that a common framework of interpretation is necessarily justified. Media accounts tend to lend a spurious coherence, a spurious 'pattern', to events. What can be said of the two principal sites of the weeks disorders?

The Meadow Well estate, in the North Shields area of Tyneside, is relatively identifiable as a geographic area (indeed as two, north and south Meadow Well), bordered by through roads, and by the metro line, relatively uniform in its stock of local authority housing. The nature of the estate has some bearing on 'what happened', especially in being 'cut off' for a time, i.e. on the perception of being severed from the world around it.

Elswick, in the West End of Newcastle, is a different sort of area. Its geographic coherence as a single estate is not comparable to Meadow Well, its traditions are more diverse. Elswick also has a different history. It was a working class area centred upon a heavy industrial base and Meadow Well has never been that. Elswick has, like many other former areas of skilled and extensive employment, been a structural victim of changes in the local economy. Meadow Well has, for whatever reasons of public policy or market forces, been marginal over the longer term. Notwithstanding the scale of disorder in Elswick, some see it as an amplified form of 'normal' weekend behaviour amongst sections of its population. Certainly, its relationship to the disorders of Meadow Well is considerably more complex than the account of events constructed in the news media suggests.

This has implications for our attempt here to analyse the reporting of the weeks events. The differences between the two areas and all those others affected by the weeks disorders does not necessarily imply a whole series of differing analyses of the news media. On the contrary, the very treatment of these events as similar events of the media creates a similarity of treatment of construction which we can use as the basis of our analysis. There is an important general point here too:- the media of mass communication constructs heterogeneous events and phenomena into generic events - in this case 'the riot' - with a meaning which may be quite independent of any meaning(s) the events might hitherto have possessed. The generic event becomes all important. 'The riot' is constructed as generalised description, and then turned back on events to 'explain' them.

Thus, it will be suggested that the media, far from being extraneous to events of arson, crowd control, looting, political analysis and concerned public commentary was in fact a 'participant' in these events in a particular sense. That is, in the consciousness of the people of the area whether as participant actors - as 'rioters', as police and fire-brigade officers or of the general public who fell into neither of these categories - the media played a representational and interactive role between the events and the public knowledge of those events.

This is not to rehearse the well worn formula of media analysis, of scanning and criticising the press for deficiencies of balance or the discovery of a biased treatment of its subject area. Rather, it is to attempt to reconstruct the events *as they were reported* during the week of disorder: to attempt to present 'events' and the 'knowledge of those events' as a circulatory discourse. This discourse is inclusive of the social actors behaviour and the media construction of the knowledge of an event which then enters into the actors consciousness. It is not assumed that the preferred reading of a media message is necessarily the one that finally settles in the actors consciousness. [1]

READING-IN... AND READING-OUT

In seeking to 'read meaning in' to the coverage provided by local newspapers, to what extent are the processes by which we seek to do this akin to those very processes by which newspapers read meanings into events in the first place? This recalls the sociological problem, especially evident in ethno-methodological analysis, of similarity between the lay process of reasoning (object of study) and sociological processes of understanding that reasoning (apparatus of study). Is this a problem or is it a resource?

It might be argued that such analysis merely reads meaning into inherently meaningless behaviour. Such a view would consider it a mistake (or at least, an unwarranted assumption) to find meaning at all in the events of September 1991, the attraction of which to participants may have been their very 'meaning-lessness', in the manner of 'punk' in 1976. There are two answers to this legitimate objection.

Firstly, the casual decisions of a sub-editor keen to headline a hot news report are unlikely to reflect conscious ideological choices although clearly decisions are made from within ideological parameters. Media constructions at the level of a news report in the popular press, do not reflect *conscious and deliberate* theorising. However, this is precisely why they are potent and interesting. The

very unstated and implicit nature of constructing meaning is precisely what is of interest in analysing its production, and its effects.[3] Discourses are generated in this same way, shaping and limiting the subsequent terms of debate.

Secondly, it would also be erroneous to read conscious ideological intent into the actions of those participating in the disorder.[4] This is particularly where we would wish to distinguish our analysis from those analyses of 'the riots' produced by Right wing or vulgar Marxist commentators. For example, the Right wing tendency to 'blame the parents' for lack of control, or crude Left interpretations which see unemployment as a simple and *singular* causal factor. Events have meanings. Seeming 'meaninglessness' is itself a meaning, in so far as it produces an interpretation and it has effects. But events such as those of September 1991 do not have an 'off the shelf' meaning deriving from our own or someone else's ideology: this simply ponders a limiting discourse which functions much as media constructions do. We are not providing an additional discourse here, nor an explanation, but a frame work for under-standing how a vocabulary for viewing 'the riots' was constructed.

DEFINITIONS, CONSTRUCTIONS AND LABELS

The community says it is plagued by glue sniffers and joyriders every night and often during the day as well (The Journal, Saturday 7th September.)

For some time now the local and national press have been concerned with certain vehicle related social problems. In particular the Newcastle Journal and Evening Chronicle have carried reports on such activities as 'joyriding', 'hotting' and 'ram-raiding': phenomena associated with youth and the codes, labels and activities of a specific youth subculture. Whether these terms or labels were created at the level of the street or constructed through the screens and pages of the media is uncertain.

The term 'TWOCing' in a legal discourse describes the activity of car theft; of taking a car without the owners consent. A legal term descriptive of car theft is by the sub cultural group turned around, inverted to describe a popular sub cultural activity, without the legal censorial associations. Although the word/term remains the same, the significance and interpretation of the activity lies at opposite ends of the spectrum of acceptable behaviour. For sub-

cultural youth the label of 'TWOCing' has a different meaning.

This is a further reminder of the difficulties inherent in assuming that the media message is decoded in the way the preferred meaning suggests.

THE NUMBER OF CAR THEFTS IN NORTHUMBRIA EACH YEAR IS A STAGGERING 30,771 (The Journal, 10th September.)

In the early stages of the week the media carried interviews with and reports about the parents and friends of the deceased car thieves. Friends and relatives expressed concern that the correct label should be attached to the stealing and driving away of the car that subsequently crashed, killing its occupants and becoming the centre-piece of news coverage. Those close to the deceased Colin Atkins and Dale Robson made it clear to the local and national press that the young men were 'ram raiders', a label seemingly higher in the linguistic hierarchy of the sub cultural value system: associations which were at first lost on the media and the wider public.

That these terms are hotly contested and the sub-cultural meanings defended by the parental generation suggests a wide circulation of the labels in a cross-generational sense. This suggests that the subcultural language and perhaps activities of Meadow Well are linked to the parent generational consciousness.

However, angry letters to The Evening Chronicle of Friday 13th September attempt to clarify and re-establish a wider, dominant and perhaps more traditional meaning of one term in the language currently in circulation between the cultural group of a section of the Meadow Well populace and the wider population. For the population outside of this Meadow Well subcultural group, the youths 'were not joyriders but professional criminals' (Evening Chronicle, 13th September.)

However, much more than language codes are shared experience on Tyneside's Meadow Well estate. Members of the youth subculture and the parent culture to which it is attached have in common more than simply a reworking of the meaning/language labels: notably the social experience of mass unemployment, a general sense of social deprivation and a declining material fabric of the housing estate. Furthermore a common feature of life on the Meadow Well is the experience of a general disengagement from wider social institutions.

This is not merely a crude left linkage of disorder to 'deprivation', and in any case no causal connections are implied here. Instead, it is necessary to consider a dissociation between areas like Meadow Well and the life of the wider regional and national community. It is not a matter only of material deprivation, ever present though that is. It is moreover a matter of being 'adrift' from the work, economy and local politics of the area. This separateness or dissociation exists between Meadow Well and the traditional working-class culture of the region as much as it does between the estate and the more obviously contrasting culture of prosperous middle England. It is a dissociation from several decades of Labour rule in the region as much as from Conservative government per se. A geographic and social space has been constructed in which dominant values and attitudes - generated from experience of, and positions in, social institutions - are less evident. This is a space in which sub-cultural and counter-cultural values may flourish.

A series of labels which describe a central part of these particular sub cultural phenomena were in employment in Newcastle and elsewhere in the country long before the disturbances took place and these groups were, three days later, labelled by the local media as 'rioters'.

Other behaviour which was to become part of the media construction of 'the riots' was also historically prevalent in the region. Indeed many reports suggest that not just car theft, but for example the igniting of stolen cars and attacks upon disused property were commonplace in the area before the 'riots'. They surfaced in the minds of Newcastle's Evening Chronicle readers (if the letters page is any guide to the minds of Evening Chronicle readers). The perception was that this behaviour was of epidemic proportions.

The point being made here is that many of the activities which constituted the 'riots' are part of the every day experience of parts of Tyneside; albeit different in scale and intensity. The media, in its attempt to make sense of these events for its readers was quick to pull these activities together and apply the generic label of 'riot'. The Journal under the headline of 'STREET FURY' described the Meadow Well as a 'burning riot estate in the grip of terror'. (The Journal, Tuesday 10th September.) Similarly The Evening Chronicle of the same day described a 'night of terror as rioters wreck joyride death estate'. (Evening Chronicle, Tuesday 10th September.)

The tone of this language is not unusual for a local and popular set of newspapers and is perhaps understandable given the scale, extent, ferocity and evident pre-organisation of the disturbance. The latter theme was one which preoccupied not only the local but also the national media which viewed 'spontaneity' as somehow more 'excusable' than concerted effort. It seems to be the case that a high level of pre-meditation and organisation was evident. For instance, a power line had been cut at the outset of the Meadow Well riot throwing the estate into total blackness and causing major difficulties for the local police. This was, unsurprisingly, a particularly powerful image on national television as well as in the pages of local newspapers.

OTHER DISCOURSES

It is important, at this point, to remind ourselves that alternative accounts are possible, that the very potent images produced during the week in question do not have a single self-evident meaning. The construction of these events in local news media involves a meeting up of prospective and retrospective accounts of 'what happened' within identifiable and internally coherent discourses. The predictable Right-wing and crude Left interpretations 'roll forward' certain notions of what is happening and 'what it means' and then use whatever happened to justify the correctness of their accounts retrospectively. This serves to 'confirm' their ideologically defined imperatives for action: crack down/deal with the trouble makers on the one hand, or jobs investment etc. on the other. Religious perspectives are constructed in the same way, creating descriptions of events based on initial value-judgements and then using events to claim how correct this interpretation was, as well as bringing specific policy suggestions in its train. Media accounts proceed in exactly the same way. A version of what's happening is built-up, 'constructed', and afterward, used as a vocabulary to describe (and hence explain) what has happened.

The closed logic of the discourse is not so totalitarian as our depiction may suggest, if only because there are various available discourses. Those of the right, the church, crude left and media were generally 'available'. Others, perhaps from within the communities themselves, were less readily available. Important questions arise here: which discourses prevail; which are taken up and by whom? Who has the power to make their definition stick?

At any rate the language of riot, or to be more precise the media language of riot was already in circulation in the local press of the weekend of the 6th/7th of September which preceded the Monday night disorder of Meadow Well. Furthermore, a general use of exaggerated and with hindsight insensitive language was being deployed in the newspapers of that critical weekend.

KEY EVENTS

The two car deaths occurred at 10 p.m. on the Friday evening. Rumours of and opinions about the actual events surrounding the deaths were being formed and circulated on the Meadow Well late on that Friday night and during the following Saturday. The Evening Chronicle of the same Saturday reported the car crash in emotive and sensational language. The headline 'JOYRIDERS BURNT ALIVE' announced an account of the vehicle which 'ploughs into lamp post' and the 'youths die in blazing car'. (Evening Chronicle, Saturday 7th September.) The story unfolding on the Meadow Well at about the time of the pubs closing late on the Friday evening was that the stolen car was forced off the road by a pursuing police car.

Monday night's Evening Chronicle ran a front page story under the headline 'WHY DID THEY DIE?'. (Evening Chronicle, Monday 9th September.) A relative of one of the dead youths is reported as speaking for the family, and perhaps a wider supportive group of residents, that 'we believe that Dale was rammed off the road (as a result of being followed by the police)'. (Evening Chronicle, Monday 9th September) The police strenuously denied this claim. In a continuation of the story on page two, a police spokesman stated that 'their patrol car was well back when the stolen car turned off a slip road and hit a lamppost. The officers were half a mile away when the accident happened. They held back because of the excessive speed the other car was reaching'(Chief Inspector Peter Barella, Evening Chronicle, Monday 9th September.) The relatives' account of the deaths opened the article on the front page and the reader was offered the police account on the second page. By the Monday evening the death of the 'joyriders/ramraiders' had ceased to be the prime news item. It had been replaced by the sensational story that some relatives were publicly claiming that the young men had been 'rammed off the road' by the police. Perhaps

both accounts might have appeared on the front page, giving the same amount of prominence to both.

The Journal however on the same Saturday placed the news item in a secondary place on its front page agenda.

Saturday's Journal led with the head line 'TINDER-BOX' announcing an article which referred to the social problems of the Pottery Bank area of Tyneside which is situated about half way between the North Shields area of Meadow Well and the centre of Newcastle. The article described the day to day difficulties of the residents of the area in coping with 'joyriders', 'glue sniffers' and other forms of delinquent behaviour.

According to the residents, as represented in the article, this behaviour was being carried out by 'outsiders'. The article, although confused in its mixture of direct quotes from the Pottery Bank residents and journalistic comment, appeared to be suggesting that the residents would 'take action themselves against glue-sniffers and joyriders'. (Journal, Saturday 7th September.)

The subheading from the same front page article introduced the equivocal language of riot reporting to Tynesiders early on the Saturday morning, several days before the disorder of Meadow Well on the following Monday night. 'A RIOT IS WAITING TO HAPPEN, SAY RESIDENTS'. (Journal, Saturday 7th September.) The subsequent text of the article followed through the theme. A direct quote from 'Geordie' of Pottery Bank pronounced that 'if there's a fight between the residents and the sniffers and the police arrive with the wrong attitude, there could be a full scale riot'.(Journal, 7th September.) The confused tone of the article paradoxically suggested that the riot would be perpetrated by the law abiding citizens of Pottery Bank against an 'outgroup' of 'joyriders' and 'gluesniffers': the very groups who were to be defined a few days later by the same newspapers as 'rioters'.

The Journals' forecasted 'riot waiting to happen' indeed did take place, not instigated by the law abiding citizens of Pottery Bank but several miles from and two days later: on the Meadow Well.

A FULL SCALE RIOT
(Journal, 9th September.)

This is not to seek direct and unequivocal links

between social events and media reporting. Clearly it would be overly deterministic to blame Newcastle's local press for fanning the flames of riot. Social behaviour is not necessarily directly instigated or conditioned by the media message. However the decoded message does enter social discourse defining and labelling, providing the language and descriptions which may enter the consciousness of people. Its language becomes part of the discourse from which people choose to adopt, and justify, certain forms of behaviour.[5]

How did the local media continue to report the increasingly explosive and constantly spreading events of that week? The tentative, exploratory article of the Monday Evening Chronicle 'WHY DID THEY DIE?' (Evening Chronicle, 9th September.) - a sensitive report exploring both police and parental claims of causality for the car deaths - turned into Tuesday's headline, 'THE IRON FIST'. (Evening Chronicle, Tuesday 10th September.) This was a direct quote from a leading police officer in the area. The police statement was clearly intended as a 'news bite' type statement constructed in its simplicity to suit the media's desire to broadcast a precise and punchy message. In fact, the Northumbria police did not adopt the 'iron fist' approach to policing these riots. The headline based on the police spokesman's quote was intended to counter criticism that the police were applying a 'soft' approach by announcing that the 'velvet glove' contained an 'iron fist'. It was a cliched 'news bite' statement intended to assuage public criticism of the police.

As the events of the week unfolded in the pages of the local press, The Evening Chronicle became more censorious of those involved in the disorder. The concerns of the friends and relatives of the dead 'joyriders' by this stage was lost in an attempt to construct a consensus of opinion which put the 'rioters' outside of any 'normal' understanding of their behaviour. 'ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE' (Evening Chronicle, Thursday 12th September.) ran the Evening Chronicle comment in an Ibsenite attack on 'the young wreckers who set fire to houses and cars'.

By the following evening in a weary plea to the rioters The Evening Chronicle - by this stage devoid of its brash images of blazing cars and burning buildings - ran an unequivocal front page headline 'STOP THIS VIOLENCE' (Evening Chronicle Friday 13th September.)

Thursday's comment page pondered over how the

disorders could be brought to a close with the thoughts that 'we wonder if some fathers in the areas...could not have made sure their lads did not go out and join in the destruction'. (Evening Chronicle, Thursday 12th September.) The Evening Chronicle even began to doubt its own role in the disturbances 'some readers and t.v. watchers will be asking themselves if press and t.v. coverage of the Meadow Well rioting and the earlier West End outrages promoted so-called copy-cat imitation for the sake of excitement'. (Evening Chronicle, 12th September.)

CONCLUSIONS

In the course of this paper, the 'Newcastle Riots' of September '91 have been charted as a series of historical events as represented in the local news media. With hindsight, that history from the death of the two young men on Friday 6th September, on the Newcastle coast road, the disruption of the North Shields estate of Meadow Well on the Monday evening and the subsequent violent events of the week, were re-presented as having a life of their own. Social history becomes natural history; events and the political and media reactions they generate take on an internal and seemingly natural logic. In summary this raises three areas for further analysis.

1. 'Stopping this violence'
Earlier in this paper doubts were expressed about reading the media message as an unequivocal and singular causal factor in determining social behaviour. However, the riots having spread across a number of the working class estates of Newcastle seemed to burn themselves out in the weekend of Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th of September.

Could it be that the Evening Chronicle and its sister paper The Journal had with their firm condemnation of the rioters constructed a message of such an unequivocal nature, with a preferred reading that could not be reinterpreted or misconstrued: a message that the youth of Newcastle could only respond to in one way?. Or to put this in another way: to what extent if any, other than in the pages of the local press, had the local media managed to 'stop this violence' of 'the riot that is waiting to happen'?

2. Words and Meanings
The language used to depict the riots not only 'describes' but also carries an implicit account, a framework of meaning. This point has already been made about earlier disorders (Solomos 1986). We have noted above that media accounts, and those of

other commentators, 'read in' and 'read out' specific meanings, and that participants themselves may invert received meanings in the attempt to assert control over them. Clearly, language is central in such ascription and denial of meaning. The very name 'Meadow Well' seeks to remove the perceived negative meanings of its former title 'The Ridges'. Such re-naming of events, processes and physical settings occurs throughout social policy and industrial society and tends merely to result in old meanings re-asserting themselves. (Who hears Sellafield without thinking Windscale?) Yet, clearly, political and media commentators find it useful to reconstruct meanings by the reformulation of the terms of description and debate. This deserves further study.

3. New Times?

This discussion has sought to analyse how a series of events, with their own undoubted force and reality became 'the riots', how description became explanation, how the local news media provided meanings and an overall construction of the week's events, and the consequences of those processes for all concerned. There is no intention here, however, to advocate an atheoretical media studies as the basis for further work. On the contrary, a fully theoretical media/cultural studies wedded to sociological theory and recognising the multiplicity of discourses in which meaning is constructed, may well have a valuable role to play in any further research. As noted in the introduction to this discussion, a political dimension embracing both policy and political theory remains central. We have been critical of 'crude left' accounts, which link material deprivation in some untested causal chain to the outbreak of disorder, and which invariably over simplify the role of 'the media'. Campbell (1991) has extended existing analyses to incorporate the differential impact of gender on the events of September 1991, but otherwise there are few examples of coherent or original left analysis of these events.

In particular, to pick up an initial theme of this discussion, it is hard to identify any New Times within these troubled processes, insofar as that term has been taken to denote a new discourse, a transformation of older ideologies, a debate/ programme for action which transcends the existing framework of choices. The Meadow Well estate has physically and socially been much the same during the time Thatcher and Gorbachev alike have both come and gone: where are its 'new times'? Perhaps,

unfashionable though this view may be with virtually all purveyors of description and explanation of 'the riots', the events of September 1991 demonstrate the constraints of 'old times' in both problem and possible response. By this, we mean the old terms of discourse have not changed after all: public investment, housing, jobs, policing, community, control, power, private enterprise, transport, public services, fear of crime and poverty have been and still are the elements of a vocabulary which has an enduring meaning for this area.

Notes

1. Hobsbawm's comments on the intensification of street violence in the 1980s is of interest here. To what extent it might be seen in traditional 'political' terms will be discussed later in this paper. 'The characteristic form of action of these new "poor" or "labouring poor" is no longer the strike, or giant demonstration or public meeting, but once again, as in the past, violence. The great city has once again become riotous, not to mention dangerous, in a way in which it had ceased to be since the middle of the nineteenth century.' Hobsbawm (1989) Page 155.

2. The idea of the preferred reading belongs, in the main, to Hall, who is in the following passage referring to the relation between the broadcaster and the audience. However the same or similar relationship exists between reporter and reader. 'Instead, broadcasters must interpret events, select the explanatory framework or context in which to set them, privilege or "pre-fer" the meaning which seems to make sense to them, and thus encode a meaning. Audiences, like broadcasters, also stand in their own (very different) positions, relations and situations, have their own (again, different) relation to power, to information, to sources, and to bring their own frameworks of interpretation to bear in order to get a meaning, or decode the message' Hall. (1981) Page 280.

3. 'Broadcasters define what is news, select the news, order, edit and shape it, translate events into their representative images, transpose happenings into a limited number of words and pictures to make up a "story", and make use of interpretive schemas in order to define social reality to us. We call this the encoding process: news is not "reality", but representations of reality encoded into messages and meanings' Hall (1981) Page 276.

4. 'The divisions within a heterogeneous and often socially disorganised population of the new "labouring poor" mean that its actions are directed inwards and sidewards rather than upwards. The typical riot or outburst today is not political in any realistic sense, and not so much unfocussed - often it is only too clearly directed against some other racial or territorial or lifestyle contingent - as lacking in aim and purpose.' Hobsbawm (1989) Page 155

5. Language is part of the discourse we are born into; providing the possibilities and limitations of action. The point was well made, in a more general sense, some years ago. 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past' Marx. (1852)

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YOUNG ADULTS' USE OF CREDIT

JANET FORD

Young people are reported to be substantial users of credit, typically outstripping the levels of use found in many older age groups, with particularly positive attitudes towards credit use and taking its availability for granted (PAS, 1987; Mintel, 1988). In addition, young people are reported as lacking knowledge about credit costs or the implications of credit agreements, and it has been variously claimed that they are 'impulsive' users, suffer considerable 'self delusion' and are vulnerable to the marketing of credit. These factors in turn are held to 'explain' their perceived vulnerability to overcommit -ment and to credit default (or debt). The potential importance of these issues grew during the mid and late 1980s as the credit market became more competitive following financial liberalisation.

One of the results of deregulation was that, for the first time, a generation of young people had easy access to a form of financing and financial management markedly different in its organisation and consequences from the cash economy to which they had been socialised. Although during this period the expansion of credit was overwhelmingly associated with mortgage credit, and so of relatively minor importance to the youngest credit users (18 and 19 year olds), other forms of credit also grew and were extensively marketed. For example, the number of people with Visa and Access type cards increased by more than 200% between 1978 and 1990, (by which time there were in excess of 22 million cards in circulation) and the amount of credit outstanding grew from £1.1 billion in 1980 to £6.7 billion in 1988 (Financial Statistics).

In response to these findings and suggestions, a number of organisations took a lead in calling for or instituting policy initiatives in relation to young adults and the credit market. For example, publicity material, aimed particularly at informing young people about credit was produced by the Office of Fair Trading, and in 1989 was linked to a week long radio initiative. The initiative was repeated in conjunction with Radio One in 1991. Organisations such as the National Consumer Council have supported the development of educational materials and argued that money management and especially the discussion of credit and debt should be an integral part of the national curriculum. Something of the range of views presented, along with an indication of the links made and anxieties expressed can be seen from the two quotations below. The first comes from 'Moneyfax: the crucial guide to credit and debt', produced specifically for young people by the Office of Fair Trading and used in conjunction with a radio campaign in 1989.

> *Credit can make paying easy, but it's not always as straightforward as it looks ... Be brutally honest with yourself ... can you really afford to have credit? Use credit wisely and it will work for you - overstretch your budget and suddenly it won't seem like such a good idea. Remember too, that you don't have to use credit. There's nothing to stop you chucking those tempting offers in the bin. Save up and pay cash instead. It may sound old fashioned but it works for some people.*

A more assertive stance (and an implicit explanation for credit uptake) can be seen in the view of one of the pressure groups in the area. Talking about young people they say

> *... they will almost certainly be encouraged to take some form of credit to live up to peer pressure. After all, with the avalanche of 'easy credit' advertising aimed at young people, is it surprising that so many youngsters get into the huge financial difficulties which may spoil the rest of their lives (Jubilee Centre).*

In practice, however, there has been little detailed research documenting either the patterns of credit use amongst young people, the processes that influence the take up and management of credit, or the extent of default. Such accounts of young peoples' credit use as are available tend to encompass a wide age range, typically 18-25 or 18-35, and so treat as a

homogeneous group those still living as dependents and those establishing independent households, despite the fact that they face different needs and so, potentially, different patterns of credit use (Ford, 1990). In addition many studies are descriptive rather than analytical and tend not to set the discussion of credit use in the social and economic context of the user. Therefore they offer little insight into the way young people learn about and respond to credit, or how it relates to their financial and other circumstances. Clearly, the availability of more detailed and more focussed research could contribute to an assessment of the beliefs and assumptions that currently characterise the debates surrounding the causes and consequences of young peoples' credit use, and so, in turn, contribute to policy formulation.

This article aims to provide a more detailed discussion of credit use and credit socialisation amongst young people than is typically available and to confine attention to the youngest of the young adults. The data are drawn from a study of sixty 18 to 20 year olds, the majority of whom were still living in their parent's home. With the exception of mail order credit, commercial credit (store cards, bank credit cards, hire purchase etc.) is not available to those under 18 in Britain. Thus this group were likely to be in the early stages of using commercial credit. The remainder of the article is organised as follows. The next section examines the types of credit used, the amounts borrowed in relation to income, and the pattern and purpose of use. The second section considers some of the factors that influenced young adults to take up credit. A number of factors will be outlined briefly but particular attention paid to the impact of supply processes and credit marketing. A third section examines the data on credit socialisation. The issue of default will then be considered briefly. Finally, some of the implications of the study for policy discussions will be raised.

The study

In 1990, an in-depth study of 60 young adults who were not currently in full time higher or further education was undertaken. The research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The aim was to examine both the establishment and subsequent management of credit use. Respondents were therefore tracked over a period of time and each respondent was approached twice over a six month period. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected.

Respondents were identified via the electoral roll for the Borough of Charnwood. The electoral roll indicates 'rising' 18 year olds, and the rolls from two consecutive years were used to identify the pool of young people who had turned 18 but were no older than 20. The roll provides addresses but no other information and so potential respondents had to be 'screened', first to ensure they met the criteria for inclusion (not in full time higher or further education) and then to ascertain their willingness to cooperate. Every tenth name was taken from the pool and contact established, initially by letter with a follow-up visit or telephone call. This process continued until 60 respondents had been secured. Fifty-one of those contacted were ineligible, largely because they were still in secondary education. Sixty-one had moved away or could not be contacted while of the remaining 117, 60 agreed to be interviewed. Respondents did not have to be credit users. Most respondents were still living in the parental home, and the majority were in employment. Twenty-seven women and thirty-three men were interviewed. One section of the first interview focused on the extent and pattern of any previous and current credit use and this information is presented below.

Credit use

Fifty-five of the 60 respondents had used credit following their 18th birthday, a majority using more than one source. Over half of all users (55), and all commitments (123), however, involved mail order and informal credit and often these sources had been in use prior to the respondents reaching 18. Table 1 below documents the sources used and indicates that most forms of commercial credit were used by less than a third of respondents. Informal credit refers to loans from family and friends for some relatively substantial purpose. It is therefore different from 'borrowings' which are short term, small scale sums lent often on a day to day basis (Berthoud and Kempson, 1990).

TABLE 1
Credit sources ever used by respondents *(interview (1))*

Type of credit	No. ever used	% of all commitments
Bank loan	10	8.0
Finance house loan	5	4.0
Bank overdraft	10	8.0
Credit card	17	14.0
Store card	8	6.5
Cheque trading	2	2.0
Mail order	39	32.0
Informal loan	30	24.0
Employer loan	2	2.0
	123	100.5

Forty-seven of the 60 people interviewed had commitments at the time of the first interview (and 37 out of the 51 respondents who agreed to a second interview). By the second interview 90 per cent of respondents had used credit at some point. Credit was used primarily for clothes (mail order, informal loans and store cards) and for cars and motor bikes (bank and finance house loans and some informal credit). Meals, holidays and petrol were sometimes, but less frequently, financed by credit. In a number of cases credit use was intermittent and restricted to one source at a time. More typically, however, the pattern was one of 'overlapping' or 'interwoven' credit use. Respondents would initially enter one agreement, but in time overlap it with another (either as the first neared full repayment or because additional needs arose). Specific examples included respondents with store cards who were making regular payments, but who faced additional demands for clothes, or connected with a holiday. They then entered agreements with mail order companies or took a bank overdraft. In other cases respondents with one catalogue agreement overlapped it with another as the first neared full repayment. Respondents with commitments that proved costly in terms of monthly repayments (for example store cards) sometimes took a second credit agreement with a catalogue company for similar goods because of the lower repayments.

Amongst those interviewed net weekly incomes (from benefits and/or employment) ranged from £10 to £150 with the majority receiving under £100 a week. Wages within the local labour market tend to be below the national average for young people, but there is no evidence that costs (for example, board, poll tax, transport etc) are similarly reduced and the disposable income available to young adults (out of which credit payments are made) is relatively low.

Data were also collected on the total sums borrowed (Table 2). At one end agreements had been entered for amounts as little as £30, while 5 respondents had commitments exceeding £2000. In general, the level of commitments rose with income, but the proportion of income devoted to credit payments also increased with income.

TABLE 2
Total borrowing in force at the first interview

Amount borrowed £	No. of borrowers n = 60	%
Nothing	13	21.0
Up to 200	16	27.0
201 - 400	8	13.0

TABLE 2 *contd*

Amount borrowed £	No. of borrowers n = 60	%
401 - 600	7	12.0
601 - 800	1	2.0
801 - 1000	1	2.0
1001 - 1500	2	3.0
1501 - 2000	3	5.0
2000 +	5	8.0
Visa - cleared each month	2	3.0
Missing data	2	4.0
	60	100.0

Table 3 shows the range of weekly credit commitments as a proportion of weekly income and indicates that half of the respondents had commitments in excess of 10% of income. More than a quarter had to make payments in excess of 20% of income.

TABLE 3

Agreed Weekly Commitments as % of Weekly Income

Credit commitment as a % of income	No. of borrowers n = 47	%
Up to 5%	10	21.0
6 - 10%	8	17.0
11 - 15%	6	13.0
16 - 20%	4	9.0
21 - 25%	2	4.0
26 - 30%	6	13.0
30 + %	7	15.0
Visa - cleared each month	2	4.0
Missing	2	4.0
	47	100.0

Within these overall patterns, on average, young men used credit more frequently than young women, had more commitments, (both number and size), and committed a higher proportion of their weekly income to credit repayments. This reflected the higher average income amongst the young men which resulted from their more advantageous position in the labour market. Young men were the main users of the bank and finance house loans (see Table 1 above), as well as the larger informal loans, which were principally used to purchase cars and motor bikes.

Any comparison between these findings and those for other groups of users as reported in recent surveys (PAS, 1987; Berthoud and Kempson, 1990) can only be tentative as the studies were conducted at different times and used different methodologies (large sample surveys as opposed to in-depth interviews in the study reported here). Nevertheless, the comparison suggests that the percentage of young adults using credit within the recent past and at a particular point in time is higher than amongst users as a whole and as high as found amongst the highest using age

group (30-39 in the PSI study). While the number and size of their commitments was lower, as was their average income, young adults as a group had a higher percentage of income committed to repayment than many other groups of users.

Thus, amongst young adults, credit use follows the pattern found more generally in society; more people have access to credit facilities than use them at any one point in time, and credit use increases with income. However, compared to other groups of users, young adults often have lower incomes and use fewer sources and smaller amounts of credit in absolute terms. A higher percentage of young adults use credit than amongst many other groups and the levels of commitment in relation to income are, on average, higher. When the sources of commercial credit used by 18 and 19 year olds are compared with patterns of use reported in other surveys the comparison suggests that credit cards and store cards are more heavily used by the youngest (newest) borrowers than by those a little older or perhaps more experienced. Twenty-eight percent of 18 and 19 year olds were using (or had recently used) a credit card and 13% a store card. Comparable figures for 18-24 year olds provided by the 1987 PAS survey showed current and recent credit card use at 17% and store card use at 7%. However, PAS noted that store card use had been higher, at around 13%, but that there was a substantial dropout rate.

Influences on credit uptake

The results of the study indicated a number of different influences that together accounted for young adults' credit use. Only two are pursued further in this paper, but the full range is briefly indicated below. In particular, (but not in any order of priority), credit use was informed by the tendency to low income, and so the use of credit to obtain basic goods; the nature of the young adults' leisure activities which placed a premium on 'cash', reinforcing the need to use credit to obtain basic goods; the cultural significance of certain capital items, (for example, cars) which could only be secured via credit; household and family relationships where credit use conveyed financial independence, (but frequently only on the basis of other forms of economic dependence), and the nature and organisation of the credit market. Only these latter two influences are discussed further in this paper.

The nature of the commercial credit market

The data already presented show that, in general, young people have relatively high levels of credit

commitment in relation to their incomes. As noted earlier there is a prevalent view that young people are at risk of 'overcommitment' and that this situation results from young people finding the marketing of credit persuasive, if not irresistible, coupled with the lack of barriers to entry to the credit market. One consequence of these supply related pressures is argued to be default. However, where default does occur, it cannot be assumed that 'overcommitment', rooted in too lax a credit market, is necessarily the cause, without first considering the reasons why people took up credit and in particular the interaction between the credit market and the decisions made by young adults. Default may also result where those managing their commitments without difficulty suddenly lose income or face a substantial rise in costs.

Issues pertaining to the impact of the credit market were discussed with respondents who were asked in some detail about the availability of credit in general, their attitudes towards aspects of the credit process, their knowledge and involvement with the credit market, the credit offers they had received, and their responses.

The respondents perceived the credit market as highly accessible, a view continually reinforced by their receipt of unsolicited offers. Only 11 of the 60 interviewed during the first round of interviews had never been offered credit and over half had received at least two unsolicited offers. Thus exposure to the availability of credit through the unsolicited offer process was widespread. Table 4 indicates the numbers and sources of offers received up to the time of the first interview. The number of offers accepted are also shown.

TABLE 4

Credit offers

Type of Credit offered	No. of offers*	No. of offers taken up	%
Bank loan	21	0	0
Finance house loan	4	0	0
Bank overdraft	2	1	50
Credit card	15	7	47
Store card	16	5	31
Mail order	25	12	48
Informal loan	14	13	93
	97	38	

*to 49 respondents

As can be seen from Table 4, there is no direct relationship between the numbers of unsolicited offers and credit take up. Rather, as the qualitative data show, the social context of the offer is an important

factor in the response made. Offers made by post are an irritant rather than a direct pressure, while offers made in person, as is typically the case with store cards and bank overdrafts, do exert direct pressure and can be difficult to reject. However, it was not just the extent to which offers were made by post or in person that was important. Two other aspects of the supply process noted by young people were the tendency by creditors to raise/offer credit limits above those requested, and the impact of 'packaged' services. Here, for example, an interest bearing current account automatically carried with it an overdraft facility and a credit card. The extracts from the interviews provided below illustrate some aspects of the supply process and the young adults' responses.

> ... the finance company that lent me the money for the car that I'm paying them back for, they're the ones sending me letters. I received one the other day saying I could have a loan from £3000 to £7000.

> Hundreds of letters asking me if I want to take out loans and special offers ... I never bother to look at them.

> I only wanted an interest paying current account, but an overdraft and a credit card came with it. But I've put the card away and don't intend to use it.

> I was quite often approached in shops. I often felt embarrassed and uneasy about it. I wanted to say 'no' but I usually said I would think about it. I don't think stores should be allowed to approach ... they could put up a poster and then if you wanted you could ask.

> I went to the bank manager to query my account because I thought I had more in it. He suggested I get a £100 overdraft but I said no, £50 would be enough. He said it can always be extended by £10 or more a month, but I had no intention of doing that ... straight away they charged me £10 on my account because of the overdraft.

> I've got an overdraft of £100 ... they've just given me it automatically.

In a final illustration, the respondent talked about shopping and the offers and approaches made to her in stores. The interviewer asked 'Do you think if you had wanted to you could have said no?' and the respondent replied 'Yes, but I don't like doing that. I feel really sort of intimidated by them.'

Overall, two thirds of respondents said that they felt credit was forced upon people (in general), but under a third reported that they personally felt pressurised into accepting the offers. Credit marketing did, however, in a majority of cases, create a view of credit use and access to credit as routine and unproblematic. Most respondents felt that if they wanted credit, for whatever reason, that it could be obtained, and would involve minimal, if any, credit screening, and this assessment was borne out in most of the cases where respondents sought credit (rather than responded to an offer).

> ... it was just a case of I was 18 and it was there, no problems if I wanted it.

> I saw the ads and rang up ... it was as simple as that.

> They didn't even ask me if I was 18 and like the lady who came round (a catalogue representative) she didn't ask me if I'd got a job.

> I basically went in there (a bank) and said to him I'm a bit short with it being Christmas. That's all I said and he just scribbled my name down and said, yes no problem and that was it.

> You actually tell them you're unemployed and everything and they keep sending them (catalogues) so its their fault as much as anyone else's.

Only one respondent reported that they had applied for credit and had their application turned down.

Thus, credit was easily available and frequently offered. The response was infrequently a direct or immediate one, but credit marketing created a view that access was easy and this belief was rarely challenged by events, even where respondents indicated that they might have expected some hesitation on the part of the creditor. The market was viewed as lax, and respondents had little doubt that should they want credit, it could be obtained. The data indicated that it was face to face marketing, rather than marketing per se that most directly encouraged respondents to take up credit and some evidence that at least in a minority of cases the marketing was successful.

The findings, however, raise more complex issues. On the one hand the data do not support the idea of users as 'compliant consumers' or 'passive victims'. Offers are not automatically accepted, rather there is considerable evidence that, at a time of their own choosing, borrowers take the initiative in seeking credit (albeit against a background of credit marketing). In the majority of cases there was a process of assessment and there was evidence of some young people deciding against using an available line of credit or determining their level of credit use as below that offered by the creditor. On the other hand, despite the assessment made, the impact of constant advertisements, offers and potentially easy access may have encouraged a greater level of use than would otherwise have pertained.

Further, while the majority of young adults responded in the relatively low key ways described above, there were some exceptions that formed two interesting groups. Five respondents explicitly rejected any involvement with the use of credit both currently, and, they believed, in the future. However, only one opposed credit on principle ('I believe you should only spend what you've got'). The other four rejected its use either because they doubted their own ability to control the process, or they had become cautious after seeing friends either experience difficulties or simply regret the purchase.

I wouldn't trust myself. I would buy things for the sake of it.

I don't want anything to do with it after the problems my brother had with it. I see red lights and warning bells.

Well ... I've got mates with cards who buy stuff and then regret it.

These responses support both the argument about the power and persuasiveness of the market but also the importance of not assuming a passive clientele. They highlight a clear interaction and assessment process that produces a particular outcome.

The second, more extreme response involved a small group who found the credit market enticing and irresistible (or had done so in the recent past) and who tended towards continually renewing and increasing their use of credit. Sometimes credit was valued for its own sake, with the actual goods purchased of secondary importance.

... it looks good to have one (a credit card) in your purse and be able to just go in and pay for something. To me then it seemed like some sort of status symbol, but now that seems really silly.

... to sort of be able - I mean to me its something you always dream about to be able to go into a shop and pretend to be rich, to hand over a card and say put it on that.

it was just a case of order it (the card) and then flash it around the house.

These responses indicate that a potential motive for credit use amongst young people is the acquisition of status and prestige. This, however, depends upon a broader consensus to that effect which is not borne out by the data. Under a fifth of respondents agreed with the view that people seemed more important when they used credit. Nevertheless, such processes may be important amongst certain subgroups and at certain stages of credit use as suggested by the first quotation in the section above.

In other cases of extensive use, the goods were central and credit the means to secure them. Here it was typically store cards that were used and the goods purchased were clothes.

It was exciting, I could walk into any shop and have these things and it wouldn't cost me a penny, well that's the way I sort of looked at it.

Well I'll tell you, there are several things I want. I'm very fed up that I'm at my limit!

The data presented to date are interesting in showing the range of responses to credit marketing, and thereby challenge some of the more simplistic assertions about the reasons for credit use. However, further aspects of the market need to be considered, aspects such as cost, risk and repayment schedules. These aspects are ones young adults have to learn about, and the process of credit socialisation is the focus of the next section.

Credit socialisation

Credit is a form of financial transaction that requires a set of knowledge and skills entirely different from those needed in a cash based economy. The time horizon for payments can be a long one, borrowers

have to judge their likely financial stability over that period, money is 'spoken for' in advance of each income receipt and so cash is more limited. In addition, the use of most forms of commercial credit imposes costs and conditions that include an ultimate legal sanction. A central question is how novice credit users access and develop the requisite skills and knowledge to use credit?

The official framework regulating credit places considerable emphasis on the annual percentage rate (APR) as the means by which borrowers are able to assess the costs of credit and compare the costs of different credit offers. An assumed spin-off is the increased competitiveness of the credit market as borrowers shop around, and so a reduction in the likelihood of costly or extortionate credit. This form of regulation assumes that borrowers understand the information provided, and use it to make rational decisions about credit use. Some doubt about these assumptions has already been expressed (PAS, 1987), particularly with regard to young people who have been shown to be amongst the least knowledgeable about credit. Little attention, however, has been paid to the other aspects of credit use that have to be learned.

The interviews with young adults asked a series of questions in this general area. For example, what information did they seek about credit, were they aware of the costs involved, were several alternative possibilities considered, what sort of advice was sought (if any) and who from?

The evidence indicated that only a small minority of the young adults interviewed had considered costs or conditions in the credit market. Further, only a minority had sought any information or advice before entering a specific credit agreement. Clearly the structure and circumstances of the offer are important, and so the absence of research may be relatively unsurprising in cases of impulsive credit use (for example, with store cards), but the finding holds more generally.

Costs of credit

Most of the informal loans taken by the young adults studied were interest free. Similarly, catalogue credit is viewed as interest free, although the charges are incorporated in the basic cost of the goods offered for sale. Out of the remaining 52 commercial credit agreements entered, in only 6 cases had the borrower sought any information about the rates charged, or

attempted to make comparisons with the costs of other forms of credit. In the remaining 46 cases the borrower either had no idea what they were being charged or only found out by accident and after having entered the agreement.

> *in fact, I didn't know how much the interest was until my Mum found it out and pointed it out to me. I was just paying off £10 every month. She said 'look how much interest your paying, its not making it go down' which it wasn't ...*

> *I thought if you took £620 then that's all you paid. I didn't realise that I'd end up paying over £1000.*

In another case the interviewer asked:

> *How much did you know about the overdraft when you took it out?*

The respondent said:

> *Well, I knew obviously there was a date set for it to be paid, and it comes out of your following pay ... I never really looked into it. As far as I could see it was just £50 that was going to be there. I thought you'd got to pay that back ... I was more interested in getting the money.*

Discussing credit and seeking advice

None of the respondents could recall credit and debt being topics that were considered at school or college. Few respondents said that they ever talked about credit with their friends. As we have already seen, few young adults had any information from creditors (over and above their legal requirements to publish certain details). Any information or advice therefore came mainly from parents. With regard to formal commercial credit only a fifth of respondents talked about their intention to use credit with anyone, and in a proportion of these cases the discussion was principally about the goods to be purchased not the method of purchase. In the minority of cases where the topic was discussed, there was often an attempt by parents to dissuade the young adult from the credit, or in a few cases, to divert them from commercial credit by offering to substitute an informal loan for the bank or finance house loan.

Informal credit and catalogue credit were rather

different as both types of transaction were more closely integrated into the household's everyday life. However, here, discussions about the desirability and quality of the goods were more frequent than discussions of how appropriate, costly or manageable the financial commitments were.

Most frequently, information and advice were not sought because they were not felt or recognised to be necessary. Two other reasons that might explain the failure to seek advice and information were, however, highlighted by the qualitative data. One concerned the way in which credit transactions were part of a process of establishing and demonstrating financial independence, while the other (sometimes related) was an awareness that the use of credit would not necessarily be approved of by their parent(s). Both issues point to the way in which an understanding of credit use might be enhanced by being situated within the social and economic context of the user.

Young adults of 18 and 19 have been described by a number of writers as occupying a 'transitional status'. Legally adult, often with an independent social life, they may nevertheless not have access to a level of economic opportunities and resources that allows them to attain other aspects of adulthood. These might include establishing themselves as independent households, or, particularly relevant in the context of this paper, as independent actors in the consumer market (Willis, 1984; Hutson and Jenkins, 1989). The economic context for young adults in general has been increasingly difficult throughout the 1980s as a series of labour market policies and social security policies have eroded the level of, and eligibility for financial resources (Junakar,1987) Rates of unemployment amongst young adults have been above the average, and training opportunities have been limited and often poorly rewarded. The social security system now assumes that young people (up to the age of 25) will remain within the parental home in varying degrees of dependence (Jones, 1991). As a consequence of these processes, young adults may have limited cash resources to fund their consumption requirements. They may remain dependent (in part if not in whole) on parents and other kin for a wide range of goods and particularly for larger purchases and unanticipated needs. As will be suggested below, these ideas associated with dependence, independence and the transition to adulthood are constructive in the context of considering young adults' credit use, and particularly the ways in which young adults are socialised to credit use.

Credit is one way to manage a low income, as suggested by the terms 'credit for improvement' and 'credit in adversity' (Crowther Committee). Young adults may take credit as one of the few ways open to them to consume when unemployed or on a very low income, and this was the case amongst a number of respondents in the study reported here. Equally important however, is the recognition that credit agreements - at least within the commercial sector - have as one of their hallmarks 'independence'. Young adults who in any of a number of ways may still be dependents within the parental household (for example not paying full costs) may nevertheless be able to establish a credit agreement as though they were fully independent. Individuals negotiate the agreement with creditors, the relationship can remain private and unknown to others, and the individual has full responsibility. There are clear parallels between this discussion and that offered by Hutson and Jenkins (1989) with regard to the concepts of independence and responsibility and social security payments. They describe these payments as '...wholly independent, in the first instance, of mediation by parents or other adult representatives. It (claiming) is something which young people have to do for themselves. And the money...is their money'. They also comment that because the money belongs to the young person 'they can, within limits, dispose of it as they see fit'. Thus, at least for a period of time, and at a certain level, credit use may be encouraged by, co-exist with, and mask a wider economic dependence.

The transitional dependent context, however, may also heighten the young adults awareness of parental attitudes towards credit use and concerns about debt, creating some tension between their intention to use credit and the ability to seek advice and information. The material presented below illustrates some of these ideas.

I could have gone to my dad ... but I prefer to go to the bank ... It gives me more privacy.

I don't like owing me dad.

She'd have gone mad if she'd have found out about Access.

It was in the papers or on the news. They were talking about how easy it was to go round shops and get cards ... Mum mentioned something about it and I thought ... don't say anything, ... so I just kept my mouth shut.

In one instance where a respondent had sought advice, he commented

> *I talked to the men at work. They gave me lots of advice where to go for a loan, and about interest rates. I also got loads of leaflets and really researched into it.*

Interviewer:

> *Did you discuss it with your parents?*

Respondent:

> *No, In fact, I knew my parents would disapprove.*

Thus, to summarise, credit use was valued as a source of financial independence, but the costs and conditions attached to credit were poorly understood amongst the majority of borrowers who either chose not to seek advice (often knowing that their actions would not be supported) or had no means of recognising that there were questions to ask. There was a failure on the part of most users to recognise the true costs involved in credit agreements, or to seek advice or to research and select the 'best' credit source. There was little evidence that in the early stages of credit use these costs and conditions operated as constraints, and although the lack of assessment did not necessarily lead to default, it had implications for the initial experience of credit use.

'Managing' credit

In the majority of cases learning to use credit was a 'hands on' process whereby users only gradually came to realise the implications of credit use and the level of commitment they could or wanted to sustain. Only a few respondents could be said to have 'managed' their credit initially, if by that term is meant having clear objectives, an assessment of the options, and making informed decisions about a level of commitment they could sustain. This small group is not considered further here. For most respondents, however, a pattern of use 'emerged' or 'gradually dawned' in response to a number of tensions and some disillusionment.

Respondents identified a number of issues they had to come to terms with concerning credit per se and the circumstances under which credit use could be sustained. These included, the realisation that credit commitments resulted in a reduced 'available' income

each week/month and so potentially some curtailment of other social activities; decreasing enthusiasm for the goods (before they were paid for); higher than expected costs and fluctuating income. For low income respondents, while their low income had often been the reason for their attraction to credit, credit in turn reduced further their financial flexibility. In the majority of cases, as borrowers came to have a clearer recognition of the implications of credit for their budgets, the pattern of use began to shift from limited control and re-action to greater control and pro-action. Where default occurred, this process was speeded up. Thus, one consequence of the early enthusiasm of most young adults for credit, and its tendency to escalate, was a period of more limited use and retrenchment. It is this, in part, that explains the move, at an individual level, to a more intermittent pattern of use and, for example, the drop out rate from store cards and credit cards.

The extent and impact of default

The study showed a substantial level of default amongst the young adults studied. Over a third were in default at the time of the first interview, and over 40% of respondents had defaulted on at least one payment at some point.

The focus of this paper does not require a full discussion of default, but at a minimum the meaning given to the term needs to be clear. It includes any situation where an expected payment is missed, whether this is on commercial or informal credit agreements, and irrespective of the consequences (for example, on some informal loans from parents the response to a missed payment was to 'forget it').

Respondents had defaulted on 1 in 5 of the informal and mail order agreements (the majority of credit agreements). The use of commercial credit was less widespread, but was associated with a higher percentage incidence of default particularly on store cards, credit cards and bank overdrafts. As before, it is necessary to be cautious in comparing the level of default amongst the 18 and 19 year olds studied here and other groups, but it does appear as though the early credit users exhibit substantially higher rates of default.

Those respondents with the highest incomes were the least likely to experience default, irrespective of the level of their commitments in relation to income. Amongst the higher earners, whose credit agreements were amongst the largest, and typically in the form of

bank loans, usually borrowed to fund the purchase of a car or other capital equipment, there was little or no default. Default however, was widespread amongst those with lower incomes (the majority of respondents), but two different patterns were identif -iable. First, amongst the majority of credit users, typically with limited sums outstanding, (mainly mail order and informal credit), and moderate to low incomes, default typically resulted from labour market disruption or some additional, unexpected call on their already limited resources. In the case of the majority there was little evidence of overcommitment, although it was not entirely absent. Most people, however, had paid their commitments while their income remained stable.

It was amongst a small group of around 10% of respondents that default stemming from overcom- mitment was concentrated. This group had incomes close to the majority group but extensive credit and so a much higher percentage of income committed to repayments. Amongst this group were those impulsive users who often responded most readily to the marketing pressures from commercial credit. This small group defaulted even while in employment, principally on store cards, credit cards, and overdrafts.

Conclusion and Discussion

The material presented in this paper offers broad support for a number of the views expressed in the introduction. In particular, the data support the suggestions that young adults are enthusiastic users of credit, have limited knowledge of the costs and conditions of credit use, are actively targeted by the credit market and experience a relatively high incidence of default

Other suggestions and beliefs are, however, either less well supported, or argued to be more complex than typically portrayed. For example, the view of young users as automatically responsive to credit offers can be contrasted with the evidence that credit offers were rejected and that a majority of young adults did assess the credit market in a critical way. Only a small minority were willing to make use of every opportunity available to them. Similarly, the suggestion that default is most closely associated with overcommitment is not supported by the findings of this study, although this is the explanation in a minority of cases.

In addition, the data presented indicate that an understanding of young adults' take up and use of credit is enhanced by recognising that market

processes and pressures form one part of the social and economic context of young adults. Other aspects of their environment also act as an impetus to credit use and influence the knowledge they have about the credit process. This analysis remains at a preliminary stage but attention was drawn in particular to the relatively low level of economic resources available to young people, and the way in which credit agreements offered a means of managing the tensions between their desire for financial independence, their limited resources, and their continuing dependence upon the parental household. However, the very independence offered by credit resulted in most young adults being reluctant to discuss its use, costs and implications with parent(s), preferring to retain this area as one of independent activity. This reluctance was reinforced by the young adults' assessment that their actions would not always be endorsed. These processes contribute to the continuing low levels of knowledge about the costs and conditions of credit arrangements found amongst respondents.

The study therefore provides evidence of the need to continue the policy initiatives already in train to increase young adults' awareness of the costs and conditions of credit use, but argues for an expansion in the content of the initiatives. In particular, an important area for further information concerns the notion of risk, and the concept of credit as an ongoing commitment. These considerations need to be more closely linked not just with young adults current labour market position but with the likely stability of employment.

The study also indicates that in the continuing absence of informal channels of information (family, friends), formal channels of communication such as the education system and the media remain important and crucial. However, creditors also have the potential to become a more important source of information and influence than is currently the case. Young adults remain critical of the credit industry, (while making use of its products) and a number adopt the view that if creditors fail to exercise due caution then any resulting problems are, at least in part, the lenders' responsibility. This suggests that young people would, in general, respond positively to creditors engaging in more pro-active strategies to inform, interview and screen applicants. Young adults would be likely to welcome the opportunity to discuss their income and expenditure profile along with the costs of credit, the repayment period and potential areas of risk. Creditors establishing practices of this kind are unlikely to be seen as erecting unneccesary obstacles but rather as acting in a 'responsible' manner.

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│         SEND REMITTANCE WITH ALL ORDERS                    │
│   MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO YOUTH AND POLICY                 │
│     TICK BOX IF YOU REQUIRE A RECEIPT  ❑                   │
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The pitfall of treating young people as a homogenous group, the need to challenge stereotypes of 'youth' and the importance both of listening to young people and of giving them access to information, so that they can make their own choices, were all points to emerge loud and strong during a weekend seminar organised by the National Council of YMCAs in November 1991.

The YMCA Movement in this country is currently the largest voluntary provider of low-cost housing for single people, runs some 20 training programmes for young people, specialising in training for those with special needs, and operates several detached youth work schemes. To find out if youth work in this country, and particularly the YMCA's work, is going in the right direction, the seminar gathered together 26 researchers, policy-makers and practitioners with expertise in the fields of youth work and research relating to young people. Nine presentations were given, followed by question and answer sessions. Smaller groups then discussed the implications for youth work generally and, specifically, the YMCA. The seminar was chaired by Sir Harold Haywood, Chairman of the National Council of YMCAs, who has over forty years' youth work experience.

Jobs and Training

The scene was set by Dr Carol Ekin-Smythe, Research Fellow at the City University, working on BCS 70. This is a national cohort study, set up in 1970, focusing on the 17,198 children born in the week 5-11 April of that year. Information was gathered from the childrens' parents in 1970, and further extensive information was then collected in 1975, 1980 and 1986. One of the questions asked in the 1986 study, when the subjects were 16, was 'Once you need to get a job, how easy or difficult do you think this will be?' Overall, nearly three-quarters (71%) had replied 'very or fairly difficult', compared to just over one-fifth (21%) who had selected 'very or fairly easy'. The precentage considering it would be difficult rose to 80% of those in Scotland and 83% of those from the North of England. Dr Ekin-Smythe explained that these results showed that this generation was far more

pessimistic about its job prospects than the 16 year olds questioned in 1974 as part of an earlier national cohort study, and generally came across as far more serious minded and anxious to earn money as soon as possible.

Young people's concern over finding jobs was highlighed again the following day during a presentation on youth television by Kevin Lench, a programme researcher for Tyne Tees Television. Interviewing 13-15 year olds about what they would want any television programme made specifically for their age-group to include, he found that the most commonly given answer was 'information on job options'.

A presentation later that day by John Offord, Further Education and Training Researcher for the National Union of Students, gave some insight into the current climate of youth training. He argued that over the past 11 years, there has been a sea change in the notion of how post-compulsory education and training should be provided, with the sector being pushed into an entrepreneurial role, reliant on the market, rather than continuing as a service provider. This, he said, ran totally contrary to the NUS's call for choice, access and quality for young people entering post-compulsory education and training. John Offord pointed out both that the numbers of young people in the UK taking part in post-compulsory education and training were far lower than in most European countries, and that the quality of the training in the UK was also lower, with our trainees lacking transferable skills. He accused the new National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) of producing 'a semi-certificated underclass' and argued that we must see a return to education and training being a public service, if we are to meet the needs of our young people and to keep up with other European countries.

The presentation by Virginia Morrow, a Research Student at the University of Cambridge, shed light on why paid work is such a concern for many young people. Her research was focused on 760 eleven to sixteen year olds in Birmingham and Cambridgeshire

and what they do in their out-of-school hours. She showed how many of the young people she studied spoke of a lack of facilities and places to go for people of their age. A fifteen year old pupil in Cambridgeshire is typical of many when she says 'In the holidays I don't do a lot of things because everywhere is so boring when you haven't got no money'.

Young People as Consumers

Virginia Morrow argued that besides having 'nowhere to go and nothing to do', many of these young people had 'no-one to be', as the only meaningful role that teenagers can have in our society is as consumers. Without an income, teenagers have no meaningful role at all - hence the desire to get paid work. She also spoke of the Catch-22 situation many teenagers find themselves in, whereby society, fanned by the media, labels teenagers as trouble-makers. They are stuck with this label unless they prove themselves otherwise, yet very few young people have the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility.

Dr Paul Bellaby, a Senior Lecturer at the University of East Anglia, made it clear in his presentation, however, that the notion of excitement and risk-taking is very important for many young people. He focused on his research into young motorcyclists (aged 17-18 years) and argued that the stereotype of the young motorcyclist as a tearaway and at risk can be vindicated by research. For instance, 17-18 year old motorcyclists are five times more likely to be killed on their bikes than motorcyclists in their forties.

The role of young people as consumers was further explored in a joint presentation on youth television by Dr Maura Banim, Lecturer at Sunderland Polytechnic; Dr Alison Guy, Lecturer at Teesside Polytechnic and Kevin Lench (Tyne Tees Television). The three presenters argued that although youth television, which started in the mid-1970s, can be seen as a cynical attempt to exploit youth spending and boost ratings, it can also be seen as a very positive force which has done much to empower young people and to reflect their lives and concerns. As such, it can help youth workers to think about how best to communicate with and involve young people. Youth television started, Dr Banim explained, because sophisticated market research showed that 13-19 year olds were watching far less television than other age groups. Programme makers realised that if they were to capture these traditionally 'bad' viewers, they would have to make programmes which would reflect the young people's aspirations and their agenda. To

be successful, the programmes would need young presenters, with whom the target audience could identify, and would need to convey an ambience of being provocative, and sometimes shocking, to validate the young people's experience and to create tension with parents and authority. Serious issues could and should be tackled, but in an ambivalent, rather than censorious way. Youth television also typically promotes a relationship between the viewer and the programme. Viewers are encouraged to write, ring and get involved, and the desire to empower young people is a major feature of this genre.

Empowering young people can raise tensions for the 'professionals' explained Dr Guy. Those in power may feel that the young people, once let in, may take over, or get out of control. She argued, however, that there is never a finite amount of power and, by empowering young people, there is an increase in energy and power for all. Empowerment is best seen as a reciprocal partnership, with the adults offering their knowledge and skills and providing back-up, with the young people bringing their enthusiasm, ideas, fresh ways of looking at things and their commitment.

Although youth television is a growing phenomenon, Kevin Lench commented that it is interesting to note that more young people still watch 'Coronation Street' than any specially made youth programme. He explained that his work with 13-15 year olds had revealed that many of them watched soap operas to find out both what it is like to be an adult and to find out about other people's feelings. Their desire to know whether other people were experiencing the same emotions and problems as them was very strong and could explain why 'advice' followed 'information on job options' as something they would like included in any programme made specifically for their age group.

Young people as 'vulnerable'

The remaining presentations focused on young people in 'vulnerable' groups. Dr Alison James, Research Fellow at the South Bank Polytechnic, started by looking at those we define as 'vulnerable' and the negative effects such labelling can have. She said that our society sees those who are vulnerable as passive beings who have a weakness and therefore need to be protected. She considered whether labelling someone as vulnerable actually meant they started to see themselves in this way. If a 'tearaway' internalises this label, s/he may positively enjoy it, she argued,

whereas the label 'vulnerable' is far more negative. Dr James said that our images of vulnerability are closely tied in with our images of the child, as an innocent, weak being, who is vulnerable to abuse and in need of protection, and, significantly, dependent on adults. She argued that in our culture there is no notion of interdependence or semi-independence - one is either dependent or non-dependent, with no half-way house. This, she said, had implications for youth workers; young people are between childhood and adulthood; between dependence and independence and so between being vulnerable and non-vulnerability. Young people themselves reject the idea of being treated like a child, yet are so often seen as being vulnerable, in just the same way as is a child.

Roger Lewis, the HIV/AIDS and Drugs Team Manager for the Lothian Health Board, then spoke about young people, experimental drug use and HIV. He explained how and why Edinburgh has a particularly high rate of HIV infection and focused in his presentation on work going on in the city to limit transmission of the virus. He said that the 'campaign tactic' being used was to encourage people to change their behaviour by giving them more knowledge, and so help them to reduce risks. Drug users, for example, were given information on how to clean their equipment; the role of bleach-rinsing and the danger of sharing equipment. Roger Lewis said that to reach young people it was important to treat the subject factually, but without scaring them. He also spoke of the important role detached youth workers and comics, such as the Manchester produced 'Smack in the Eye', have in reaching young people and increasing their awareness of HIV infection.

Dr Michael Little, Research Fellow at the Dartington Social Research Unit, University of Bristol, also spoke about another group of young people, often considered 'vulnerable' - those leaving local authority care. The research he presented showed that 86% of children who come into local authority care do go back to live with their parents. In view of this, he argued, it is essential to keep in touch with the family while the child is in care. He said that for 16-17 year olds leaving care who do not return to their families, the options for 'independent living' tend to be squats, bedsits, staying with friends, hostels or homelessness, with the young people moving frequently from one place to another. Consequently, they find it hard to get work, difficult to continue their education and more open to offending. Dr Little stressed the importance of finding individual solutions for young people leaving care and also of the need very often to offer different options until the right one is found.

The final presentation, by Dr Paul Burton, Rearch Fellow at the School for Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol, looked at young people growing up and leaving home in Europe, based on research he carried out in the late 1980s. He said that homelessness, however defined, is growing and is becoming an increasingly problematic issue in every European country. Young people find it hard to enter the housing market because of the lack of effective purchasing power and owner-occupation becoming increasingly expensive. At the same time, the gentrification of inner-city areas is adversely affecting the less well-off, as is the reduction of the stock of social housing in many European countries. Dr Burton argued that the legitimacy of young people's housing needs is not generally recognised. There is a deep-seated view, he claimed, that if a young person leaves the parental home and gets into difficulty, then it is his or her own fault for leaving home too early. Although youth housing projects do exist, they tend to concentrate on providing emergency provision. He predicted that the situation of homeless young people in Europe will get worse in the future and that there will be an increasing intolerance throughout Europe of the victims of homelessness and housing stress.

In the light of these presentations, the delegates discussed the implications for all involved in youth work and, specifically, the YMCA. The full conference report can be obtained from the YMCA.

CLASSIC TEXTS REVISITED

and

Appreciation of Bryan Reed

Eighty Thousand Adolescents

JOHN PARR

The Reverend Bryan Reed died on December 23rd 1991, one month short of his eighty sixth birthday. I bless the day I met him when he came to preach at the Sunday School Anniversary at my home church in 1949. I was completing a course in Social Science at Liverpool University. My vocation, to work with young people, was determined but he gave me direction by pointing me to Westhill College where he was Youth Tutor from 1946-1952.

His youth work knowledge and expertise came from his experience, practice and imaginative study. He was a Methodist Minister. In his ministry at Walthamstow in the 1930s he founded the first Methodist Church Club and later in the 1950s as General Secretary of the (then) Methodist Youth Department, he stimulated members of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs to raise a million half crowns in order to build a new headquarters to house the department at Muswell Hill. He was a champion of young people.

Bryan Reed, apart from these specialised appointments, worked in Methodist circuits with people, young and old, exercising his group and pastoral skills in a manner much appreciated by those he served. Even in retirement he and his wife, Connie, responded to an invitation from the American churches in New Hampshire where he ministered for some years.

He was a tall man, in more ways than one most looked up to him. He was slim and never seemed to change his appearance throughout his life. Some might have found him difficult to approach because he was a private person but he took initiatives of love to make relationships. To many including his students, most of whom, in the immediate post-war years, were very mature men and women, he was an inspiration as to how to foster and develop relationships and to create and manage the structures in which they could prosper.

During his Westhill days on personal journeys of distance, he hitch hiked. He never seemed to be left stranded even when he wore a dog collar.

He engaged in research in religious and Christian education usually resulting in informative conferences organised at Westhill and occasionally in published form. However, the most enduring symbol of his scholarship was the book *Eighty Thousand Adolescents* published in 1950.

It was the result of two years research conducted between 1947 and 1949 commissioned by The Trustees of the Edward Cadbury Trust and conducted under Bryan Reed's direction by the staff and students of Westhill Training College as it then was.

It will be noted that this was the immediate post war period. At the commencement of the research the *Service of Youth* (Circular 1486, 1930) was barely eight years of age. Established to relieve the effects of war on adolescents, it was then seeking to transfer its ethos and activity to the demands of peace time. The 1944 Education Act, particularly the clauses concerning 'leisure time' education had not been fully implemented. The inspiration behind the project was most timely.

The research studied the lifestyle of young people aged 14-20 in Birmingham and posed the question as to how successfully the Youth Service met these needs. The estimated number of adolescents in the city was eighty thousand and a sample of one thousand and four was used for the analysis of this lifestyle. Conclusions about the effectiveness of the Youth Service were based on a study of some three hundred and twenty one separate youth units representing the estimated one thousand three hundred and eighty five units in Birmingham. The publication of the book caused a furore both in the Youth Service and across the country. It received wide publicity and comment. No less than one hundred and forty two newspapers and journals reported it and or carried comment including The Times, Telegraph, Mirror and two women's magazines. It figured in at least two radio broadcasts and one television programme. It was noted internationally by the New York Herald Tribune, in New Orleans, Canada, Australia and South Africa.

It is not difficult to understand this reaction. Would publications about youth work create similar reactions today! In the late forties there was little substantial published at all. Macalister - Brew, Henriques, Edwards-Rees, Jephcott and few others had written text books on the subject. L.J. Barnes had published two research reports on the Youth Service in Nottinghamshire but they had limited circulation. *Eighty Thousand Adolescents* hit the headlines. It was thorough and detailed raising youth work issues for discussion and resolution.

Based on this evidence, Bryan Reed reported that just over half the boys and about one third of the girls belonged to some youth organisation or other.

He concluded that for these the Youth Service was undoubtedly making a real contribution to the physical development of its members but it could not be claimed that the Service was contributing as effectively to their development in other directions. Further, youth organisations were failing to retain their members through their adolescence. The member -ship tended to be aged 15 to 17 but some 20% of boys and girls were still members at 19. There were several criticisms of the Youth Service but expressed in a constructive and challenging manner. The sense of vocation of youth workers was not in doubt but, with wide exceptions the quality of the leadership was troubling. The workforce needed better training and a sense of direction. Education for democracy, it was thought, should be the central philosophy and objective for youth organisations. The conclusions, criticisms and suggestions were based on evidence gathered for the study and aimed at the Birmingham situation but were generally accepted as applicable to all parts of the country and received their fair share of publicity.

However, it was the 45% of boys and 66% of girls who were 'unattached' which mostly impressed the press and public causing hectic controversy. Of these, some were at school, attended evening institutes or other 'approved activity' but a large proportion were outside any educational provision. Not, suggests the report, that they were vicious or anti-social but that their lives were so dreadfully empty and dull. Rightly, asked the critics, by who's standards and values?

Much of the criticism from the press etc. was aimed at the education service as a low literacy level was revealed by some of the respondents. Of course, the school experiences of the sample had been disrupted not only by the war years but, for many, by the education provided during the depression of the thirties. Except for a selected few in Grammar schools it was administered in Elementary schools with a school leaving age of fourteen. Perhaps in view of present day criticisms, the explanation is deeper than this. As can be imagined, Education Committee Councillors and officials were quick to justify their position.

Bryan Reed was particularly concerned, as befits a Minister at Westhill, a Free Church Foundation, about the church interests of young people. About one third attended with some regularity. In the concluding chapter (which was reprinted by NYB in 1986) on *The Purpose of Youth Work* he wove in a need for religious and spiritual experience.

Eighty Thousand Adolescents deserves study today not just because of its historical relevance, but it set a pattern for subsequent reports and projects. The book was well produced with photographs, helpful tables, diagrams and graphs. The statistical data could have been more sophisticated and additional questions might have been asked but the results are clearly communicated. The project demonstrated the value of students taking part in surveys as part of their training. Although one or two learned journals looked on this with horror querying the authenticity of the results. Some readers may feel they have seen this film several times since.

Bryan Reed, by this work we remember him.

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REVIEWS

REVIEWS IN THIS ISSUE

Patricia Noller and Victor Callan
THE ADOLESCENT
IN THE FAMILY
Routledge 1991
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Bob Franklin and Nigel Parton (Eds)
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PUBLIC RELATIONS
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Deanna Robinson, Elizabeth Buch and
Marlene Cuthbert
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Allatt, P. & Yeandle, S.
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Routledge 1992
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£35.00 (Hbk)
190pp

Noller, P. and Callan,V.
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This book is part of a series on Adolescence and Society which aims to make accessible to a wide readership the growing evidence on adolescent development that is being published in relatively inaccessible professional journals. Most of the research summarised and reviewed has been written in the 1970s and 1980s - with the exception of some key studies in the late 50s and 60s - for example Erikson E.H. - 1959, Childhood and Society. It is a comprehensive and authoritative review of the research literature and certainly meets the intention of the authors to publish a relatively short, clear and very readable book on the subject. But how much use is it?

It is not a text book in the conventional sense, nor does it contain original material. Many of the quotations are very short and generalised, completely removed from the context and details of the original research work. What for example does 'good communication in the family' actually mean? What is a 'warm and positive relationship' with a mother who is 'psychologically stable and conventional?' We may all *think* we know, but there are no quantitative and qualitative details to help show us our position on the scale.

Terms often remain undefined or are used differently even in the same section of the book. For example - 'adolescence' at times seems to include 18+ undergraduates, senior high school students and those experiencing puberty. This may be due to the extraordinarily wide definition of adolescence provided at the beginning of the book which refers to 'the time between ones childhood and adulthood beginning with the physical and emotional changes characteristic of puberty - with the end being less clearly specified - by such events as 'leaving home, beginning a career or getting married.' It is not until p54 that the more familiar stages of early, mid and late adolescence are discussed. The general impression is that researchers are almost totally unconcerned with early adolescence preferring to concentrate on the 15 - 19 year olds.

Those who have been involved in the hard end of youth and social work for many years may find some difficulty, at least in the first half of the book, of identifying with the very middle class lifestyles and backgrounds of adolescents described, compared to their multi-disadvantaged clientele. There is a tendency for the research quoted to be about 'normal nice adolescents from nice families' - perhaps on reflection, not too dissimilar from the recent Gallup Polls and Opinion Surveys showing that most teenagers today are a fairly conventional lot, happy to stay at home with their parents and regarding them as their best friends.

To be fair, the book does state that it deals predominantly with 'normal' development and 'the role that a supportive family can play in helping adolescents cope with the physical and emotional changes associated with this period of their lives'.

Many of the examples of research presented in the first half of the book are concerned with the lives of middle class adolescents. Key clues are found in reference to 'Career goals, Higher Education, decision making, sharing homes with friends, pressure to train in Pharmacy, attitudes to changing sex roles, participation in household chores, parental opinions on political issues such as conservation, farm subsidies and nuclear power. One reference to families from ethnic minorities appears later as do references to the effects of unemployment, being thrown out or leaving home early and some material to do with drug taking. Readers whose studies on adolescence in the past, generally included something on 'storm and stress' (and dare one say it, even anthropological details of remote tribes where adolescence is an unknown phenomenon) may wonder what happened to all this 'old hat' research. Although there is a reference in the preface to the 'storm and stress' interpretation of adolescence, in which the family was believed to play little part in the lives of adolescents who defected to their peer groups, there is no discussion of the historical context in which this set of beliefs took place, or when they changed. Were the early researchers wrong or was there a huge generation gap between pre war and post war generations due to a particular set of social circumstances? Are adolescents and parents actually having to get on better with each other because of the ever-growing period of economic dependence that extended education has come to mean?

There is a very interesting section on 'Methodological issues in studying adolescents' which concludes, perhaps not surprisingly, 'that all methodologies have various advantages and disadvantages and that the choice of method depends on the research question being explored'. The

methods listed include - self report methods, insider or outsider views with research tasks involving the whole family and resulting problems of the subject's awareness of emotional reactions and attitudes and willingness to report these accurately; observational methods includ -ing use of video with resulting problems concerning the accuracy of judging interactions lasting only a short time; diaries of conversations; phone calls requesting details of arguments and conversations over the previous 24 hour period.

Other problems include using psycholog -ical instruments which deal with the concepts more familiar to the middle classes, using language more applicable to them, using middle class interviewers who interpret differently working class behaviour. For example, research shows working class mothers claim to be more affectionate than middle class ones, but the researchers judged the opposite. Research is also lacking in many areas and there are problems of drawing conclusions from limited studies. Many divorce studies for example fail to take into account the differences in income, family support, workforce involvement of mothers, and socioeconomic status, and differences soon diminish when these are taken into account. Little if any research has been undertaken, on sibling aggression which is widespread and on the way adolescent behaviour actually impacts on the family and elicits different responses from parents. Most research has centred on how different types of family environments have different impacts on adolescent development.

It is interesting to read that adolescents view the family more negatively than other family members when responding to the same report inventories - the explanation being that parents have a large investment in their children and need to see the family positively, and adolescents who are beginning to distance themselves from the family, see it in a more negative light. After all this, it seems a little fatuous to come up with the obvious research problem - that 'it is very important for the researcher to show a real interest in the adolescents, their attitudes and opinions'.

Subsequent chapters of the book cover the Generation Gap, Communication in Families with Adolescents, Family Environments and Adolescent Develop-ment, Leaving the Family, Separation, Divorce, and re-marriage, the Family and Adolescent issues. There is a wealth of snippets of information on all these topics, some of which are selected out below:

1. Adolescence involves a period of renegotiation and a gradual change in the parent/adolescent relationship with gradual independence but the wish to

maintain a close working and life long relationship with parents.

2. Adolescence is a stressful period for parents and families. Marital and family satisfaction, family pride and family cohesion tend to be low and levels of family stress high.

3. Adolescents of all ages believe that compared with fathers, mothers talk more frequently to them, disclose more and are more willing to listen to their point of view. Daughters report stronger relationships with mothers than fathers. Mothers are more interested in the day to day problems of their teenagers and they are better at negotiating agreements with their children.

4. Fathers are seen as more judge-mental, less willing to be involved on important discussions of feeling, self doubts and problems - and more likely to try to impose their authority.

5. Very little communication about sex seems to occur even though parents and adolescents want to talk more about the subject.

6. Arguments between parents and children in the 70s and 80s seem to be mainly over the same issues argued about in the 1920s.

7. Mothers and Fathers differ in the behaviour they see as unacceptable in children. Where parent/adolescent communication consists mainly of criticism the adolescent develops a negative self image which leads to more negative behaviour and more criticism and rejection from parents - a vicious circle is set up which is difficult to change.

8. Mothers are more positive to sons when the father is present whilst fathers are more positive with sons on their own. There is no similar effect with daughters.

9. Parents who have positive relation-ships with their children can remain more influential than the peer group through adolescence; if adolescents are not given love and support or they are thrown out of home, they are more susceptible to the influences of the peer group and more likely to engage in problem bhaviour.

10. Families that are too authoritarian or too permissive are most likely to have adolescents with problem behaviour.

11. Drinking and smoking by adolescents is affected by the drinking and smoking habits of their parents.

12. Roles and rules need to be consistent, but be open to negotiation with parents to accommodate changes in age and circumstances.

It is these little gems which make the book interesting and very readable. Certainly people with an interest in the subject of adolescence would gain something from the book and it could be useful background reading for youth and social workers. How useful it would be at undergraduate level is perhaps less certain.

One thought remains - why is adolescence still picked out as the most fundamental staging post in terms of human adjustment and change than other life stages which may be equally traumatic and even more disruptive to individuals and families rarely mentioned? Many of these characteristics so readily associated with adolescents are also equally true of many adults. To quote, 'Adolescents can also be unpredictable so that within minutes they change from mature and adult like behaviour to throwing children temper tantrums. Parents find such unpredictability and moodiness very difficult to handle. Quite - but such behaviour is also found in adults - at work and home the situation can be 'difficult to handle too!'.

Janet Watson

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The price of a free press, someone once remarked, is that no one can say where the gutter should end. The phrase seemed apposite, particulary after reading Martin Ruddock's chapter, when as key social worker in the Jasmine Beckford case, he experienced the onslaught of a tabloid press (television included) that peers through letterboxes, solicits injudicious remarks at the local pub and 'door-steps' it's victim.

Nothing excites press self-righteousness more than 'guilty'. No matter what the wider context mitigates, 'guilty' and its stablemates of 'shame' and 'disgrace' justifies the subsequent pillorying on the specious grounds of fair comment.

One should not be surprised that a complex case of child abuse could be reduced to key players, without any accompanying structural explanation. Sure, social workers with similar caseloads to Martin Ruddock must have stopped in their tracks when the messy saga unfurled, knowing

that it could have happened on their patch, but the irresistible lure of a public servant seemingly 'neglecting' responsibilities is sufficiently 'guilty' enough to avoid any need for elaboration or balance.

From the information in Martin Ruddock's chapter and from others, it should have been as easy to provide a tabloid news story on the lines of: 'A social worker was left alone to cope with a crisis caseload of suspected child abuse cases without proper back-up and resources.' And why not? There are just the same elements of pathos in an angle like this and it would not be too difficult to apply the self-serving epithets of 'guilty' and 'shame' and 'disgrace'.

This approach does not seem all that fanciful until one would imagine 'filing' the story'; chances are it would not even pass the copy taster (first line of live editorial selection). The media, and the tabloids in particular, have an uncanny sense of their obligations; the history of this section of the press in the last 20-odd years has been a sad chronicle of focusing on individuals to report the inadequacies of our institutions. That much is not in doubt, but the press' metamorphosis from its self congratulatory pose as champion of the ordinary person in the street to the virtual persecution of them has always struck me as a puzzling phenomenon. It remains axiomatic that following the 'story' is to look for the individual to whom 'guilt' can be apportioned. In this dubious pursuit, the chief executives of many companies and public bodies have not escaped hounding, but that does not seem to be the trend. By and large, it is the Martin Ruddocks who have carried the can, prompting the uneasy feeling that deeper forces are at work.

For an explanation of that, the introductory chapter of this book by editors Bob Franklin and Nigel Parton is illuminating on structural causes. They chart social work's development from its post-Seebohm reorganisation as 'an essentially ambiguous profession, riven with tensions, which render it potentially vulnerable to criticism from perspectives which view the world in far more clear-cut and absolutist terms'. They also develop the belief that social workers 'have been presented in media reporting as a symbol for the public sector, embodying, in almost caricature form, its alleged shortcomings.'

If one is to superimpose a decade of Thatcherite ideology and its assault on the public sector of the 'four legs good, two legs bad' variety, then its no accident that the virulence of attacks on social work activity has increased. Initially, it was on the specious grounds of attacking 'ineffective' social workers for allowing abused children to remain at home. But then Cleveland came along and a different

perspective was demanded; suddenly those who acted were 'zealots' or 'authoritarian'. The irony of this reporting angle was not lost on the profession but the media suffers no such self-conciousness. For an explanation I return to the authors' phrase 'caricature'.

Most hostile reporting of social work tends to accompany the release of inquiry reports. These often lengthy documents tend to put events in a wider context but hold no fascination for most journalists, anxious to file a story quickly. I have been in newsrooms when whole reports have been 'junked' in favour of the accompanying press release. This has been scoured for a good phrase or two before the calls are made for 'reaction'. It is at that time key personnel are at their most vulnerable. If a chance for balanced reporting exists at all, that window of opportunity is one that attenuates in favour of the 'caricature'. So a story essentially about the inadequacies of social services provision quickly becomes one of a scapegoating individuals.

The sad fact is that much of the media is only lukewarm to the notion of fair and balanced reporting. For that reason, it might well pay to launch a pre-emptive strike along the lines Martin Ruddock did, though something like that tends only to work for 'sympathetic' sections of the media - invariably the 'quality' press. Yet it is important to remember that journalists only know what other people tell them; they are essentially a conduit for information. No doubt they think of themselves as excercising judgement on stories, but in the absence of incontrovertible evidence (which is most times) they are prey to their own prejudices or those of the news-desk.

Frankling and Parton look deeper into the structural changes in society which they believe presaged a switch in attitudes towards welfare. This 'rolling back the frontiers of the state' has led to a 'fundamental reassessment of the basic principles of welfare policy and a restructuring of the way certain services are provided'. Lossely translated, this means the role of the state should consequently be 'reduced to providing only those services that cannot be met by the primary institutions of the market and the family'. Whether the media interpreted this to distinguish between 'deserving' social work activity or whether they were just the unwitting accomplices to this change, I do not know. But suspicions are aroused again when one recalls the reporting of Cleveland and the less than subtle changes in emphasis. From 'wimps to bullies' seems to characterise this change and with it social work's proactive stance stands condemned. It matters little that the Butler-Sloss report all but vindicated the professionals; what

remains in the public conciousness is that some great conspiracy to undermine family responsibility was thwarted.

That this image is an enduring one, even after the report has been published suggests an apparent helplessness on the part of social services that, try as they might, their side of the story will be largely uncovered.

Perhaps the only way social services can redress the balance is to take a proactive stance and in that the role of the skilful and experienced public relations officer is paramount. Public relations is the one growth area of the media in the last decade. While the private sector seemed to need no encouragement to use PR people, the statutory area has been a bit more reluctant. I understand this ambivalence, as the success of 'good PR' is often seen as getting a 'good press' - whatever the all costs.

Inevitably, social service departments accept that just having a good story to tell does not guarantee it will be told. The media's predeliction for sensation often ensures this, to which Lynn Walder's useful chapter on Public Relations and social services testifies. Her prescription for dealing with the media is a sensible one, but requires the type of experience that, on the whole, social workers rarely have. Her own background as a journalist has been no doubt helpful; she has an insider's knowledge of the media and is not afraid to beat them at their own game. "We have come to understand that adopting press techniques can help to get our case across. By agreeing to play the game according to their rules we can emerge the winners", she writes. Often that means using information that departmental colleagues are reluctant to divulge, especially if it is about clients. But that is the price many agencies have to pay if they are to succeed in getting their side of the story across.

There are other useful chapters in this book, the one on the professional press by Terry Philpot and the chapter on reporting social work by Anne Fry are two that spring to mind. But where it scores is on the editors' ability to have commissioned contributions, both broad and definitive in their range.

Despite these useful analyses, there is no blueprint for redress and social work seems destined to 'putting the record straight'. This book reminds us, if we need reminding, that the price of a free press can be expensive and the responsible use of public relations might go some way in blunting a weapon that self-regulation has patently failed to do.

Eamonn Rafferty

Not many books come with their own review attached, but *Music at the Margins* is a notable exception. After more than 250 pages reporting on the results of a vast research project, the authors include a 'Critical Response' by the British rock writer and analyst Simon Frith. In seven pages, he raises doubts that seem to threaten the validity of the whole project. Whatever the authors' motives for including Frith's commentary, it gives the book an intriguing twist and raises questions that cast the main text in a quite different light.

The original purpose of *Music at the Margins* according to its authors, was to ask whether popular music throughout the world was becoming ever more homogeneous, or whether there was 'a continuing and perhaps even increasing diversity of song, styles, and forms' (p xi). It is an important question and one that deserves the thorough (if not always helpful) analysis it receives here.

The issue of cultural homogeneity versus cultural diversity emerges from two apparently conflicting trends in the development of popular music. On the one hand, the music industry has been beating a seemingly inexorable path towards globalisation and concentrated control. Corporations like Sony, BMG and Polygram now appear to dominate the world market, selling Anglo-American stars to every corner of the earth. Such developments prompt the thought that, in the process of globalising the market, the industry has eliminated local tastes and musics and replaced them with a standardised product. But against this trend and this conclusion another pattern has been observed. There has been a burgeoning of interest in, and sales for, 'world music'. By which is not, of course, meant Madonna and Michael Jackson but Salif Keita from Mali and the Voix Mystere de Bulgares. 'World Music' is, in fact, the music of areas outside Britain and North America. The 'discovery' of these other musics, and the trends in style and taste they have prompted, has prompted awareness of global diversity, whatever the trends in the industry.

Though other books have studied these conflicting pulls in the world of popular music (most notably, Wallis and Malm's *Big Sounds from Small Countries*), they have tended to concentrate on the global dimension, leaving the local unexamined.

This, at least, is the argument of the authors of *Music at the Margins*. To correct the perceived imbalance, they created the International Communication and Youth Consortium, which drew together researchers from 20 musically 'marginal' countries (south Korea, Holland, Soviet Union, Taiwan, for example). These researchers provided reports on music in their countries and were responsible for interviewing local musicians to create a sample of 220 marginal musicians. These interviews and the background papers provide the foundations of *Music at the Margins*.

Through the wealth of detail on offer, the book succeeds in creating the impression of international diversity. Vast differences emerge in the way music is produced and consumed. In attempting to organise this material, the authors argue that thriving music scenes depend upon the strength of existing music traditions, 'a competitive and energetic recording industry', and consumers with the opportunity to make use of its products (p 105). Putting the emphasis on these factors deliberately detracts attention from political conditions, cultural policies and economic deprivation. The authors are, it seems, unimpressed by the thought that state intervention can do anything to affect the development of popular music.

Some of these generalisations seem to be built upon limited data, but equally, some of the country studies provide a rich picture. The portrait of Canada, for example, demonstrates the problems faced by the national record industry, both internally and externally. The Dutch study, again admirably detailed, raises fascinating questions about the character of national tastes - why do the Dutch show such enthusiasm for British pop?

Apart from the accounts of the context of music-making in various 'peripheral' countries, the other main concern of *Music at the Margins* is the plight of musicians in these contexts. The organisation, status and resources of musicians are recalled: their opportunities for live performance, the deals struck with record companies, their inspiration and their backgrounds are all touched upon.

This material, like much else in the book, is a source of interest. It is not clear, however, quite what we should make of it. For all the discussion of research methodology, for all the hours of work by the international contributors, for all the money spent, it is not obvious what status the information (and the generalisations derived from it) ought to have. Why should the 220 musicians be seen as representative of anyone or anything? Besides, even if they constitute a good sample, what they see and say is profoundly

coloured by their sense of themselves as artists. Their impressions cannot be treated as definitive accounts of the world they share. At one point, the authors comment, 'Most of the musicians from Nigeria, Jamaica, and Canada responded that they do not feel that their group's music is censored in any way' (p 245). But this does not tell us whether they are right.

Besides the problem of how the data is generated and interpreted, there remains the assumptions which the authors bring to bear on the whole project. They appear to be committed to the view, first, that creativity and authenticity are inextricably linked, and second, that the condition of both is some form of independence from 'commercialisation' and from official political involvement. Out of this emerges something called 'good' music, the precise features of which are not defined, but which have to do with the way such music genuinely represents people's conditions and links audience and performer. But as Frith points out in his critical afterword, such simple dichotomies and values make less sense when the complete process of music making, packaging and consuming are taken into account. It may be argued, after all, that state involvement is both necessary to the process by which music - whether good or bad - is made. Further-more, the 'value' of music is not determined solely by the musicians experiences, lyrics or contexts, but by the way in which audiences, artists, industries and political processes strive for a sense and meaning that cannot be confined to the simple dichotomies of authentic versus commercial, or global versus peripheral.

John Street

Douglas, T.
COMMON GROUPWORK PROBLEMS
Routledge 1991
ISBN 0-415-03898-7
£10.99 Pbk
193pp

This book will attract not only those who are already familiar with the author's previous work but also those who are intrigued by the title itself *A Handbook of Common Groupwork Problems* and by the questions posed on the back cover, 'How can groupworkers get practical help with their practical problems?' and 'Why do group-workers' problems remain so similar for every new generation? In tackling these questions the author draws on his experience over 20 years both as a practitioner and as a trainer in group work. The use of the word 'groupworker' includes all who work with or in groups. It should

be noted that this book is aimed at groupworkers who have not got easy access to a supervisor or facility to discuss problems. So it can be viewed as a self-help guide and this in turn influences the structure of the book.

Firstly, one or two comments about the content and format of the book. The introduction outlines some of the key areas of debate i.e. why is it that despite all the literature on group work and the wealth of knowledge and experience of trainers, practitioners often feel so ill-equipped to cope with situations; what is it that is preventing people from learning from their trainers; why is there such a discrepancy between the theory as it is presented and taught and the kind of problems the author is asked about so often by practitioners in workshops and discussions. In analysing their difficulties and frustrations, he has identified five types of common problem and has distinguished them as those related to a) group members, b) the group as a system, c) conditions which affect the group, d) leadership roles and e) supervision, training and development of group workers. This classification system forms the basis of detailed discussion in the following chapters. Incidentally, the author does refer to aspects of group work which were not mentioned as problems. This was a fascinating line to pursue and one which would merit further exploration.

In discussing each of the common problems, the author adopts a standard approach by first of all, defining the problem and in many instances sub-dividing the problem into categories for further comment. This is followed by a section which outlines the problem as seen by the practitioners themselves and here specific illustrations of questions are given. He then includes a section headed ideas which provides a suggested theoretical base for examining and analysing the presenting problem from as many points of view as possible. Following on, possible strategies are explored. Throughout stress is placed on ensuring that strategies are based on a sound knowledge of the situation and that plans of action are closely monitored. Each chapter concludes with a list of reference material.

The use of the standard approach is aimed at the reader who would like to dip in to the book and quickly find information on a particular area of concern. Whilst I have very positive things to say about the content overall, to my mind this over emphasis on classification and the resulting cross-referencing and repetition became a little irritating after a while. Also I felt there was an imbalance in the level of discussion in the ideas sections, some quite weighty issues were rather briefly covered. To be fair to the author, he does acknowledge

that difficulties can arise in adopting such a classification system and that confusions can be expected when it is not clear whether the problem relates to the groupworker, to another person, to a situation or to a system.

Whilst accepting that the book is targeted at those practitioners who do not have easy access to a supervisor and would welcome the chance to go directly to the discussion on a specific problem, I would hope that the reader would explore the text more fully as the author introduces some interesting views on the nature of groups, the value of theory and particularly on the most effective way of acquiring group work skills, In the case of the latter, the author maintains that the best way to learn is through a sort of apprenticeship system whereby the beginner is apprenticed to a skilled and experienced group worker, who acts as a model of good practice, who is well versed in theoretical concepts and is able to help the beginner develop a personal, internalised method of recognising problems and dealing with them effectively, even when they are problems that have not been experienced before. This process suggests the trainer adopts a truly consultative role. So although described as a Handbook, it is not solely a handy hints approach, theory is not dismissed but is accorded an important role in the on-going development of skills given the ideal apprenticeship scheme as outlined.

In fact, it is the author's view that so much emphasis has been placed in the literature on the operational skills in running groups that relatively little attention has been placed on the nature of groups, especially the structure or the infrastructure which defines, creates, supports, maintains and almost secures the success of the group. In the chapter on the conditions affecting groups, the discussion focuses on the embedded nature of all groups and that any group is part of a larger system of organisation. This means, according to the author, that the groupworker must obtain detailed knowledge about systems, particularly those related to resources and policy discussions.

There were other general themes highlighted in the book, for example under the heading of strategies for dealing with problems a recurrent suggestion was to keep record of what actually happens, monitoring the effects of a chosen course of action and re-assessing strategies in the light of feedback and observation. Time and time again a suggested strategy for problem solving was the value of sharing the responsibility of solving the problem with the group. The author also notes that groupworkers are often reluctant to share their experiences and thus forego the benefits of consulting and sharing

knowledge and experiences with others and therefore to an extent limiting the learning process.

For me therefore the value of the book lies not so much in the suggested strategies, (although there were one or two definite possibilities for future reference!) but in the issues raised, the problem analysis and mental exploration of what really works and why and what does not work and why. As such this book should be of value to all who work with or in groups. Those who have a training function will find this particularly useful.

Janet Smith

Evans, K. and Haffenden, I. (Eds)
EDUCATION FOR YOUNG ADULTS - INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
Routledge and Kegan Paul 1992
ISBN 0-415-00577-9
£30.00 Hbk
159pp

Although this work focuses upon a subject of some importance, its brevity ensures that only the most superficial overview can be conveyed. Unfortunately there is a paucity of convincing ideas and far too many assertions which, fortunately perhaps, have been overtaken by recent events. For example, this surely should have been edited out 'the distinctions of the Cold War of the 1950s remain of political importance: our mutual and international misunderstandings have considerable continuity'.

Recent events have been equally and further unhelpful to the editors who have selected the education system of the USSR for extensive discussion. However, even without these changes, the analysis is mistaken in failing to recognise that it is not the curriculum and the school system of the West that is socially divisive, but rather each reflects extant divisions in society. There are twelve disparate and variable chapters, six each on 'East and West' and 'North and South' reflecting the interests of the contributors; for one this interest includes 'the transfer of educational ideas and practices between countries, education and revolutions and the social construction of institutionalisation of education discourse'. It is unclear what this means or how it is to be operationalised - nor is there much evidence of this 'discourse' in the somewhat motley chapters. Perhaps the most effective way of conveying the overall 'feel' of the book (the emotional reactions being more activated than the cognitive responses) is to indicate its basic misconceptions in relation to industrial society - the more interesting chapter focuses upon Botswana.

Can the book's basic premise - that the 'involvement of young adults in national development (is) an important issue' be universally accepted? I doubt it. The extent and importance attached to 'young adults' manifestly varies with the stage of economic development a particular social structure has attained. As a general rule, when societies become more industrialised the ascribed importance of 'young adults' tends to decrease as their entry to the labour market is further deferred. It is becoming apparent that every society is moving towards industrialisation with only minimal variation in the final form. Under such conditions, the global significance of 'young adults' can be expected to further decrease as their entry to the labour market is delayed and from which a number may be totally excluded. These are centrally important issues yet not developed here.

What is important is that all have access to economic resources both positional and material. This is another issue neglected here. There is enthusiastic support for the populist view of a Western industrial 'economic crisis' which is nowhere challenged. 'Education for change' continues to be a recurrent myth despite the overwhelming evidence that the universal goal of educational systems is for continuity and the re-creation of social systems. The continuing and near-total success of the industrialised nations in exporting their form of market economies (as witnessed most recently by the 'Group of Seven') has to be recognised even when not universally welcomed. Changes in education and training will occur and reflect the transformation of the economic systems everywhere. Too many of the contributors ascribe excessive autonomy to education and training systems which are everywhere dependent upon the needs of the economy. When discussing the USA one would have expected at least a mention of their distinctive 'contest' education system in contrast to the UKs (and seemingly the socialist and Third World countries) 'sponsored' system which selects the elite at an early age and provides an appropriate education for them.

There is a further major gap here. Nowhere is the age of 'young adult' defined with any precision although there appears to be some modal convergence at age 25. I recall attending a Commonwealth youth conference where one speaker chided the UK (and by implication other industrialised societies) for excluding young people from positions of power and authority - gerontocracies he believed were exclusive to industrial societies. It transpires that in at least one Commonwealth country 'young people' form half the members of the government. Initially this appeared difficult to believe until it became clear that young people referred to those aged up to 40-45. David

Marsland has an interesting chapter on this unresolved issue of youth and adolescence with a still unconvincing re-run of an inconclusive debate from almost 20 years ago.

Almost every page begs questions and can exasperate. For example, on page 25/6 alone we are urged to 'draw out some of the implications of the crisis' - which one? 'The commercialisation of youth cultures in the West has, now, a long history' - what is long? Forty years it seems. What are these 'rapidly changing economic demands?' 'The Soviet revolution was rather clearer on the economic principles ... and the East began with an ideological edge .... which have probably assisted in easing the impact of economic change on the young'.

Turning to the 'North and South' section provides no convincing theoretical insights either. The first chapter, by Moses Ntuk Idem is very difficult to comprehend and theoretically confused. Two examples suffice. He assumes that adolescents have 'autonomy in society and that it is their interests or needs which are at the heart of youth affairs policies'. Further, although he recognises that the 'concept of youth is subsumed in models of society' - what are we to make of 'the liberation model takes the perspective of psychoanalysis, the structural consensus, while the collaborative relates conflict perspectives of radical community action? He is also in error to assume that the drift from rural to urban areas is a consequence of the formal education system but correct in recognising that 'socio economic conditions combine to place young people in vulnerable positions to be exploited by the state'. Nothing surprising here - and why only the young?

The chapter on Botswana's 'Tirelo Setshaba' material study scheme is most illuminating. It is a scheme whereby an academic elite are selected and sponsored for high education with the aim 'to instil in our children a clear sense of responsibility and commitment' and to utilise their skills for social, national purposes. Following completion of studies and training, young people are expected, in a Durkheimian sense, to contribute to the collective - by working in rural areas where they become a resource for the locality. Such a solution appears an economically efficient method of utilising scarce skills. It will continue to work, one suspects, only until such time as their activities clash with the economic interests of emergent professional groups.

Overall the work is characterised by the absence of any coherent theory of industrialisation and this contributes to its many and major weaknesses.

Robert Gutfreund

The AMA/CEDC paper Looking at Community Education is important for four reasons:

First, it is a comprehensive yet concise review of developments in local authority policy and practice in recent years. Moreover, the argument - and it is about presenting an argument - is not clouded by the rhetorical flourishes or the sanitised language characteristic of many internal LEA policy statements.

Second, as an official AMA paper, it represents the collective voice of 69 metropolitan authorities, 25 of which participated in the working party which drew up the report. As such, it puts community education as a rationale for LEA policy development firmly on the agenda of the metropolitan authorities. It also demands, and deserves, the attention of central government whose wilful neglect of community education it sets out to overcome. Whether it will get it is another matter.

Third, it holds out an alternative vision for the development of education as a locally delivered public service that is the antithesis of the fragmentation and competition of a marketised system. In essence, it argues for an education service fit for citizenship in a modern democratic society. Citizenship is defined in terms of common interests and inter-dependence rather than market position and the unequal capacity for choice.

Finally, it is a strategic document which shows how local policy can be developed in ways that bring education and community into closer partnership and, at the same time, address central government's professed concern for accountability, achievement and access.

A significant - as well as a significantly unremarked - feature of local education policy development in the 1980s was the groundswell of interest in community education. As the AMA paper rightly notes, this is a home grown movement which 'can be almost entirely attributed to the encouragement and support it received from local authorities'. Although it borrowed selectively from established traditions of policy and practice, this was essentially a new phenomenon. In many urban areas in particular community education, whatever the vagaries of definition, appeared to have 'construct validity' as a way of addressing the urgent

realities of social, cultural and economic change - as well as increasing political pressure from the centre.

The distinctively metropolitan version of community education evolved in two stages. In the first place, it reflected an internally generated critique of a paternalistic and high handed Labourism which had become deeply embedded in large swathes of urban Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. It also involved a recognition of the chronic educational underachievement that often went with this. Then, partly as a reaction to trends in national policy, the process of reassessment led to the construction of a defensive local politics of education articulated around the notion of community. In short, community education came to represent a commitment to coherence and collectivism as the key principles which should inform the delivery of the local education service. This was perhaps best expressed in Newham's policy statement:

> Community Education will not in itself produce a just society, nor will it guarantee to solve the social, educational and economic problems of Newham. What is important about community education, though, is that it offers a coherent approach to this range of issues. Fundamentally, it is about recognising people's right to education .... (and) encouraging and empowering people to take charge of their own institutions, their own education, and their own lives.

The primary audience of *Looking at Community Education* is quite specifically the major power holders in the current situation, i.e. central government and governing bodies, heads and principals of educational institutions in the new LMS/LMC era. The explicit intention is to overcome ignorance and dispel misconceptions. It also contains recommendations for LEAs to address, although their status - like that of teachers - within the traditional tripartite structure has been seriously undermined by recent legislation. It must also be said that at £9.50 for a slim if glossy A4 format booklet, few individuals are likely to buy personal copies. Nevertheless, it is a document that should be ordered by all LEA institutions and services. Apart from the hard headed and clearly presented argument of the main text, Annex B contains a very detailed and useful DIY guide to the management of community education within the constraints of the current legislative framework. This should be required reading for all managers and administrators.

The paper argues the case for community education as a way of addressing the

demands made upon the education service by the Audit Commission's 3 Es - Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. Added to these, however, is a consistent and timely commitment to the fourth E - Equity. Although it may well be necessary and, indeed, expedient to argue for a congruence between local and national agendas for education in certain respects, it is good to see the emphatic reassertion of equity as a goal of policy and of equal opportunities as a strategy for achieving it. In addition, evidence is presented for the connection between community education and a fifth E - Efficacy. It works.

The case for community education as a coherent and cross-sectoral response to change is made by reviewing current practice. Five key characteristics are derived from this: access and equal opportunities, lifelong education (includ -ing the development of the capacity for lifelong learning), inter-agency collaboration (i.e. coherent service delivery), curricular relevance (in terms of where curriculum starts rather than where it leads, and incorporating the acceptable face of enterprise) and, finally, represent -ative partnership in institutional governance. What is refreshing about this account is that it reflects concrete achievement as distinct from worthy intention - thus the emphasis on the importance of institutional value statements and LEA development plans as ways of initiating, monitoring and evaluating policy. The main focus on schooling is justified in terms of the implications of deregulation and local management for strategic policy develop -ment. On the other hand, more could be said specifically about the National Curriculum and perhaps a bit less about 'meeting (unspecified) needs'.

The rub, of course, is that community education as a strategy for raising the quality of the local education service calls for realistic levels of funding. In terms of cost-benefit analysis these may be modest enough. And yet community education is highly vulnerable in times of rate capping and the financial crisis in local government. Ultimately, the AMAs purpose is to show the government just what is at risk.

This raises the basic problem about the AMA paper. It assumes - it has to assume - that central government is open to reasoned argument and is prepared to listen. In fact, there is little evidence that this is so. The AMA has no choice but to look for and to argue for common ground between the centrally imposed imperatives of reform and home grown community education (eg in terms of parental involvement, enterprise, quality assurance). In reality, however, community education as a rationale for strategic, as distinct from institutional, policy development confronts its antithesis in

the marketisation of education. The contradiction must be understood in both structural and discursive terms.

In structural terms, current policy seeks to diversify and fragment education by creating different kinds and statuses of institution which compete for customers in the educational market place. Part of the aim of this is precisely to emasculate LEAs and deconstruct the traditional central-local-professional partnership so that the interests of national government, parents (as consumers) and industry/commerce are dominant. What is missing is precisely the mediating structure of local government. Thus, for example, one recent prognosis suggests that 'What we may face is the problem of the excluded middle in the hierarchy of political power'.

Even more significantly, perhaps, in discursive terms the New Right project has been about transforming the terms of the debate and limiting the possibilities of our thinking about education. Stephen Ball argues that the preoccupation with teacher effectiveness and efficient management, for instance, is part of an insidious and potent new discourse about education which

> has thoroughly displaced the weakly articulated concerns of comprehensive education - equality, talent development, tolerance and participation - with a strongly articulated concern with efficiency, the social and economic requirements of industry, competition and national interests.

In this context, the AMA paper may sound like a voice crying in the wilderness. But it is a voice that deserves to be heard - both by the power holders and the stake holders in education.

Ian Martin

Carspecken, P. F.
**COMMUNITY SCHOOLING
AND THE NATURE OF POWER.**
**The Battle for Croxteth
Comprehensive.**
Routledge, London, 1991.
ISBN 0-415-03560-0
£35.00 (Hbk only)
225pp

Croxteth Comprehensive hit the headlines in 1982. Faced with closure, it was occupied by local residents who ran the school with the help of volunteer teachers. Through their efforts and campaigning, and the success of the Labour Party in local elections in Liverpool, the school was eventually reinstated as part of a larger reorganisation plan. Phil Carspecken was one of the voluntary teachers and this book explores the occupation and

subsequent developments.

The book, at one level, is a reasonably straightforward account of events. Particular questions and issues are taken up and discussed. The opening chapter sets out some of the key theoretical concerns of the book. This is then followed by chapters which deal with the initial closure of the school; and the development of the campaign. The first year of protest had three phases. To begin, arguments against the closure were horizontally competitive - urging the closure of another school in the same situation. With new and more militant residents joining the campaign it was portrayed as a community movement and more radical methods were used. The exceptional and special needs of the area were stressed. Less emphasis was placed on trying to argue the case against closure by saying other schools should close.

Phase three began in September 1982 when the Action Committee was joined by a group of volunteer teachers and 280 students from the Croxteth estate. Each phase has a chapter devoted to it. In the last of these Carspecken looks at the constraints which helped to shape schooling practices in Croxteth during the first half term.

In further chapters Carspecken discusses the intersubjective frameworks in operation. He looks at three areas of conflict: the form of schooling that should and could be provided to students; the direction the political campaign should take; and the question of who should determine solutions to these problems. He examines problems of power and authority within the school and the emergence of a dual structure involving teachers and local residents/parents. This then leads into a substantial chapter which explores the conflicting and often bitter debates over political strategies and alliances. In particular, he sets out two distinctive positions which were articulated in the struggle - the community power orientation and the social wage orientation.

There were those who argued from a community action focus; and those who wanted to site the struggle firmly within the terrain of Labour Party and union politics. These positions are of particular importance when considering both the way the campaign was seen and what the aims were in terms of the school and schooling. The community activists were interested not only in retaining the school but also in altering the relationship of power and the nature of education. They argued for more community involvement and for changes in educational practices to make them consistent with the political nature of the occupation. On the other hand, those concerned with the 'social wage' saw the occupation not as an end in

itself, but as a holding operation. This was to be continued until the state took back its obligations to the community and provided it with a school. There was no particular interest in altering the relationships of power between the local community and teachers; or in changing schooling practices. By the end of the first term the campaign was moving strongly in the direction of traditional Labour Party politics. In discussing this, Carspecken brings out the different perspectives and schemes of interpretation in play. He particularly highlights the contrasts between teachers, helpers and activists within the school and the campaign.

What the book does succeed in bringing out, to some extent, is how society wide power relationships find expression in the ways in which working class parents view the schooling process. He argues that the occupation of the school led to some important movements in these frames of reference, but that they were constrained by other forces. These included the examination system and the lack of clearly articulated alternative educational practices.

However, there are a number of problems with the book. Unfortunately, as a whole, it falls between two stools. This arises because the book both attempts to tell the story of the struggle and to be a substantial addition to the sociology of schooling. I am sure it is possible to do both, but this book does not succeed in this. On the one hand it is not journalistic enough (in the best sense) to capture the story, say in the way that Leila Berg managed in relation to Risinghill in the 1960s. On the other hand, the analysis is rather underdeveloped in significant areas. Here I want to mention four.

First, inadequate attention was given to the literature of community education and community schooling. At one level this is understandable. It is an arena inhabited by well-meaning evangelists and the occasional mountebank. However, there are some shining exceptions to this who make the effort worthwhile. Carspecken has taken a highly selective slice of the literature and has generally failed to look at anything written after 1983. This was a major disappointment given the possibilities inherent in his case study material.
Second, while he does bring out some of the ways in which communal inequalities wash to and fro and influence relationships of schooling, there are gaps in his analysis. In particular, I thought that gender and youth (see below) remained under-theorised and analysed.

Third, while there is some material on discipline and competing definitions of schooling, there is relatively little textured material concerning classroom interaction.

By and large, the student voice was not heard. There were no substantial interviews with students, for example. To some extent, this is understandable given the book's focus on the politics of the struggle; and the position of the writer as a teacher having to cope with the day to day strain of having both to teach and organise. The book does bring out some sense of this daily grind. However, the lack of material coming directly from a student perspective is also matched by a lack of attention to student experience in the book as a whole. Given that this is a book about community schooling, and relations of power this omission is particularly surprising.

Last, I felt that much more needed to be done to sustain the analysis around intersubjective structures. There is quite a substantial literature in relation to schooling (and student perspectives) which was not properly addressed e.g. Philip Brown's *Schooling Ordinary Kids*.

In the end this book was a disappointment. Perhaps I started out with hopes that were too high. Community education and community schooling desperately requires critical and sustained analysis. Stories such as Croxteth's need telling. For those interested in the relationships between local communities and schools; and the politics of struggles around schooling this is a book worth looking at. It doesn't, however, take debates much further on.

Mark Smith

Ryan,P., Garonna, P.
and Evans,R.C. (Eds)
THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH:
The Regulation of Youth
Employment and Training in
Advanced Economies.
Macmillan 1991
ISBN 0-333-49380-X
£45.00 (Hbk)
308pp
Allatt,P. and Yeandle,S.
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
AND THE FAMILY:
Voices of Disordered Times
Routledge 1992
ISBN 0-415-01851-X
£35.00 (Hbk)
190pp

An awful lot of books on youth unemploy -ment have appeared during the last few years. So many that few now stand out from the crowd; especially when a significant proportion are saying little that is fresh and original.

A major reason for the abundance of material is the natural time-lag between the completion of research and the transference of findings into print. That is certainly the case with the second of the above books which is based upon research completed in 1985. The origins of Ryan et al are also located around the same time. In this case the book is a collection of re-worked papers prepared for international conferences held in 1985

and 1988. Some of those papers are like Allatt and Yeandle based on research completed sometime ago.

The Problem of Youth has all the faults that one has come to expect of a book constructed from conference papers, especially the international variety. A high degree of variability in the quality of the chapters; considerable differences regarding the sort of audience the contributors are writing for; and inevitably chapters that emerge from the strange quirks of funding that such jamborees depend upon. Therefore if you missed the conference, due to some pressing engagement or the refusal of your employer to pay the fare, and desperately want to know about the 'Alienation of Young Workers from Trade Unions: the Case of the Netherlands' or 'Contrasting Forms of Youth Training and Employment in Sweden and FR Germany' then your luck is in; here at last, is the book you have been scanning the horizon for. The pity for the rest of us is that in order to help you out we have to pay an extortionate amount to get hold of some very useful material.

Garonna and Ryan provide two excellent opening chapters. Both of which manage to provide an invaluable comparative overview of both the pattern of youth unemployment in Western Europe and North America and of the impact it has had upon the lives of young people. Superficially increased levels of youth unemployment have been a universal problem. However the record of some countries remains much better than that of others. For example a young person in Italy is 3 times more likely to be unemployed than their counterpart in the UK, and 10 times more likely to be unemployed than a young Swede. Equally the authors remind us the distribution varies between countries, except for young people from ethnic minority groups. They are, it seems, disproportionately likely to experience unemployment wherever they live. In other respects significant differences are encountered, for example, young women are more likely to be unemployed in France and Italy, young men in the UK and Japan. The universality of the problem has to be contrasted with the wide variety of policy responses adopted by different nation states. Such differences, however, have to be set in the context of key similarities. In particular all appear to have responded to youth unemployment by expanding state support for vocational training and by encouraging greater numbers of young people to remain in full-time education for longer periods of time. So that in Germany and Sweden, according to Schober-Brinkmann and Wadensjo, most young people are not now established in the labour market until their early twenties.

Overall the performance of the UK in this policy area does not appear to be such that other nation states are likely to look to us for a lead. As the authors note in the UK 'the content of many of the "qualifications" gained by young people continues to be

trivial' (p. 20). Also many employers despite all the rhetoric to the contrary remain wedded to low skill requirements. Deregulation of the youth labour market, the driving down of youth wages and the uneven spread of new technology have all encouraged the crowding of young people in the low paid and often least efficient sectors of the labour market. Where inevitably they receive low standard training and enjoy poor job security. As levels of youth unemployment once again begin to rise what is perhaps most disconcerting is just how little progress has been made. It is not simply that we have learnt so little from the experiences of others but that we appear to have learnt almost nothing from our past failures. The chapters in this book all predate the rise of the TECs and although they note the introduction of 2 year YTS are unable to offer an assessment. As events unfold regarding the development of both, few grounds for optimism can be identified. Hopefully some of those responsible for making policy will read a number of chapters in this book. Having done so it is difficult to imagine that the smug and self-satisfied air conveyed by those responsible for doing something about youth unem-ployment will not be dented.

The book by Allatt and Yeandle is based on a study of forty families living in Newcastle upon Tyne. All of the families included at least one young person who was trying to enter a labour market that promised few openings. The study was commenced in 1983 and concluded in 1985. That is seven years ago and it shows. Where the young people and their parent(s) speak they often capture the interest of the reader. Their insights into home life, the social and economic value of work and wider social relationships are at times valuable reminders of the human costs of youth unemployment. However it is no more than a memory jogger for there is little in this text that a youth and community worker, for example, is likely to find that is either new or challenging. It tells us nothing fresh about he experiences of the young unemployed or about the impact it has on family life. Worse it has been seriously overtaken by events, for example, the introduction of 2 year YTS, the sharp growth in staying-on rates, the spread of drug usage, rioting in the area, new patterns of youth crime and the cumulative impact on families of long term unemployment amongst siblings and parents. In some of these homes the parents will now have been without a proper job for well over a decade as will some of the young participants. Things have got worse since the researchers left, and moved on, and that is not something that the text either conveys or explains. Given the length of time since the completion of the research and the number of similar texts around it is difficult to work out why the publishers have bothered to invest in this book. It is not bad, but it is somewhat surplus to requirements and seriously over-priced.

Tony Jeffs

**Groupwork - for parents and
their 'beyond control'
youngsters**

STEVE ROGOWSKI

**The Youth & Community
Apprenticeship Schemes -
*A personal evaluation***

GAYNOR CLARKE

GROUPWORK - For parents and their 'beyond control' youngsters

Preventative social work with chidren and families has not featured in the social work press of late. Instead it has been dominated by crisis, reactive social work in relation to child abuse, so perhaps it will prove useful to illustrate that social work with children and families involves more than this. There is a preventative role for social work, something which the Children Act 1989 certainly endorses. What follows then gives an example of colleagues and myself pursuing this preventative role and concerns the running of two parallel groups, one for parents and one for their youngsters with whom they, along with others, were having problems.

Recently various agencies expressed concern about a number of nine and ten year old boys who formed a natural peer group. Schools complained about their behaviour when in school and the fact that they truanted. Youth clubs also complained about their behaviour when they attended. The police were concerned about offences such as shop-lifting and even stealing clothes from washing lines. Not least parents were often at the end of their tether and complaining about them, for example, coming and going as they pleased, not doing as they were told, not going to school, being verbally abusive, glue-sniffing etc. Many talked of wanting them in care and indeed two boys had been in care previously in order to give their parents a break.

Traditional responses to these problems would largely have taken place on an ad-hoc basis by the various agencies concerned and would have focussed on the individual youngsters themselves. For example, schools would have excluded them, likewise youth clubs; the police may have cautioned and charged them (at least the ten year olds!); and social workers may have responded by receiving the youngsters into care.

Colleagues and myself considered that as the parents and youngsters knew each other, then perhaps a groupwork approach involving both would be a more appropriate response, not least because of the importance of peer group support. A group could, for example, enable the parents to come together, discuss their difficulties and provide mutual advice and support. It would also break down much of the loneliness and isolation that many felt. As for the youngsters themselves, meeting together and becoming engaged in, for example, constructive leisure activities could give them alternatives to their current behaviour, as well as allowing informal discussions to take place about such things as school, offending and home. It was decided to run two parallel groups on the lines suggested. I was involved in the parents group so this will form a large part of this article, although I will comment on the youngsters group.

In formulating plans for the parents group it is important to realise that we wanted to get away from the usual 'blame the victim' approach of focussing solely on the intra or inter psychic processes of the individual group members. Rather an attempt was made to examine some of the external factors that can lead to the many problems and difficulties that children and families face in our society. In pursuing this, Mullender and Ward's 'Self-Directed Groupwork' model (1983) was found useful. Thus, some of the values underpinning our approach were: 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. Essentially the aim was to work alongside group members helping them to set their own agenda of issues - asking the question 'what?' in order to establish their view of the problems. This moves on to asking the question 'why?' the problems on the agenda exist and then 'how?' to deal with them?

Returning specifically to the parents group, colleagues and myself were already in contact with the parents,

either informally or formally in that they were official 'cases'.

The idea for the group was put to them and was favourably received and it was agreed to meet for eight weekly sessions in a local community centre. A similar plan of action was made for the youngsters group.

At the first session there was discussion of the aims of the group, and these varied from some parents who saw them very specifically in getting David back to school, whereas others saw them in more general terms of discussing and understanding the problems the youngsters were posing, to share their common problems and help each other. Interestingly, some members soon focussed on the external factors relating to, for example, truancy from school, making the point, forcibly, that if school could be made 'more attractive', for example more resources, more teachers (leading to smaller classes) - then youngsters would be more likely to attend on a regular basis. One parent went further and pointed out that under a decade of Thatcherism the reverse had actually happened with resources being squeezed from state schools.

The actual problems faced by the parents dominated the first, and indeed many subsequent sessions. The basic issue being that the youngsters were beyond their control for much of the time, engaging in, for example, glue-sniffing and offending. Plans for the future of the group were also discussed, with it being agreed to invite the local police and a child psychologist, and that it would be useful to discuss a case study.

In fact, the police attended the second session and a lively discussion ensued. The police emphasised their community liaison role, but much of the session was dominated by some parents wanting a return to policing 'like in the old days' where there was 'less crime, more discipline', corporal punishment in school, etc. Again though there were comments such as 'Thatcher is half to blame because our kids mess around with teenagers with no jobs, only YTS, which isn't training only cheap labour - they have nothing to look forward to and no money so they go out and rob.'

In the two sessions that focussed on the case study there was also strong emphasis on the external factors which influenced the problems the parents faced. For example, it was generally felt that youngsters get up to their antics because of boredom. The parents

felt that if they, along with social services and the youth service, had adequate resources, then the youngsters would be less likely to be bored and less likely to get into trouble. Mention was made of rewarding good behaviour rather than simply using harsh punishments for bad, but again parents noted resource implications here. They argued, and I am aware some readers will find this as well as some of the earlier comments, controversial, that 'there is no chance in present society' of addressing the resource issues, but pointed out that in a truly fair and just socialist society things could be resolved. At one stage the discussions even turned to singing the praises of life in Cuba!

There was some discussion of race and gender issues. One parent said her mixed race son was often the subject of verbal racial abuse, this making him angry and as a result he became involved in fights. She did not really condemn his behaviour seeing it as a result of living in a racist society, and if such a society did not exist then neither would his behaviour. As for gender, the point was made that 'having a man around', despite the increased chances of the woman being physically assaulted (!), at least it meant the youngsters' behaviour issues were easier to deal with.

The session involving the child psychologist proved valuable in that she stressed that rewards for good behaviour, for example, did not necessarily have resource implications but could merely involve spending time with the youngster concerned.

All the sessions enabled the parents to review the progress of their youngsters over the previous week. In particular they discussed what the youngsters had done wrong, how the individual parent dealt with this, how they could have done this differently, and these discussions certainly seemed to be of positive benefit to the parents. This should not detract from the fact that the parents continually stressed material stresses and strains - of living in a 'rough area', of having no money, of inadequate youth facilities, etc. - as being significant factors in relation to the problems they faced.

Towards the end of the group there was an attempt at evaluation and there was agreement as to the value of the sessions - 'we'll miss the group', at the very least 'it gets you out of the house and gives you something to do'. A more detailed evaluation took place after the end of the group using simple questionnaires which covered questions such as: what were the aims of the group? , were they met?, how could the group

have been improved?, etc. All agreed that the group had been of positive benefit, speaking of sharing problems, giving advice, learning from each other, realising 'you're not unique' or, more appropriately, that 'you're not on your own'. One parent in particular spoke of how she had changed her dealings with her son - 'I no longer lock him in his bedroom, and I hit him less .... instead I ignore his bad behaviour and talk to him more.'

Another significant benefit to emerge was the close friendship that developed between two mothers outside the group. They used to see each other regularly to talk over their concerns about their youngsters. One of them became very angry and upset about her son because of his behaviour and felt she was 'close to battering him'. Her friend offered to allow him to stay with her for a night and this provided a valuable cooling-off period and possibly prevented an incident of child abuse.

Before concluding, it might be useful to briefly refer to the youngsters group. As stated, this met in parallel with the parents group and involved activities such as pool, table-tennis, drawing, games, outings to the swimming baths as well as the informal discussions, again already referred to, about behaviour, home and school. Colleagues involved are certainly adamant that the group was worthwhile, not least because the youngsters attended and enjoyed the sessions. After the group, the youngsters also completed simple questionnaires and these also indicated the value of the group with one youngster saying 'it helps keep us out of trouble .... and gives my mum a break'.

Overall, then, I hope this article has indicated the value of the two groups. Returning to Mullender and Ward's model (1985) it may well have been better not to have limited the group to eight sessions. This prevented the development of answers to the 'how?' question and indeed much of the parents group rarely moved from the 'what?' question and only superficially looked at the 'why?' question. Time and other commitments, however, meant that colleagues and myself could not make an open-ended undertaking to the group. Nevertheless, the groups in themselves were worthwhile, not least from the parents and youngsters point of view, and this in itself is important. In addition, this example of preventative groupwork is a timely reminder that there is more to social work with children and families than merely responding to child abuse allegations in a crisis orientated way, or in merely dealing with juvenile offending solely in terms of system management strategies, and only working with young people in trouble as an alternative to custody.

Steve Rogowski

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THE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES
- A personal evaluation

At the end of the first 2 years of the 3 year Apprenticeship Schemes in Community and Youth Work how much of the original dream is likely to come true? How many of the original aims are still a priority for evaluation? How positive is the model of employer-led training to the overall development of initial training and community education practice?

In November 1989 Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council employed 10 young people as Trainee Community Education Workers to train for 3 years on the Apprenticeship Scheme. It was a stated aim of the Department of Education and Science that these young people would be recruited from Gateshead to work in geographical areas already familiar to them for the duration of their training. They would then return to their communities as trained workers. After two years these ten young people, as a result of being on the Apprenticeship Scheme are salaried members of staff, are familiar with and readily use Community Education jargon, have been trained to develop strategies for planned action, are aware of equal opportunities issues and feel alienated by racist and sexist behaviour, they have changed and developed both professionally and personally. They are, of course, still young and the developments outlined above are based on an understanding of their own life experience, but they will not be returning to the streets in a years time as the young people they were. They will be qualified, professional Community

Education Workers who will be seen as such by the communities they work in. They will be able to work in many and varied settings, with a range of age groups in any area of the country. The view of being brought in from the streets, trained and put back on the streets has always been viewed by them with suspicion.

It is thought that the model was based on the idea of taking young people who were prominent in their local communities, possibly even leaders of local groups or gangs, who would be trained up and then sent back in order to influence the communities from which they came. Once again this points to the ideology of social control, however, although this may have been a feature of the scheme originally it does not appear to be an aim of any of the schemes which have now been established and it is alien to the present discourse of Community and Youth Work.[1]

Central to the design of the Apprenticeship Schemes was that they were employer-led. This has been true in that the funding has been paid directly to the Local Authorities and that the Local Authorities employ the coordinator and trainees and buy-in teaching from academic institutions. However, Gateshead Apprenticeship Scheme has been highly dependent on the expertise of the academic institution as well as being bound by many of the existing structures and practices of the full-time route to initial training. Much of the taught curriculum and the methods of assessment were drawn directly from existing good practice at Sunderland Polytechnic. Because of the involvement of the Gateshead CES in the development of the Full-Time Community and Education Youth Work Course, the Apprenticeship Scheme knew what it was buying and knew that it was what it wanted. However, the power of being the employer leading the Scheme would have carried limited weight against the Polytechnic Validation and Monitoring Committee and 16 years of custom and practice.

The productive relationship between Gateshead Apprenticeship Scheme and Sunderland Polytechnic has not existed because the employer was leading but because there was already an understanding and experience between the two institutions and because there has been a commitment to making the Scheme work. As a result of the partnership there are many examples of the Apprenticeship Scheme experience influencing the development of other routes to initial training, notably the part-time course, but this must be seen in the context of the influence the initial training agency had already exercised on the design of the Apprenticeship Scheme.

Within Gateshead Local Authority the results of the Apprenticeship Scheme being employer-led are positive mainly because the Education Department, and the CES in particular, were already committed to training young people (18-25) as part-time workers and volunteers, and had clear staff development policies.

In addition work had begun on reviewing the recruitment of full-time staff and the implementation of a 5 year development plan for the Service. It was in the context of an already developing and expanding Service that the Apprenticeship Scheme was initiated, Gateshead Community Education Service has taken care to own the Apprenticeship Scheme, to incorporate all the employees into existing structures, to promote it positively and to ensure its full integration into the development of the overall Service.

There has been much discussion, nationally, regarding innovative practice and it is regularly mentioned as a measure of the success of the Apprenticeship Schemes. Questions such as What is innovative practice? and How can Local Authorities promote Innovative Practice? abound. It is my view that the Apprenticeship Schemes will only be as innovative as the Authorities within which they are placed. It cannot be desirable for the Apprenticeship Schemes, or individual trainees within them, to be charged with the task of forcing change outside existing structures. Long term change and development will come from clear overall policies with adequate monitoring or evaluation of a total service within which the Apprenticeship Scheme has a vital role to play. This has been particularly apparent in Gateshead in areas such as staff recruitment, relating theory to practice, providing up-to-date source material, supervisory training and individual staff development. The influence would have been minimal had the Apprenticeship Scheme not been integrated into the Service and it would be unfair to measure innovation in any other context. It is also worth noting that the current climate, nationally, of redundancies and closures of centres and projects is not an environment in which innovation or positive development of any sort will easily flourish.

When the Apprenticeship Schemes were in their planning stages and when Coordinators and Trainees were recruited, equal opportunities issues were very high on the agenda. In particular there was a desire to increase the numbers of qualified workers who were under-represented, in particular women, black people and people with disabilities. The responsibility, once recruitment and selection was completed and

statistics had been compiled, for ensuring the trainees recruited were given equal access to the different elements of the training rested with the Local Authorities. If we are serious about equal opportunities our responsibility does not end when women, black people and people with disabilities are recruited. The Gateshead Apprenticeship Scheme takes account of the hours trainees are expected to work, care allowances, access, resources, supervisor training, tutor support, available placements, specialist supervision, teaching methods, strategies for change and the development of work in the field. Even where Apprenticeship Schemes have been carried out within such relatively supportive Local Authorities, there are no specific aims or policies set nationally to assist, and no specific training provided nationally and no national monitoring or evaluation around equal opportunity issues. I acknowledge the considerable support given by colleagues, members of the National Steering Committee and their Advisors and in particular other Coordinators but the impact of the Apprenticeship Schemes experience must be documented and the level of attitudinal change in Local Authorities measured if the workers who are training now are going to be able to confidently apply for jobs and be supported adequately in them.

If there is a real desire to redress the balance nationally then more emphasis must be placed on the reality of the experience of existing workers, trainees and qualified, who are currently in the minority.

Since the original bids for the Apprenticeship Scheme were discussed Polytechnics have been taken out of Local Authority control and have by necessity developed a business approach to education. The Council for Education and Training of Youth and Community workers has ceased to exist and there is a lack of clarity about the role of the National Youth Agency in the validation of new and existing initial routes of training in general and in community work in particular. The role of Her Majesty's Inspectors is in dispute and the Apprenticeship Scheme is being evaluated by a commercial body who are instructed by the Department of Education and Science to calculate value for money.

The extra pressure on already inadequate resources at Sunderland Polytechnic have tested the delivery of the Gateshead Apprenticeship Scheme at a time when teaching methods and relevant student support are being attacked because they cost too much. In this environment any future employer-led training would have the buying power without the essential

checks and balances of the Council for Education and Training of Youth and Community Workers and Her Majesty's Inspectorate to ensure a measure of quality. Already overstretched academic institutions would be under pressure to take up the offer of business. It is difficult to see where quality education and training which take adequate account of equal opportunities enter the equation.

There is an assumption that the Apprenticeship Schemes were initiated because there was a shortage of suitably qualified applicants for existing jobs. This may have been confused with a shortage of training places for those wishing to qualify or may have reflected problems some areas of the country had in attracting people to apply to posts hence the desire to train local people to work locally. However, there was evidence at the time, produced by Maggie Jardine, while she was at the Council for Education Training for Youth and Community Workers that there was in fact a surplus of workers, not jobs.

In the last two years there has been a sudden and dramatic decrease in new posts and mobility between posts as well as an increase in redundancies.

A survey to be published next month covers 59 Local Authorities and shows that two-thirds of these have experienced budget reductions since last year. Lambeth which has £2m cut from its Education Budget, lost more that 200 Youth Workers. In 1990 Lewisham employed 44 full-time Youth Workers. Next week it will interview its current complement of 22 with the aim of making 8 redundant. Shropshire has seen 15 Youth Workers made redundant.[2]

The current climate of increased statutory obligations in Education at a time of drastically reduced financial support from Government is not ideal for the trainees to enter future employment when qualified. Even the call by the national Youth Agency for the Youth Service to be made statutory will not resolve the problem. If the next six months see job losses at a fraction of the level they are anticipated in the region the service could be depleted beyond recognition and repair. The trainees in Gateshead are being optimistically and positively (some would say naively) trained for a future in a developing, skill and issue based service in which they will expect to be well resourced, to have part-time worker teams, to gain further training and to receive efficient and challenging supervision and management.

There is much to commend Apprenticeship Schemes

which are appropriately resourced and incorporated into developing Local Authority Education Departments provided that they are committed, and financially able, to support a growing service which serves the whole community. They need to work in partnership with a positive academic institution which is free of unrealistic financial restrictions and alongside appropriate independent and government bodies whose role is to ensure quality. By and large this was the basis of the Gateshead Apprenticeship Course two and half years ago. However, this is rapidly being eroded at all levels and the future looks bleak for an effective and acceptable repetition and more importantly looks even bleaker for the only possible successful conclusion, that all the trainees who qualify are able to gain employment.

In a years time the numbers of qualified workers will increase at a time of high competition for jobs. It is being suggested that teachers should follow a similar model of training. If this is the case I hope that the Unions and Education Departments of Local Authorities and Academic Institutions consult those who have experience of the Apprenticeship Schemes before allowing themselves to be convinced that the future of their profession lies with an Apprenticeship model of training.

Gaynor Clarke

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Popular Front

**Beyond Lemonade City
The Riverside Organisation**
A Blueprint for the future?

ANDY BALMAN

I hope that this article will be informative to those people and organisations working with young people who have expressed an interest in developing self-managed projects, and in particular those involving popular music. Pop music is an art form that the majority of young people at some time become involved in. The **Riverside** organisation is a project based on these concepts. Given the necessary levels of support and understanding, it is possible to capitalise on this interest and provide facilities and employment in the music industry.

Since its opening in 1985, the young people who set it up and still control the organisation, have seen **Riverside** maintain its original aims and develop a number of initiatives that the current generation of young people can now take for granted.

This article aims to give a background to the development of **Riverside**, look at a number of problems that it has faced and make recommendations for the development of new projects, although space does not allow for great detail in this area. It looks at a similar project in Cambridge that was established in 1990 and how that has benefited from **Riverside's** experience, and it is hoped that the next generation of independent music venues might also benefit from the lessons learnt by the organisation and outlined below.

INTRODUCTION

Riverside is based in Newcastle upon Tyne, and operates within the music industry. It owns a 20,000 sq. ft. printer's warehouse from which it runs its various activities. These include a 600 capacity venue, restaurant, rehearsal rooms, exhibition place, music magazine (circulation 15,000), music workshops, world and contemporary music agency, design service, promotions agency, advice service and training facilities.

It has been operating since 1985 and currently has a membership of 10,000, the majority of which are aged between 18-25. It won the BBC Radio 1 *It's My City* award for Youth and Music in 1989, the Northern Electric Arts Award for Arts Promotion in 1991, and is consistently voted one of the best venues in Britain in the New Musical Express. In 1991 it collaborated with Tyne Tees Television to produce a series of 6 TV shows called Riverside that featured the behind-the-scenes activity of the club in addition to live music.

Its main area of activity is the promotion of live music. In 1991 it put on over 500 bands, a high proportion of which were from the local area. The majority of the acts that are promoted range from World Music, Folk, Rock, Indie through to Heavy Metal and Thrash. Its credibility and reputation throughout the region and nationally is second to none. It is currently considering new areas to expand into such as the development of new venues and a music label.

Riverside, therefore, is a success story in its own right. What makes it remarkable is the way it was established and how it is structured.

THE HISTORY

Back in the early eighties, unemployment, particularly among young people, began to become a major issue. The punk movement of the late seventies and the politicisation of young people, through such movements as Rock against Racism, the Anti-Nazi League, and in the later eighties, Red Wedge, led to a growing awareness of young people's rights and a collective feeling of power. In 1981 the anger experienced by communities throughout Britain exploded onto the streets with many major cities experiencing rioting for the first time. Newcastle, however, kept calm. The system was shocked and was forced to realise that those people who for one reason or another felt marginalised, would no longer sit back and accept their lot.

In 1982 a number of informal groups, or collectives, of young people on Tyneside started to meet together and eventually formed one large collective that became **Riverside**. A number of aims were established that

centred around the need to improve the music provision in the area and create employment.

At that time, Newcastle missed out on the majority of tours. If bands played in the area, they would either go to the student campuses that were for students only, or to the larger venues that were expensive. Any independent promotion was either in rooms above pubs or halls. There was always a financial risk involved and therefore the majority of the independents lasted only for a short time. Those that did make money had no long-term obligation to build up a thriving music scene. Riverside, however, wanted to change all of that with its own venue, rehearsal rooms, meeting place, recording studio, record label and employment, and most importantly, its own control.

By 1985, Riverside had secured £150,000 of funding from the Inner City Partnership Grant, and had purchased and converted a printer's warehouse on the fringes of the City Centre. It structured itself as a community co-operative with the aim that all future users of the club would be able to become involved and exert the control over their own leisure.

Everything looked rosy, even though the funding was half of that requested and therefore the founding members, the majority of which had never had a job or could even get out of bed before 11am, had to run the place as a workers' co-operative. So what if there was not a licence - surely the police would not object?

Unfortunately, there were problems.

Firstly, the lack of start-up finance caused immediate and long-term problems. **Riverside** has never been in a stable financial position and it will be some time before it can look positively to the future. Secondly, the application for a liquor licence was objected to by the police and was refused on a number of occasions. Eventually, after 5 months of trading, by which time **Riverside** had become known as Lemonade City, a restrictive members' club licence with pub hours was granted and the pumps were finally turned on. But the damage to **Riverside** had by that time been done. The financial position was dire, the image that had been built up around the project was destroyed and the morale of the coop was extremely low.

It really was all too much for the members to take. As a group of unemployed young people, they had somehow managed to put together this amazing project and had the independence that they so fiercely fought for. They wanted to prove to all the cynics and 'older' generation of people involved in the music scene that they could pull it off. By adopting this attitude, however, they alienated a lot of people and organisations and therefore isolated themselves from a number of possible lifelines that they so desperately needed.

On reflection, it is difficult to understand why there were not structures in place to deal with this type of project. Instead of seeing **Riverside** for what it was - an exciting and innovative development that positively harnessed the energies and creativity of a large number of disaffected young people - too many people looked upon it negatively and hoped that it would fail in the early stages and life could go back to normal.

What was not accounted for was the strength and support for **Riverside** from its rapidly increasing membership. They would not allow it to die, and when the financial situation became absolutely desperate in 1987 with the City Rates Section demanding £500 in cash every week or else they would call in the bailiffs, the members turned out every week to organise fundraising activities. The artists that had either played at **Riverside** or supported it, did benefits, and Red Wedge saved the day by donating a considerable sum of money. This expression of support from thousands of people from around the region made others sit up and listen. **Riverside** had become too important to ignore and the staff involved had developed enough knowledge of the funding organisations to finally pull things together in the right direction. The project was saved, the granting situation was improved and **Riverside** had a future, though for how long was unknown.

Riverside's development has coincided with attacks on local government and the voluntary sector and therefore our history has been one of chasing an ever-decreasing pool of resources. The commitment shown recently by Newcastle City Council, Northern Arts, and the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation indicates that at last we are seen as a valuable asset to the region. At a time of deepening recession, this support is crucial. **Riverside** is, however, receiving less than £20,000 a year in revenue support and that is not guaranteed beyond this year. On a turnover that is approaching £700,000 a year, it is obviously not a great deal. Without it though, the organisation would not be able to continue.

Fortunately, **Riverside's** experiences have made it easier for other similar venues to be developed and it has been visited by numerous groups from Britain and abroad with a number managing to develop venues with similar aims.

A good example is the Junction in Cambridge. Whilst I do not profess to be an expert on its history, I understand that it was stimulated by a group of young people who approached the local authority, who backed the idea. They then allocated an officer to research the development who spent over a year looking at similar projects and advised the council on design, management structures and devised a business plan. The original group wanted to be involved in the setting up of an independent company that was to be managed by professionals with a representation of the members on the board. That is now the case, and the structure seems to be appreciated by all parties. The board of the company has, in addition to 3 members, 2 councillors, and up to 7 co-opted members from the private and public sector.

Where the Junction really has the edge over **Riverside**, apart from being located considerably closer to London, is the support from a wide range of parties. The total start-up costs of nearly a million pounds were provided by the public sector and it currently enjoys £150,000 p.a. revenue support. Although it is only 2 years old, it has had 2 major redevelopments that have been paid for by commercial loans but guaranteed by the council. It also has a 2am open licence and has the support of the local media and police. The commercial potential is therefore far greater than **Riverside's**. The advantage of being able to borrow money guaranteed by the local authority is something that **Riverside** has not had. Any redevelopment plans or strategies for expansion have had to be paid for from purely commercial sources, which in the past 6 years have been limited to Brewery loans. However, with the only security available being the building, any downturn in the alcohol market may well lead to the closure of the venue. It also begs the question as to whether cultural provision should be dependent on the consumption of alcohol. I hope that the above gives a picture of an organisation that has struggled through the difficult experiences that has confronted it from Day 1. To pretend that it has been easy would be an untrue picture, but as a pioneering project, **Riverside** has had to learn the hard way. It is imperative that local authorities, Regional Arts Bodies, the Arts Council of Great Britain and the new Conservative Government look seriously at developing a strategy that recognises the worth of independent popular culture projects and the positive energy and creativity that is so often ignored in young people. Given the commercial potential of the music industry and the large amounts of money that can be generated, it would be logical to involve the Private Sector in discussions regarding partnership opportunities.

THE FUTURE

Fortunately, the experience and credibility that we have developed over the past 7 years has meant that we can now look to exploit the commercial opportunities efficiently and profitably. What is of paramount importance is that the organisation is re-structured in such a way so as to allow private investment whilst still maintaining commitment to the community that we serve. In **Riverside's** mould-breaking tradition, it may be that our new structure becomes a blueprint for the next generation of businesses, that while fulfilling economic objectives by making a profit, also fulfils social objectives by putting those profits to the best use of the community.

As a final comment, Riverside does still serve the young people of the region. There are no guarantees, however, that the similar new incentives that are being developed by young people across the country are getting beyond the first stage. Young people have over the past decade been kept firmly under control and their expectations are far lower than the early eighties. Let's hope that Mr. Major sees young people as an asset to the country and makes every effort to harness their potential.

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