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## 'GETTING THE DIRTBAGS OFF THE STREETS'

*Curfews & Other Solutions to Juvenile Crime*

TONY JEFFS and MARK K SMITH

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A widespread belief is circulating in America and Britain that young people are in some way turning feral; that an escalating proportion are involved in serious and petty crime, and other assorted antisocial activities. As Melanie Phillips put it, there is 'growing concern that our children are running out of control' (The Late Show, BBC 2, 16 May 1994).

Not only journalists looking for a headline talk in such alarmist terms. 'Futurologists' such as Mulgan and Wilkinson (1995) have similar concerns. They coined the term 'underwolves' to characterise what they claim are a growing band of young people 'disconnected from society' who increasingly threaten the social order. Academics can also be cited. Rutter and Smith (1995) contend that, even after every conceivable allowance is made for flaws in the collection and interpretation of the data, the rate of recorded crime committed by young people in Britain has increased tenfold since 1950. This is not a uniquely British phenomenon.

*In all developed countries except Japan there have been very large increases in the level of recorded crime since the Second World War ... crimes that make up the bulk of all those officially recorded, that is robbery, theft, burglary, assault and damage to property, are mainly committed by teenagers and young adults in their twenties. (Smith, 1995, p. 389).*

Politicians, especially after high profile events such as the Bulger murder are equally prone to join the chorus. They vie to convince a cynical public that, if given the chance, they will impose discipline on an increasingly recalcitrant youth where others have failed (Stenson and Factor, 1995).

In the United States the language used and the fears portrayed tend to be even more alarmist. Janet Reno the Attorney General warned in 1995: 'Unless we act now to stop young people from choosing a life of violence and crime, the beginning of the 21st century could bring levels of violent crime to our community that far exceed what we have experienced' (quoted in Thomas 1995). Influential academics share her pessimism. Predictably underclass theorists such as Murray (1984) and Wilson (1987) peddle a vision of escalating youthful crime, drug taking and unrestrained promiscuity which having decimated the neighbourhoods of the poor, will, if unrestrained, obliterate the very fabric of American society. Others drawn from the Libertarian Right (Fukuyama, 1992) to the Liberal Left (Galbraith, 1992; Jencks, 1992), as well as the New Communitarians (Etzioni, 1993) readily identify underclass youth as the pre-eminent threat to political and social stability. As Lerner (1995: see also Wooden, 1995; Hamburg, 1992; Prothrow-Stith, 1991) explains:

*America is hanging over a precipice. Unless dramatic and innovative action is taken soon, millions of our nation's children and adolescents - the human capital on which America must build its future - will fall into an abyss of crime and violence, drug and alcohol use and abuse, unsafe sex, school failure, lack of job preparedness, and feelings of despair and hopelessness ...*

*I believe that the breadth and depth of the problems besetting our nation's youth, families, and communities exist at historically unprecedented levels.*

Analysis such as this fuels and reflects a public concern which has spawned a remarkable array of policies designed to manage 'the youth crisis .. the biggest problem facing the nation' (Colley, 1995, p. 20).

Unlike Britain, the USA has a constitution which protects not only the rights of the citizen but elected local government from undue interference by the Federal government. Consequently states and individual cities, towns and counties possess a freedom to initiate policy which those living in centralised states such as the United Kingdom can barely comprehend. Local communities, provided they do not flout the Constitution, have an almost unfettered right to make laws and organise services with respect to those areas which most directly impinge upon the daily lives of the population. The result is a bewildering array of policy options, coexisting not just between states, but within them. Widespread concern regarding crime, and juvenile offending in particular, appears to be producing a control culture buttressed by a burgeoning array of legislation often specifically directed at young people.

### **America's War on Youth Crime**

Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 produced an administration determined to be seen to tackle violent crime. Legislation such as the Armed Career Criminal Act (1984) and the Comprehensive Crime Control Act (1984) generated heavier sentencing, changes in the definition of insanity to enable easier conviction, expansion of Federal law enforcement agencies and a new prison building programme. Within this package was legislation unambiguously fashioned to control the movement and drinking habits of young people. States were given two years to raise their legal drinking ages to 21. Any failure to comply would cost them 15 per cent of the Federal contribution towards highway construction and maintenance. Twelve states, even before the legislation was signed, had gone further, imposing night driving curfews on young people (Merry, 1984).

The enthusiasm of some states for adopting 'control policies' activated a large scale prison building programme. It was based on a belief that 'prisons worked', if only because they kept 'bad guys out of circulation' (Irwin 1994). The consensus around this view was revealed in almost unanimous legislative support for the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. To an extent California has for the past decade set the pace and the 1994 Act passed with the backing of a Democrat President and a Republican legislature incorporated many policies first introduced there. Referenda and powerful pressure groups in California promoted an unprecedented prison building programme and a plethora of crime control measures. Between 1984 and 1991 more than 1,000 new criminal statutes, virtually all of which lengthened prison sentences or upgraded misdemeanours to felonies, were enacted. Simultaneously courts enforced far stricter monitoring of probationers and parolees which sent tens of thousands back to prison. Between 1984 and 1992 the prison population of California went from 22,000 to 106,000 and is still rising (Mendel 1995). More recently the state adopted Law AB971 under which a second serious felony attracts double the existing prison sentence, and a third three times the usual sentence or 25 years to life, whichever is the greater. This is the infamous 'three strikes and out policy' endorsed by Clinton and incorporated in the 1994 Act.



AB971 also reduces the time allowed off sentences in recognition of work or good behaviour from 50 to 20 per cent. To accommodate a burgeoning prison population California will open 18 more prisons before the decade ends.

Similar policies have been adopted elsewhere. Colorado and New Hampshire have increased their prison population by an even faster rate while others have lowered the age of responsibility and reintroduced capital punishment. Inevitably such measures are putting more and more young Americans, some as young as 16, on Death Row. Neither the population of the prisons or Death Row reflect the demographic make-up of the host community. Young African-Americans and Latinos are four to eight times more likely to be arrested for serious crimes than Whites depending on the location (Blumstein, 1982; Langan, 1991; Smith, 1995). Whatever the explanation for this disparity - poverty, family breakdown or racism within law enforcement agencies - the reality is that today more young black males are in prison than in college (Black, 1990). This is no minor achievement given that the take-up rate for higher education is twice that of the UK. Approximately one in four African-American males between the ages of 20 and 29 are currently incarcerated, on probation or on parole (Prothrow-Stith, 1991).

Prison as a means of curtailing the seemingly inexorable growth in crime has not only acquired political and popular endorsement but also the support of some academic researchers. The National Academy of Sciences Panel on Criminal Justice concluded that between 1975 and 1989 the increase in the prison population had prevented between 10 to 15 per cent of violent crime (Roth, 1994). Block (1994) is even more bullish, arguing that the 10 states which expanded their prison populations the fastest in the last decade experienced a 20 per cent plus decline in overall crime rates, compared with a nine per cent rise in the 10 states where incarceration increased the least. Although this relationship has been vigorously questioned by some writers (for example Mendel, 1995) perhaps the most important point is that more and more Americans believe control and deterrence are working and are voting accordingly. Voting, that is, for more police to catch the criminals, who will eventually fill the prisons, and for laws and regulations to control the young people who it is widely believed are committing the bulk of the crime (Jordan and Arnold, 1995).

The control and regulation of young people has taken a number of forms. One has been a relentless attempt to impose prohibition on teenagers. 21 is now the minimum age for the possession and purchase of alcohol in all states. This was strengthened by the 1995 National Highway Bill which again financially penalised states failing to impose on drivers under 21 a minimum blood alcohol level one fourth that applied to adults. These laws have served to officially banish alcohol from the college campus and encourage the exclusion of young people from clubs and entertainment venues serving liquor. Furthermore, they have encouraged the ghettoisation of young people and promoted their detachment from the 'adult world'. Denied access to places where those over 21 go for relaxation and entertainment they are obliged to 'hang out' with others their age - on the streets, at cheap eating places or their room at home or on campus. It has promoted clandestine drinking, which some commentators and educationalists now consider to be approaching epidemic proportions (Wooden, 1995). Sympathetic adults and unscrupulous retailers furnish supplies which are smuggled onto campus for room parties, taken home or consumed at 'out-of-the-way' locations.

The attitude of campus police, university authorities and local law enforcement agencies varies. Some universities clearly 'overlook' consumption providing no damage or distur-

bance results. As one Student Affairs Officer explained, he tried to leave well alone but last year had 'closed down a Fraternity House after a 24 hour party which attracted five squad cars from the town police' (interview). Elsewhere a student counsellor boasted that their college had zero tolerance of alcohol with an uncompromising application of the rules supported by random dorm searches and automatic suspension awaiting those caught in possession. Similar variations occur off campus. At one high school students claimed local police were continuously monitoring them, trying to catch them in possession and used agent provocateurs to catch shopkeepers selling liquor and tobacco to teenagers. As a school student put it 'we go into the woods for a party ... the cops just seem to always turn up and break it up' (interview).

Police officers generally favoured the ban. A senior officer endorsed it, as most did, because it 'allows us to stop and search them (teenagers) whenever we want ... it's real handy. Lets them know who's in charge' (interview). A junior officer, in the same force, more cynically admitted it provided leverage over the kids and meant he never had to buy a six pack of beer now for 'it was easy to know where it is being left for pick up. You just go round and lift it before the kids do' (interview). It is not only on the street that the young people are searched. In Massachusetts the K-9 unit of the state police have been descending on schools to carry unannounced searches 'to pinpoint troublemakers and let students know they are watching'. Students are locked in the cafeteria while dogs search rooms, lockers and the grounds for alcohol and drugs (Associated Press, 1995). In Florida the St Petersburg police tried a different approach. They enrolled 'youthful' officers as students at a local High School as part of a sting operation. The officers after purchasing drugs and alcohol over a period of time eventually arrested eight students for dealing and numerous others for possession.

Some localities have extended the alcohol ban to tobacco. In Maine, for example, possession of tobacco by anyone under 18 is now punishable by fines of between \$100 and \$500, community service or both. To facilitate enforcement in one county, gangs of prisoners from the local jail cleared heavily wooded land around schools where students go to smoke. Whilst in Westbrook police staged a sting to arrest teenage smokers:

*Steve Lyons, a Westbrook police officer wearing plain clothes, told students smoking on public property in front of the school that he was taking pictures of them for the yearbook ... The students apparently believed Lyons, continued to smoke and posed for the camera. Lyons then flashed his police badge (McCall, 1995).*

Restrictions on tobacco, like those on alcohol, are defended on both health and crime prevention grounds. One Police Chief held the law to be essential because cigarette addiction kindled teenage crime:

*two 12-year-old girls broke into a Fowler Road home Friday to steal cigarettes. The homeowner surprised the girls, gave chase and caught them*

*Pickering said one of the girls explained in an interview with police, 'Me and my friend really needed a cigarette' (Hoey, 1995).*

Unofficially, however, police, without exception, justified it (often whilst breathing tobacco fumes over the interviewer) because it provided grounds for stopping and

searching the 'dirtbags'. It showed them who was the boss or as one officer put it, 'there may be a couple of gangs in town but they know we [the police] are the only one that counts' (interview). Stop and search procedures unambiguously drive that message home.

Control is also increasingly exercised via school contracts. The most common, comprise an agreement signed by both the parent(s) and student. These guarantee the latter will obey school rules and regulations, show respect for staff and property, attend when required, be punctual, complete assignments and not bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs or weapons onto school premises. Although not at present in general use in Britain, they are gaining popularity and have the active support of the Conservative government who promise legislation in the near future to remove legal 'obstacles' to their wholesale introduction (DFEE 1996). Generalised contracts of this sort are often augmented in the United States by more far-reaching agreements signed as a prerequisite for involvement in high status or popular school-based leisure and sporting activities. Sport and other coaches often extract from students agreements that they will at no time consume or possess alcohol, drugs and tobacco and will not 'break curfew' by being out of the home except for approved activities during specified times. The range of sporting and leisure activities provided by almost any American school far exceeds anything encountered in Britain. A disparity which is likely to grow given the inclusion in the 1994 Crime Bill of \$75 million of Federal funding for after-school programmes and a \$400 million budget spread over four years to develop programmes in poor areas (Economist 1994). Specialist coaches for individual sports and cultural activities are not only employed in most schools but given high status and generous budgets. Attendance at matches and other events by other students, parents and the general public lend these a degree of prestige outsiders often find difficult to fathom. Young people tend to accept as given that membership of the squad will require attendance at training camps prior to the season commencing and training most weekdays. One 16 year old explained how she would leave home at 04.30 to join the swimming team for training prior to school proper which commenced at 07.00. After school it was either competing yourself, watching others perform or taking part in an 'official' leisure activity. Finally around 17.00 it was home or to a friend's house to complete assignments. Even then the pressure did not relent for she was required to maintain a specified grade-point average to remain in the squad. Little wonder she found 'apart from school and my Saturday job I don't have time for anything' (interview).

The range of activities in schools (for example drama, music, contributing to peer counselling and teaching programmes, producing the school newspaper, community work and visual and performing arts) plus the size of the sports squads means that potentially there is a place for most young people. Therefore those not involved have either 'dropped out' or been suspended for infringements of the rules. Studies of American high schools highlight the array of coexisting sub-cultures within them (see for example Hollingshead, 1949; Coleman, 1961; Grinder, 1969; Lewis, 1977; Schwartz, 1987; Wooden, 1995). The designated names, like their respective icons of style, mutate but the notion that those who retain affiliation are safe remains constant. Danger resides in distance, in being beyond control. Common-sense explanations tell us good homes and good parents supervise and occupy their kids - always know their whereabouts, who they are with and what they are doing. Good kids for their part are wholeheartedly immersed in their school, as well as activities organised by churches

and other 'respectable' groups; or doing a part-time job. As a high ranking police officer in a New England town explained 'it is the Dirtbags who hang around. Messing up the town like they're messing up their lives' (interview). An opinion endorsed by James Alan Fox, criminal justice professor at Northeastern University who attributed 'the increasing lawlessness of children ... to children who aren't supervised especially after school' (Associated Press 1995a). Juxtapose such explanations to widespread fears regarding a perceived growth in juvenile crime, and curfews have, not surprisingly, emerged as a fashionable policy option.

### **Curfews**

Youth curfews are not new in the United States. Some cities and towns have had them for decades. San Diego first introduced a juvenile curfew in 1947 but did little to enforce it until 1995. Elsewhere, as a man in his 50s explained, things were different. In the small New England town where he grew up the Fire Department siren sounded at 21.30 warning kids they had 30 minutes 'to get on home'. Then again half an hour later 'telling you if you weren't the cops would pick you up. If they caught you; that is' (interview). The idea began to attract fresh attention in the 1970s when a number of places, most notably Detroit and Baltimore, enforced juvenile curfews as a crime reduction measure. Detroit initiated a curfew in 1959 which was fleetingly enforced in the 1970s but allowed to fall into disuse once it had helped police control and disrupt gang activity (Starr, 1983). According to Hunt and Weiner (1977) it was a success although they suspected it encouraged 'displacement' juvenile crime into neighbourhoods without curfews. Baltimore introduced a much more comprehensive programme with funding attached for youth centres to work with violators. They and their parent(s) not only faced the prospect of fines, community service and probation but were often forced to attend centres for compulsory family therapy. An initiative defended by advocates of the programme on the grounds that 'violators of the curfew law are teenagers who do not have a satisfying relationship with their parents' (Plotkin and Elias, 1977, p. 525).

During the 1980s a gradual increase in the number of authorities introducing or reactivating juvenile curfews can be discerned. Post 1990 the pace quickened and 'curfew fever' swept America as politicians sought to 'appear tougher on crime' (Blumner, 1994, p. 41). Currently thousands of small communities and three-quarters of America's 77 largest cities have curfews (Ruefle and Reynolds, 1995). Hawaii is the first to have a state-wide curfew but Florida, California and New Jersey are deliberating whether to follow suit. Curfews are characteristically justified because they:

- protect juveniles from becoming the victims of crime:
- reduce the likelihood that juveniles will engage in criminal activity:
- and assist parents in carrying out their responsibility to supervise their children.

Details vary, but most curfew regimes apply to those 17 and under and run from 22.30 through to 06.30. A growing number are being supplemented with daytime curfews operating during school hours - usually 09.00 to 14.30. However this is not always required as many localities have strict truancy ordinances allowing police to pick up anyone of school age out and about during term time. The decision of localities to introduce juvenile curfews has been challenged in the courts. As a consequence a number were withdrawn and re-written. This happened in Washington D.C. where the courts found the 1989 curfew to have violated the first Amendment Rights of young

people 'to freedom of speech ... to assemble ... and association' and the equal protection component of the fifth amendment since 'it irrationally distinguished between juveniles and non-juveniles' (Horowitz, 1991, p. 381-2). By 1995 these objections had been overcome and Washington acquired the curfew it had sought for so long (Janofsky, 1995). The ordinance adopted by Dallas has survived challenges in courts up to and including the Supreme Court; consequently many are using it as a template (Bureau of National Affairs 1993). Amongst these are Bridgton (Maine) which recently introduced one covering 'persons under the age of 18'. It applies to all young people loitering, walking, driving or riding about in a public place including not just the streets but also common areas 'in and about apartment buildings, office buildings, hospitals, schools, shops, and places of entertainment'. To comply with court judgements exceptions are allowed if the minor is:

- accompanied by their parent or guardian;
- involved in an emergency;
- engaged in an employment activity, or on the way to or from an employment activity, without any detour or stop except as necessary to drop off or pick up a co-employee;
- an errand directed by a parent or guardian, without detour or stop;
- on the sidewalk abutting the minor's home;
- attending a school, religious or governmental activity, which is supervised by adults, or travelling to or from such a school, religious, or governmental activity without detour or stop;
- attending a recreational activity sponsored by the Town of Bridgton, a civic organisation, or similar entity, which is supervised by adults, or travelling to or from such an activity without detour or stop;
- exercising rights protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution;
- married, or otherwise legally emancipated.

Although many curfew regimes, like Bridgton, rely solely on fines and court orders to achieve the desired result, some communities have linked implementation to substantive youth programmes. San Antonio, for example, introduced a curfew in 1991 and simultaneously raised spending on youth social and support programmes by \$2 million. Some of the funds were allocated to basketball and social events designed to offer 'prosocial' late night activities and prevent violations, or to functions taking place earlier in the evening to encourage alternative 'lifestyles'. Participants were also offered the incentive of discounts on food and apparel in local shops as well as advice, information and job training programmes (Banerjee, 1994; Ruefle and Reynolds, 1995).

Whatever the format, curfews appear popular. Police officers sometimes seem sceptical that sufficient resources will be allocated to ensure implementation but nevertheless generally favour their introduction. Believing, as the police spokesperson for Hartford (New Jersey) explained, it 'removes juveniles from harm's way, and it also removes them from participation in the drug scene and prostitution' (Dettmer, 1993). Or as the Police Chief of a New England town put it they were something of a last resort:

*If we don't do something, and do it soon, this country is going to fall apart. We have got to defeat crime before it defeats us. If the police don't do it people are going to start taking the law into their own hands. If I need a curfew to stop the kids wrecking this town that's ok with me and the rest of the citizens around here. We need to get those dirtbags off the streets. And the curfew is doing just that (interview).*

Some youth-orientated businesses have sought to legally obstruct introduction (Russell, 1993) but overall business has been a major advocate. Moves for a state-wide curfew in Florida emanated from the damage wrought to the tourist trade by the killing of a British tourist by four teenagers (Rohter, 1993). In Austin enforcement was welcomed after it produced an immediate 15 per cent improvement in sales as high spending adults replaced low income juveniles on the streets (Banerjee, 1994). Politicians have been similarly enthusiastic. In New Jersey curfew legislation was passed by both Houses without dissent (King, 1993). Apart from challenges in the courts by ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) affiliated groups opposition appears to have been minimal. In New England towns where votes have been taken on whether or not to introduce a curfew, support, one is continually told, has been overwhelmingly in favour.

Rightly or wrongly the enthusiasm for curfews seems to flow from a widely held belief that they work. Certainly the evidence appears, at first sight, conclusive. In Houston the crime rate apparently fell in the two years following introduction by 22 per cent (Campbell, 1993). New Orleans, with possibly the strictest of all curfews obliging young people to be off the streets during weekdays by 20.00, claims a drop of 29 per cent in armed robbery, a 29 per cent fall in auto theft and 26 per cent fewer murders (Morial, 1995). In San Jose a curfew coinciding with school hours has, we are told, reduced daytime burglaries by 70 per cent (Wilce, 1994), whilst in Dade County (Florida) the police report 39 per cent fewer robberies of tourists post implementation (Economist, 1994).

Yet, such claims have to be treated with some care. Blumner (1994, p. 41) has argued 'there is absolutely no empirical evidence that curfews are effective'. But doubts such as this are likely to count for little when set besides the claims of ebullient supporters such as the Mayor of New Orleans who after two years holds:

*the statistics prove our curfew is working. This new law is keeping youth off the streets and out of trouble. It is helping families be more responsive to one another and more responsible to their communities. (Morial, 1995)*

### **Importing into the UK**

As we have seen, influential American commentators believe a combination of tough policing, tough sentencing and tough jails is working. Certainly the crime rate nationally has fallen. British policy makers are showing mounting interest. Jeffreys (1996) reporting from New York, where the police assert they have 'taken back' the city 'block by block' and the murder rate has returned to below the 1973 level, tells us

*Last month the Metropolitan Police were here, riding around Harlem with the NYPD. In August officials from the Home Office paid a visit to the Bronx. Next month the Met will be back again, to study weapons control. In the past year more than 10 MPs have spent time in what was a world class crime zone.*

At one level such enthusiasm is strange. American social policy has been almost an unbroken catalogue of failure. That the USA may at last be achieving a marginal reversal of historic trends which have seen crime statistics spiral ever upwards for decades is noteworthy. However, rather than seeking to copy policies which have



achieved what may be only a temporary respite we should be seeking to learn from the appalling mistakes which generated the crime wave in the first place. We should be asking why, even after the current improvement, they still have a murder rate 10 times our own; why they have two per cent of their male population in prison compared to our 0.3 per cent; and why their prison population is set to double within the next decade putting one in 25 of their male population behind bars.

Gross inequalities of income; probably the worst welfare provision to be encountered in any democratic industrialised nation; and a pervading atmosphere of brutality and violence (which cultivates a debilitating fear of public space and strangers amongst the general population) are, like the crime wave they feed, not worthy of envy. Only a Conservative government infatuated with the prospect of removing all impediments to the free play of the market could avoid questioning why the United States needs to introduce the Draconian measures it has, and focus attention on their failures rather than their Lilliputian achievements in this area.

Already the UK government has imported the Boot Camps - the first (Thorn Cross Young Offenders Institute) opens this year. Indeed it is taking the idea to its logical conclusion by placing some 'hard-core' young offenders in the 'glasshouse' or military police prison for between six to twelve months (Fairhall, 1996; Bellamy, 1996). As is par for the course, inconvenient research has been ignored. The American Boot Camps have not reduced the reoffending rates of their graduates in comparison to similar offenders released from prisons or placed on probation (MacKenzie and Souryal, 1994). We also have, at the time of writing, a Home Secretary who believes prison works claiming 'it deters many people from committing crime. And it protects the public from danger' (Howard, 1995, p. 3). To prove the point he is intent on extending mandatory sentencing and a 'three strikes and out' policy which will guarantee an explosion in the prison population. We already have truant roundup programmes in operation (Jeffs and Smith, 1994) and all-party support for school contracts. Finally, the Government has signalled its intention to transform the Probation Service into an American style parole agency and have proposed payment by results for probation officers. All that now remains to complete the package is the adoption of the juvenile curfew.

Juvenile curfews may well surface as a vote-winning policy during the forthcoming election. UK politicians, like their American counterparts, would find them 'appealing crime-fighting tools because they're easy to invoke, they sound tough, and they are popular with the electorate' (Banerjee, 1994). In the context of an electorate where fear of crime tops the list of 'life worries' (Home Office, 1996) anything which indicates a political determination to 'reclaim the streets' (as Jack Straw put it) will prove tempting. Curfews have already been piloted by one Labour controlled authority, North Tyneside. The experiment collapsed partly because the police were reluctant on legal grounds to hold the children they picked up in custody. Consequently they were obliged to ferry them to where their parent(s) were. Also because parent(s) and youth workers were unwilling to co-operate, for as a community worker explained the appointed time was 'so ridiculously early kids were being lifted on their way home from the youth club and classes' (interview), little should be read into this failure. Supported by legislation which removed any ambiguities regarding the legal position of the police and bolstered it with fines providing a serious deterrent it is possible to



envisage both them and the public giving juvenile curfews a cautious welcome. Some community and youth workers, especially if they are offered a counselling and support role, might be delighted to fall in line. An orientation that could be strengthened with the realisation that within curfew regimes there can be a greatly enhanced role for youth provision by local governments, schools and voluntary organizations. Youth workers and youth organizations in the United States have been quick to take advantage of the situation; and the willingness of some UK workers to collaborate with Truancy Watch programmes in areas such as Staffordshire and Newcastle indicates some will go wherever the money draws them. Finally traders and local authorities anxious to 'increase the comfort factor for others, notably senior citizens, who may feel threatened by the presence of groups of teenagers hanging around shopping arcades' (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1994) are unlikely to contest the introduction of curfews.

### **The case against**

If juvenile curfews, limited or general, are proposed then arguing that they are ineffective on the basis of the American experience will not be easy. As a short-term crime reduction measure they may well be productive, although this may not be the case over longer periods of time, say three or four years. Baltimore which has had a curfew for nearly twenty years now has double the national average of juvenile arrests for assault (Bannerjee, 1994). Reading too much into such data is risky and does little to counteract the overriding impression that curfews are a success story.

All the data presented by advocates of curfews is suspect and partial. Despite 'large number of youths arrested for curfew violations' (Ruefle and Reynolds, 1995, p.351) there is still no recent sustained empirical research on the impact of curfews. What is more there is the ever-present danger that like is not being compared with like. Curfews may be successful over a short period precisely because of the high rate of offending in some areas. In other words, the problems are so great that more Draconian measures - through their shock value - have an impact. Yet what works in the special circumstances of many United States cities and towns is unlikely to apply in the same way to UK experiences.

Swapping critiques, however justified, on the methodology of data collation or the way it is brandished, will, judging by the American experience, have scant impact on a debate. This is especially so when it is conducted in the current climate where any policy offering a promise, however slight, of success and an aura of toughness is greeted with enthusiasm by politicians of both major parties. Resisting curfews on the basis that they are ineffective is unlikely to be an option.

Ignoring youth curfews for the present on the assumption they will fail and ultimately fall into disuse is not a viable option. Bad laws rarely vanish so painlessly. Rather they linger to be employed by the police and courts at their discretion - in particular at given times and in specific localities to control 'unpopular' minorities. The use of archaic statutes to make the lives of New Age Travellers intolerable or harass Black young people in public areas illustrate how illiberal laws once enacted are extremely difficult to remove. Sadly they do not fade away. Indeed, if the American experience teaches us anything it is that enthusiasm for curfews is cyclical. Once formulated they will almost certainly resurface with monotonous regularity to plague succeeding generations. It is best to resist them from the onset - but why and on what grounds?

First, juvenile curfews are discriminatory and fundamentally wrong. Wrong because they criminalise perfectly legal and acceptable behaviour on the grounds of the age. Walking the street, standing in public places talking to friends, moving quietly and peaceably from one place to another, going to a late night movie are all harmless activities which should never be criminalised - whatever the time of day. To select young people and criminalise them for doing what the rest of the population can freely do is doubly discriminatory. Youth curfews identify young people as an enemy within, a dangerous other, therefore curfews must be seen as morally repugnant and divisive. As Harriet Bradley (1996) has argued, age is the neglected dimension of stratification. Similar legal intervention which criminalised individuals on the basis of their sex or ethnicity would not be acceptable in a civilised society and discrimination on the basis of age should also be rejected as unjust and indefensible.

Second, curfews would sanction, even encourage, discrimination. Abundant evidence already exists to show the 'stop and search' powers and adversarial policing are disproportionately employed against young Black and working class males. It requires scant imagination to envisage those localities where the curfew would be most energetically enforced or those individuals who would be most frequently apprehended for violating it. As Loader (1996, pp. 25-26) has shown, prevailing public discourses around youth have helped to feed practices that are concerned with both the routine supervision of young peoples use of public space, and with a paternalistic pedagogy geared to the production of 'respectable' citizens. Curfews provide a further mechanism by which young people - and particularly those who occupy public space in ways that do not fit dominant ideas about what is proper or safe - become police property (ibid, pp. 22-29).

Third, it is often argued in defence of curfews that given young people commit a disproportionately high number of crimes this measure would protect potential victims, young and old alike. This is not, we believe, a compelling enough justification for setting aside the rights of young people. The imposition of a blanket curfew would punish far more innocent than guilty individuals. It also isolates age as the determining factor rather than say gender (which is a far more significant indicator of recorded criminal behaviour). It is difficult to see how a curfew on young women could be justified on this basis. Finally, if the safety and comfort of potential victims is a criterion then a far more powerful case exists statistically for a curfew to be imposed on all males over 16 and under 35 than on young people below 16.

Fourth, youth curfews are always championed as a way of protecting young people from danger. At best such claims are dubious. As Horowitz shows of the twenty-six juveniles killed in the District of Columbia in 1988 when advocates of a curfew were at their most vociferous 'not one was killed at a time or place that he or she would not have been had the curfew been in effect' (1991, p. 413). Police officers also exhibit a noticeable reluctance to claim curfews reduce the consumption of drugs by young people. What they always tell you is that it takes such activities 'off the streets'. Removing young people from the street for their own protection is as unacceptable as curfewing women for the same reason. It is the liberty of perpetrators not their actual or potential victims which should be curtailed.

If, or perhaps more likely when, the demand for juvenile curfews reaches the same intensity in the UK as it has in the United States the case against will not be readily

listened to. However it will have to be put. Hopefully youth, community and other welfare workers will be willing to argue it even in the face of intense lobbying. Some of the community groups with whom they work may well perceive curfews as a way of controlling crime in their neighbourhood. Equally, many may find the youth agencies which employ them enthusiastically collaborating in the implementation of a curfew package which includes funding for 'prosocial' work and the counselling of violators. If so it will be fascinating to see how many will find glib excuses whereby they can overlook the manifest injustice of the legislation in order to 'get at the funding'. If that happens we may hear a senior youth work manager parroting the defence offered by the Chief of the Metropolitan Police:

*It is not our Bill it's Parliament's Bill and it became Parliament's Act but, in a democracy, we have to enforce the law ... Parliament has to look at laws to stop the minority of people destroying the quality of life for others. I guess the Criminal Justice Act was an attempt to do that. (Interview in Youth Clubs, April 1995)*

Hopefully if we are prepared from the onset vigorously to oppose youth curfews that unedifying prospect will not come to pass.

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## LOCAL HEROES

### *Violent Racism, Localism and Spacism among Asian and White Young People*

COLIN WEBSTER

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#### **Introduction**

*...to change one's geography...may well be to change one's world  
(Goldberg, 1993, p.205).*

Violent racism influences where black people can go and what they can do. It also continues to create a perception within minority ethnic communities that they are under protected and over controlled by the police and the criminal justice system. The response of policy orientated research has been to measure the reporting, prevalence and patterning of violent racism, yet little is known about its causes or the contexts in which it is sustained or reduced. The study reported here attempted to redress this imbalance between description and explanation by looking at violent racism over six years among several hundred Asian and white young people in the North of England. The findings were that violent racism declined in the area studied, and this is partly explained by the responses of victims found in vigilante forms of self-defence against perpetrators. This did, however, produce unintended consequences that on the one hand white young people perceived themselves rather than Asians to be victims of violent racism, and on the other that young people's 'colour coding' of areas as 'white' or 'Asian' as confirmed and reinforced.

#### **Limitations of Victim Surveys**

Most research into violent racism has attempted to measure the size of the problem through local or national victim surveys to uncover the prevalence and patterning of violent racism among young adults and adults, and most local surveys have been carried out in London (Maung and Mirlees-Black, 1994; Layton-Henry, 1984; CRE, 1987; Seagrave, 1989; Saulsbury and Bowling, 1991). Whilst surveys have focused on: the discrepancy between self-reported and officially reported and recorded incidents; victimisation patterns that demonstrate that some groups are disproportionately at risk depending on where they live; and definitional problems of 'racial motivation', this approach has contributed little to our understanding of why and under what conditions violent racism occurs. In counting 'incidents' and their frequency, a 'one-off random incident' perspective has come to dominate the criminal justice system and police, local authority housing, and school policies. Agencies concerned with the problem of defining violent racism and racism do so within a legalistic framework which emphasises that every incident has to be judged in its own terms, and within the time frame of the criminal act itself and its immediate antecedents and motivations (whether it was racially motivated or not). According to this view violent racism is an individualised criminal act understood in terms of inter-personal and situational factors, rather than there being any wider historical or social context (Husbands, 1989, 1993; Hesse, 1995; Keith, 1995; Panayi, 1993). Furthermore, the political antiracism movement mirrors this 'official' policy view in encouraging a blanket labelling of all incidents in which the parties are different race as racially motivated because all whites are seen as essentially racist (see Miles, 1993; Braham et. al., 1992, for a critical discussion).

The survey approach although undoubtedly useful in measuring the size of the problem has tended to ignore younger populations and areas outside of London. It is unable to capture repeat victimisation and ignores the social, political and historical contexts which explain the persistence and entrenchment of violent racism in British localities. We know very little about younger people's experience of violent racism, yet this population is likely to have the highest rates of victimisation and perpetration (Webster, 1995b), or whether racism and violent racism takes different forms and involves different problems in smaller provincial towns compared to the large metropolitan cities. This methodological, demographic and geographical narrowness has resulted in neglect of some important questions about the underlying mechanisms, processes and contexts that might further our knowledge of why and under what conditions violent racism occurs.

### **Methodological Alternatives: Triangulation**

Victim surveys need to be complemented with other types and sources of data to gain a more rounded knowledge of violent racism. Triangulation means comparing different types of data which focus on the same problem to see if the different data sets agree, and to achieve a more rounded view of the problem. In this study, qualitative and process aspects of violent racism were explored through giving voice to young people's experience of racial harassment and violence in an area having a notorious public record of racial 'incidents'. A triangulated research strategy was chosen comprising a four year cohort study of seventy perpetrators and victims, a victim survey of 10% of the 13-19 year old population living in the area (n=412), and a follow up study of 65 young people. The 13-19 year old population studied was representative of the ethnic and class characteristics of the area and was made up of male and female Asians and whites.

The cohort study was generated from a five year Home Office funded evaluation of the role that the Youth Service might play in influencing and reducing crime and violent racism, and offering victim support (Webster, 1993b). Cohort members were victims and/or perpetrators of violent racism participating in a detached youth work project which contacted them at 13 or 14 and worked to influence their behaviour and offer support over the five years of the project's funding. Cohort members were followed over their four or five year project involvement and were asked over time what had happened to them and what had changed in the locality in their experiences of violent racism. This enabled discovery of whether and to what extent young people had continued perpetrating racist violence or desisted from such acts and why this had happened. We were also interested in whether victim experiences had escalated or not, and changes in victim-offender relationships. Overall, the project demonstrated considerable success in influencing and reducing violent racism among the young people it came into contact with. It was less successful however, in reducing crime, especially among groups of more persistent and serious offenders. The findings of the survey, which was administered in 1992, were in many respects similar to those found in other surveys of racial victimisation, the main difference being the higher prevalence of victimisation compared to other surveys which suggests that younger people are more at risk of being victimised than young adults (see Anderson, 1994). The survey did find however that more whites than Asians said that they had been victims of violent racism and abuse, and that the same proportion of Asians as whites said they had perpetrated violent racism and abuse. Further, that these experiences were highly patterned according to locality



and there was a consistent perception and fear of violence and abuse based in territorial rivalries. This was discovered when we asked survey respondents to mentally map localities considered safe or dangerous, and those they avoided and to give reasons why they avoided areas. The follow up study was designed to find out in more detail the meaning of these responses. Clearly, the unexpected finding, supported across the range of data, that more whites than Asians perceived themselves to be victims of racist violence, problematises accepted views of what constitutes racism and its victims. Much of the article then, addresses the problem and the context of the ways in which young whites come to describe and construct Asian on white violence as 'racist'.

*The combined data from the three methods used revealed that violent racism and abuse in the area studied had changed in pattern and character such that white on Asian attacks had declined and Asian on white had increased in the context of an unfolding story of Asian vigilantism based on territorialism.* In following cohort members from 1988 to 1992 it became increasingly apparent that the dynamic processes underpinning the patterning of violent racism were changing. It is to the main findings and explanations of these processes that we now turn.

### **Findings**

Generally, our study suggested that violent racism is patterned rather than random (Hesse, 1992, 1993a). It becomes entrenched in some localities and not others; involves some groups of young people and not others; it is persistent and long term in the way it affects individuals and the places they live. However, what was striking among the young people we spoke to, was the pervasiveness and 'normality' of racism and the possibility of violent racism as a routine aspect of everyday life, rather than it being a deviant or pathological activity occurring at the margins of local life (Webster, 1995a). We found little evidence of organised and coherent neo-facist ideologies of 'race' typical of a collective criminal form of behaviour involving Far Right groups (Bjorgo and Witte, 1993). We did, however, find some victims who were repeatedly subject to escalating attacks over quite long periods of time. Attacks involved a range of behaviour from intimidation, abuse, spitting, and chasing to violence. We were to discover that these practices of violent racism to 'name, maim and claim', had as their rationale the aim to intimidate and disrupt contested areas of ethnic settlement (Cohen, 1993).

Specifically, the survey found that 40% of white young males compared to only a third of Asian young males, reported that they had at some time been the victim of racially motivated violence. In contrast, the relationship of white and Asian females to public forms of racial exclusion and violence, although significant, took a quite different and more complex direction compared to males because of their gendered positioning towards public sources of danger and threat. For them, public forms of violent racism were on a continuum with general male harassment. We have focused more on males because the data on females would require a different and separate analysis, which has been made elsewhere (Webster, 1995a). The specific findings for males were puzzling and although they echoed official racial incident statistics for the region, which had shown a rising incidence of Asian on white attacks, and declining white on Asian attacks in the period 1989 to 1991, they were nevertheless inconsistent with the findings of other self-report victim surveys which had demonstrated that white people were primarily 'perpetrators' and black people 'victims' in situations of racially motivated violence and harassment (see, for example,

Maung and Mirlees-Black, 1994; Saulsbury and Bowling, 1992; Newham Crime Survey, 1987). Through careful examination of our different data sets, the research was able to conclude that white victimisation was indeed likely to have been prevalent at the time the survey was administered. The main difference between the two groups was in their experiences of the intensity and nature of violent racism. Asians were much more likely than whites to have experienced repeat and cyclical victimisation. Once victimisation had taken place it was likely to reoccur and escalate in frequency and seriousness-a factor that the survey could only partially pick up.

### **Explaining the decrease of white on Asian violence**

Despite having been attacked by Asians, whites reported lower levels of fear than Asians. This discrepancy between prevalence of attacks and fear of attacks within the white group pointed towards different historical experiences of the intensity and longevity of violent racism between the Asian and white population. Nevertheless, the apparent decrease of white on Asian violence remained to be explained. There were a number of factors - contexts and mechanisms - in the locality that might have, at least in part, accounted for why violence against Asians had declined. These were:

1. Changes in the availability and use of drugs were associated with changes in behaviour among persistent and hard core perpetrators of violent racism. Local agencies and the young people themselves concurred in suggesting that alcohol use, always associated in the experience of Asians with white violence, had declined compared to other drug use. As one Asian young person explained:

*we do not get any more white raids into our areas. Not at all. Because we sit and smoke with [white] guys, you know, we smoke draw with them... No jobs or anything so they take to violence, fighting, doing something, organising gangs, groups and now there are drugs so everybody has to mix with drugs.*

Drug use, it was said, had influenced the racial situation in the area among a wider youth population because of a linked chain of supplying and selling among certain Asian and white young people.

2. A decline in violent racism coincided with a change in the ethnic participation of two large youth clubs situated in predominantly Asian areas which had previously been used almost exclusively by whites, and instead became almost exclusively used by Asians. This change in use was an important factor in creating a sense of ethnic solidarity among young Asians in a situation where there had been few safe leisure outlets available to them. These developments arose from the detached youth work project mentioned earlier and had the effect of taking Asians off the streets, thus reducing their availability as victims, and reducing important sources of white racism within Asian areas.
3. An increased knowledgeability among older Asian (and white) young people about where and when racial incidents were likely to take place had created avoidance strategies. Knowledgeability about the timing and location of incidents and 'topographical' knowledge of the 'lie of the land' in terms of foliage, lighting, refuges, ethnic residential concentration, and community surveillance, reduced risk and therefore the likelihood of violence.

4. The police and local schools had developed more effective racial incident monitoring and recording practices, and more robust policies aimed at reducing violent racism in and around schools, where many incidents had occurred in the past. At the same time any displacement effect this might have caused was undermined by other developments mentioned here.
5. Asian youngsters became increasingly adept in establishing, maintaining and extending 'safe areas' through loosely organised self-defence groups that deterred white incursions into their areas. This informal vigilantism (see Johnston, 1992, pp.159-179) developed alongside demographic changes within certain predominantly Asian areas where the Asian community was longer established, creating a disproportionate presence of older Asian males. These demographic assets meant they were better equipped to defend their areas. Previously, younger Asians had been intimidated by older whites. These older Asian young people, then, had come to have a creditable presence in their own areas in terms of creating defensible space based on territory. Asian territorialism however, also had the effect of creating white perceptions of these areas as 'no-go areas' for whites, and that any white on Asian attacks would invite swift retribution.

It was this last point about white fear that was to prove decisive in explaining the reduction of white on Asian attacks. The overall effect was that Asians were able to 'own' their residential areas and certain parks, whereas whites continued to dominate the town centre, where there was in effect a curfew placed on Asians. The prevalence of white victimisation, however, raised the fundamental question of what 'racism' and 'racial motivation' meant in the lives of the young people we interviewed.

### **Explaining the increase of Asian on white violence**

Both groups, Asian and white, defined their comprehension of personal safety territorially in that they expressed anxiety about going near or into each other's areas, shown when we asked young people to construct a 'mental map' of areas they frequented, and areas they avoided in which the white and Asian maps mirrored each other. Most Asian informants stated that they stayed in their own areas, and avoided white estates and the town centre in the evenings for fear of attack, and only tended to venture out if they had access to a car:

*'Asian areas are safe - we know each other and we stick together'..... 'We avoid white areas, unless we've got transport, then we go and see what's happening'.... 'I stay in Asian areas. No one will attack me, because they're the same people as me, they're normal.'*

Although white young people said that they avoided certain places where there might be trouble, on the whole they felt they could go anywhere in the town. When pressed most whites qualified this by saying that they would avoid certain areas where Asians lived since they would be attacked because they were white:

*'A few years ago we (whites) could go down to Asian areas - it would be mel-low - but if we go down now, we would be expecting a kicking'.... 'I wouldn't go to (Asian) areas because you get your head beaten in by a load of Pakis'.... 'They (Asians) feel safe down there, we feel safe up here'.... 'Its just if you walk through their areas, they start shouting "white bastards."'*

However, this mirroring or 'equivalence' between Asian and white perceptions of safety and threat hides a local history of changes in the relative power 'positionings' of Asians and whites. It was these changes that led to a situation in which *whites were able to exaggerate threats from Asians, although this may well have worked the other way around - Asian exaggeration of white threats*. We are *not* arguing that whites were being untruthful, and we do not deny that at the level of individual experience and perception some Asians *were* a threat and *did* attack whites at certain times and in certain places. Indeed it is almost certainly the case that significant numbers of white survey respondents *had* been abused and attacked by Asians. What we *are* arguing is that the survey findings, which are a cross section of what is happening at a particular time, need to be placed in the context of an overwhelming dominance of white spatial hegemony in the town where Asians are 'ghettoised' in four inner areas.

Both groups avoid each other's areas out of fear of violent racism, yet changes in the meaning of 'racism' went hand in hand with changes in territorialism, so that 'racism' understood as whites being victimised by Asians was predicated on Asians contesting white territorialism. The sequence of events - putative cause and effect - were that some *whites*, despite their increasing anxieties about 'Asian' areas, initially felt in control of their areas, and unrestricted in their movements, whilst at the same time, through a growing resentment and hostility towards Asians, sought to invade certain streets, parks and areas considered to be 'Asian', attacking and trying to drive out their inhabitants. We would locate this period as 1985-1989. Because of factors already mentioned, white territorialism became increasingly limited in its scope and was subsequently modified by an increasing Asian response and resistance to its destabilising effects on Asian areas (1988-1992). The form of this *Asian* response was to oppose white resentment through carving defensible spaces out of a hostile racist environment. Violent racism, as a result, substantially declined in the area (from around 1991 onwards). A situation was created then, which offered conditions where whites were able to construct a discourse in which they defined racism in terms of their own status as victims, even to the extent of sometimes seeing themselves as inhabiting small white enclaves surrounded by a hostile Asian environment. Whilst *inverting* the '*real*' geographies of power and position between Asians and whites, this *imaginary geography* had a basis in fact at a *particular time* - some whites were being attacked by some groups of Asians who created for themselves, what Cohen (1993) calls a 'nationalism of neighbourhood'.

The *real* geography of the town changed through changes in the territorial patterning of violent racism in ways that resulted in a territorial *settlement* between Asians and whites based on a relatively stable and agreed racialisation of space. Racist restrictions and exclusions placed on Asians by white territorialism, had by extension incubated a culture of solidarity and resistance among Asian young people. Over the period, what began as aggressive white territorialism, ended as the establishment of 'safe areas' through Asians challenging the territorial preferences of whites. For Asians the intractability of their victim experiences was overcome as their social isolation - an important cause of racial victimisation - was reduced. Whites, on the other hand, developed a growing awareness of an Asian 'offensive' and experiences of being attacked by Asians. White territorialism inadvertently generated an Asian challenge aimed at 'turning the tables on whites', which created those very conditions that whites

complained about to the study - that attacks on Asians had declined and attacks on whites had increased, enabling white young people to portray racism as something that black people inflict on whites in the form of violent racism and abuse aimed at whites, and that Asians demand special treatment. An unintended consequence for Asians was that their loose defensive mobilisation had the effect of establishing safe areas and extending racialised territories and spaces on different and more favourable terms than was the case before, at the expense of reproducing and consolidating already predetermined 'ethnic areas' and territorial boundaries - 'we have our places, they have their's' - rather than challenging the very existence of spatial apartheid in the first place.

It was this territorial context and these social mechanisms found in the locality *at the time of the study*, which demonstrated that whites were indeed being threatened and attacked by Asians in the context of an unfolding story of Asian defence of their territory, and retaliations against whites they perceived to be racist, and against some who were not.

### **Local Heroes**

Within the processes analysed we were able to identify different groups hidden by what are often seen as sociologically and culturally homogeneous majority and minority ethnic groups. The categories 'Asian' and 'white' serve to hide highly differentiated responses to violent racism within and between the two groups. Focusing here on 'Asians', the nature of their 'defence' and retaliation against white racism revealed distinctive groups. Importantly, these groups differed according to factors such as whether their responses to racism were 'respectable' or not; their involvement in drug use and criminality; their different rates of victimisation, and so on. I have called them the Conformists, Experimenters, Heroes, Ethnic Brokers and Internalisers.<sup>1</sup> It was primarily the Heroes who were responsible for setting up vigilante groups aimed at defending Asian areas and attacking some whites.

The *Conformists* generally kept out of trouble and avoided any situation in which there might be violent racism. They identify with and defer to community elders and traditions of 'public propriety' (see Cohen, 1979, p. 124),<sup>2</sup> honour, prestige (*izzat*) and shame. They prefer to take the advice of their Elders to 'turn the other cheek' in situations of racial provocation.

*Well, when my father came from Pakistan he was 50 years old and he had a lot of trouble with white people and he used to say to me 'stay on the safe side .. and don't get mixed up with fights or anything like that.'*

This strong sense of propriety within the Muslim community which relates in complex ways with the more devotional aspects of Muslim culture and its sense of *izzat* (honour) and *Biraderi* (the social network of friendship and kinship relationships) (see Hippler and Lueg, 1995; Lewis, 1994), institutes the split between 'respectable' and 'rough' responses to racism within the community. The conformists respond in 'appropriate' ways, that is to ignore violent racism or even deny that it is happening, whereas the heroes are its 'rough' challengers (with its charge of latent criminality and disorder - see Jefferson, 1993). The conformists, like their parent culture, tended to blame and implicate other Asian young people for their involvement in violent racism, suggesting that those 'who get into trouble with white youths' have 'problems with their attitude'.

The *Experimenters* tended to take risks and move around different areas in the town. As a consequence they experienced much higher rates of racial victimisation than conformists. They were likely to rebel against their parent culture and its public proprieties, and demonstrate a fierce independence from their parent culture. Their cultural preferences and tastes are for those elements of music and video culture that emphasise *fusion* and *hybridity* - 'modern' Hindi films and 'Indie' music, Bhangra, and a 'pick n' mix' orientation to drug use. There were some young people (both Asian and white) who, because they possessed a range of cultural registers and repertoires, were confident and at ease across ethnic and racial boundaries. These 'go-betweeners' or *ethnic brokers* (see Werbner, 1991) tended to act as 'fences' and dealt drugs. In spite of widespread racial hostility, participation in local drug cultures brought them into extensive contact with whites. These moments of contact, although fleeting and ephemeral, seem to allow a relaxation of rigid and fixed racialised positions, without this altering wider racial animosities.

In contrast to males, Asian Muslim girls and young women were afraid of what they perceived to be increased racial harassment, abuse and in some cases physical attack because Asian young males were better able to defend themselves. White racism that had previously been directed towards Asian males had become redirected towards females who become 'easier targets' for white male and female perpetrators:

*They [the white youth] are shit scared of the Asian boys. They can't pick on them anymore as they fight back and beat them up and stuff. So they take it out on us 'cos we can't fight back, so we get all the shit and verbal abuse now. (Young Asian women)*

Asian girls and young women become softer and less risky targets for the perpetrators of racial harassment and abuse. Their victimisation is compounded by a situation whereby they are neither able to fight back nor report incidents to male friends or relations because of the rules of public propriety that apply in what is a close knit patriarchal Muslim community. Consequently they are left with little choice but to *internalise* abuse and attacks against them in the context of powerful informal pressures and sanctions that are applied to discourage any public display of impropriety associated with resistance or defence against racial abuse, harassment and violence. Many young women felt that if they reported abuse or threat to others then they would be placed in the position of being blamed for inviting or provoking such attacks. On the other hand reporting to young Asian males would be seen as complicity in provoking fights, and in any case young women fear the retaliation from perpetrators that might follow from such actions. They are therefore positioned in a classic 'double jeopardy' at the precise moment of a worsening situation of racial harassment directed towards Asian females. They have not been able to respond to their fear in the way that male youngsters have and are isolated in strategies of disavowal of racial harassment so as to 'survive' both in their own and the white community. As one young Asian woman said, in summing up the isolated and impossible situation of facing two ways at the same time, 'If you fight you cry'.

Finally the *Heroes* are generally older and experienced combatants - 'veterans' - admired by younger Asians for their capacity to provide protection and defend Asian territory. *It is this group more than any other among Asians that are held responsible for defending Asian territory and attacking whites, and have influenced*



*young white perceptions of Asians as a threat in ways disproportionate to their actual numbers in the Asian youth population.* These loosely organised vigilante groups are led by 'toughies' - physically strong, big and 'hard' Pakistani youth who regulate or patrol given or claimed areas or territories. They can be called upon to defend shops, property and younger youths who are attacked either by whites or even other Asian youths. Heroes were more likely than either conformists or experimenters to be involved in criminality. At the height of inter-racial fighting, they were associated with martial arts and weight training cultures - groups called themselves Ninja Gangs, and were responsible for carrying out attacks against known white racists, and going into white areas to intimidate whites.

Heroes oppose the authority of the Muslim parent culture because of what is seen by them as its mealy-mouthed and hypocritical response to violent racism and harassment. In turn, Asian elders chastise this group for bringing dishonour upon the community. Increasing violent racism in the 1980s saw an increasing frustration among Asian youth about the ability or willingness of the police to tackle violent racism. Some groups, especially as they got older, responded to this situation by committing themselves to a retributive form of 'rough justice' against white aggression. This growing self-reliance to protect themselves from attack depended on a level of organisation based in area and ethnic group, and more recently, the communications technology offered by mobile telephones. This enabled rapid responses to racial incidents through a well established network. Heroes or 'veterans', in particular, reported marked improvements in levels of safety in the area as a result of their imposition of a settlement between Asian and white protagonists which had identified and apportioned territory, a settlement increasingly recognised and respected by white youths. Compared to the past, white 'Viking' raids had become less and less indiscriminate, almost, it was said, non-existent. Nevertheless, younger Asians maintained a residue of fear and were still anxious about being attacked or 'looked at' offensively by whites.

Resistance to white racism was founded on a particular local form of working class Muslim community and *young British Muslim identity*, which derived from a parent culture having a common class and geographic provenance. Whilst some Muslim Asian young people may not see themselves as religious and pious as their elders, they do see themselves as belonging to a community of faith. However, the informal controls on Muslim youth from their parent culture are considerable, and more often than not, are experienced as oppressive. On the other hand, the community's relatively homogeneous close-knit social structure and cultural isolation was also its strength in containing and ultimately resisting white racism through mobilising networks and solidarities based in *Biraderi*. However, the absence of an Asian middle class meant that 'respectable' responses to violent racism through local political influence were not available to the parent culture. Indeed the Asian community - both Pakistani and Bangladeshi - was, according to the survey, overwhelmingly working class and suffered 60% male and 95% female unemployment. The highly differentiated responses to white racism among young people found in the study was arguably conditioned by this fact. It was the Local Heroes, operating as much *against* the common wisdom of the parent culture and its 'respectable' sense of public propriety, as they were *resistant* and *retaliatory* towards white racism, who were left with little choice but to 'stand and fight when the time is right', sometimes meting out rough justice to whites.



### **Racism, Spacism and Localism**

The term *localism* in the title of this paper connotes the state of being local; affection for a place; provincialism. The underlying argument is that the form of racism being described and analysed is both specific to and confined to place; it belongs to the locality studied. It is a form of racism that articulates, is inscribed and refers to a delimited geography of place. Wider ideological forms of cultural or political racism become mediated by social and geographical referents that are specific and concrete to 'being born and bred' in the town. The following excerpts from an extended discussion between a youth worker and a group of sixteen year old white males living in the locality serve to illustrate this point:

Group member: *When you have lived in [the town] all your life you grow up like a [town] lad - there are too many Pakis.*

Youth worker: *Don't you see that those people were born in [the town]?*

Group member: *You think they are all taking over, you can't go in the park without them there.*

Youth worker: *I would say that is a typical attitude for [the town].*

Group member: *Yes it is but you get that bred into you when you live in [the town].*

This sense of belonging is invested with a myth of origins which supports local patriotisms and prides of place through maintaining strong internal boundaries against those perceived to be outsiders, white as well Asian. Here territory is lived through an immediate presence of threat and physical aversion. In this example both the perpetrator and victim were white:

*I like [the town] I am proud to live in [the town], it give us some kind of buzz... if you go anywhere else and you say you come from [the town] they hit you - mind, we hit people who come from out of town...someone said they came from Burnley and someone said right you bastard and thumped him -the only reason was he didn't come from [the town].*

Theoretical explanations for the type of racism we have described and analysed are found in Cohen who describes the racialisation of space as involving the 'colour coding' of particular areas and places as 'white' or 'black' which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy articulated through images of confrontation - 'front lines', 'no-go areas' and the like - which serve to orchestrate moral panics about 'invasion' and 'blacks taking over'(1993, p. 7). Cohen's approach which posits 'nationalisms of the neighbourhood, prides of place associated with certain invented traditions of popular sovereignty'(1993, p.17), is suggestive of the idea that local racisms can be seen as employing symbolism associated with and derived from the wider racist cultures of which they are a part, *condensed* at the level of locality, and reinforced by customary local traditions of racist thinking, through peers and a parent culture of 'white flight'.

'Racism and Spacism in Britain' is the title of an article by Barnor Hesse (1993a) and is meant to convey the sense that violent racism is not contingent and random but is determined by a wider cultural and political geography, and that racism and violent racism articulate and somehow relate to spatiality - the formation and control of racialised identity through the control of space - territorialism. Cultural and human

geography perspectives lend support to our findings and offer an important framework for understanding racisms and racist expression (see for example, Hesse, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Smith, 1989, 1993; Jackson, 1987, 1989; Cross and Keith, 1993; Goldberg, 1993; Duncan and Ley, 1993). Goldberg (1993, p. 206) in particular has resonance with the main themes of this paper arguing that 'Race has fashioned and continues to mould personal and social identity, the bounds of who one is and can be, of where one chooses to be or is placed, what social and private spaces one can and dare not enter or penetrate.'

It is clear however, that from these perspectives violent racism and harassment is not a crime problem, but a problem of politics, culture and identity (Hesse, 1993b, 1995; Cohen, 1993; Keith and Pile, 1993). Racism, which involves promoting exclusions, or the actual exclusions of people in virtue of their being deemed members of different racial groups, is more complex and dynamic in its effects than either official policies (Genn, 1988; Bowling, 1993b; Hesse, 1992; Gordon, 1992; Smith, 1994), or political 'antiracism' (Braham et. al., 1992) have allowed. Whilst it is important to identify what is common to and what is different from racism, I want to argue that there are really only specific forms and constructions of racism to be found in their particularity and locality, rather than there being an all-encompassing generic racism, as evidenced in the ways that white youngsters perceived and responded to Asian on white attacks. This accords with Jackson and Penrose's (1993, p.13) proposal that

*By demonstrating the existence of a plurality of place-specific ideologies of 'race' and nation rather than a monolithic, historically singular and geographically invariant racism or nationalism, the constructedness of 'race' and nation is starkly revealed.*

Racisms, then, are socially constructed from contingent and specific mechanisms and processes (see Goldberg, 1993), one aspect of which is the territorial imperative of locality.

### **Conclusion**

As we have seen localism is expressed at a number of different levels and in a number of different ways, some racialised, others not. For whites growing into adolescence, disaffection is expressed in terms of the presence of Asian people who come to represent a loss of identity among demands that the town be returned to how it once was - to return to a pride of place, or in contradictory ways to leave the town. It is this disaffection and boredom with what the town offers young people rather than a coherent ideology of white supremacy which motivates local racism. Struggles over racialised space seemed tied up with the protection of an embattled identity which is seen by the white working class as much threatened, as some Muslim young people see their religion and identity as under attack.

Of all the factors that conspired to reduce white on Asian violence, it was Asian resistance to white violence that created a widely held view among whites that *they* rather than Asians were the main victims of violent racism. The processes which underpinned this view, however, were to be found in the changing power relationships between young white and Asian communities based in *local dynamics of Asian and white territorialism*, wherein Asian and white protagonists apportioned

home and away territory so as to 'settle' and agree safe areas which approximated to racialised residential areas. The centrality of the 'safe area' to everyday life then, was predicated on, and seen as the remedy for, a situation where ethnic groups simply did not mix. All the evidence from the study pointed to this fundamental characteristic of ethnic apartheid in schools, leisure, public space and work. Whites and Asians were strangers to each Other.

It has been shown how a binary understanding of violent racism involving white perpetrators and black or Asian victims does not always apply. Studies about violent racism tend to *assume* that Asian and black people alone are victims of inter-ethnic violence. This ignores the ways in which racism has been constructed by whites so as to attribute 'victim status' to themselves, and the ways in which racisms are constituted by racially defined spaces within which social practices of community defence and challenge can 'become the spaces from which resistance and transformation are to be launched'(Goldberg, 1993, p.203). It is to the specificity of local histories and spatial forms of racism that attention needs to be drawn so as to explore the plurality of racisms existing both within and between localities, and indeed nations.

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#### Notes

1. The idea of categorising Asian male interviewees participating in the follow up study as 'conformists' and 'experimenters' was suggested to me by Fabbah Husein, Senior Lecturer in Youth Studies at Bradford and Ilkley Community College. The interviewees were matched to the interviewees by 'ethnic' background and sex. The interviewees demonstrated exceptional skill in eliciting responses from young people based on trust, and in offering a preliminary analysis of the interview data. They were Laiqa Sheikh, Ingrid Hall, Alex Sommerville, Fabbah Husein, Saboor Ghazi and Carol Byewater.
2. Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (1976, p.1078) defines '*propriety*' as ownership; rightness, as in the use of words: appropriateness: seemliness: decency: conformity with good manners: conformity with convention in language and behaviour, and so on.

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## YOUTH AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE 1990s<sup>1</sup>

ALAN FRANCE (DR.)

There is little doubt that in the 1990s citizenship has become a major political and sociological issue. From the middle of the 1980s there was a 'sudden interest' in the concept and meaning of citizenship. This interest has been explained in a variety of ways. For example, King (1987) argued that it arose due to the political right attempting to redefine citizenship in terms of the individual's relationship with the market. Alternatively, Hall and Jacques (1989) discussed its rise in relation to the effects of 'late capitalism', and the fragmentation of national identities.

One of the main impacts of this 'sudden interest' is that academic and political disciplines have been influenced by the language of citizenship, while also attempting to explain its meaning. Many debates on the relationship between individuals and society have therefore become dominated by the concept of citizenship. For example, questions such as, 'what rights and duties do citizens have?' and 'what responsibilities should the state have towards its members?' have dominated debates and discussions of both politicians and academics.

One area where this interest in citizenship has become intense is around 'the youth question'. Concern about the behaviour of the young has always been of central importance to governments (Muncie, 1984; Pearson, 1983). In the 1990s much of this debate has been framed around how the young can be encouraged [or made] to be 'good citizens' and how they learn their responsibilities of citizenship. This has seen government policy, in areas such as education and training, emphasising the importance of young people being taught the values and skills of 'good citizenship' (Speakers Commission on Citizenship, 1990). This discussion has, therefore, focused on the question of obligations and responsibilities, giving little attention to the contradictory nature or even lack of rights young people have.

In this approach citizenship is defined as an adult concept which is denied to young people until they reach the legal age of adulthood. Citizenship for the young, therefore, consists of a series of transitional rights that can be claimed at certain ages. Simultaneously, they are also expected to become good citizens by learning about certain obligations, and acting responsibly. This may be perceived as a form of second class citizenship because it does not have the same status or rights as adulthood. To the young, this second class experience is important in shaping not only their social and economic life but also future opportunities. In this paper it is my intention to identify how, over the previous ten years, this concept of citizenship has dominated policy responses to dealing with the 'youth problem'. I shall conclude by discussing the implication of these developments for young people's opportunities to become autonomous adults.

### **Marshall and the dominant paradigm of citizenship**

Any discussion on the meaning of citizenship has to recognise the importance of the work of T.H. Marshall (Barbalet, 1988; Roche, 1992; Turner, 1986). There can be little doubt about the influence of Marshall's work on the political and sociological understanding of citizenship in modern 20th century western democracies. Marshall's *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950) was both innovative and enlightening

at its time, setting the agenda and framework for future discussions on the meaning of citizenship. Up until the late 1970s Marshall's ideas dominated, with only attempts by writers to strengthen and expand on his ideas<sup>2</sup>. Roche (1992) argues, that this approach has become the dominant paradigm of citizenship because all debates that have followed Marshall's work evolve out of his theoretical framework.

For Marshall, citizenship was a status attached to full membership of a community. People who possessed this status were equal with respect to the rights and duties associated with it. He saw the historical evolution of universal rights as being a means by which citizens could gain full membership to British society. The central elements of citizenship for Marshall, in respect of the obligations of the state, surrounded the creation of civil, political and social rights and the institutions through which they were to be exercised. These rights had their own independent histories but it was not until the 20th century that they came together to form the modern day shape of citizenship<sup>3</sup>.

Marshall's notion of citizenship was therefore a rights-based approach that took the form of claims against the state, implying that it had a duty to service its citizens. But citizenship is also concerned with the duties and responsibilities of citizens. Marshall identifies three areas in which individuals could fulfil their duties. Firstly, the payment of taxes and social insurance. These were to be compulsory and essential if the state was going to be able to meet its responsibilities in providing universal social and economic rights. Secondly, citizens have the responsibility to undertake paid work. With the growth of social rights, Marshall believed that the individual in society could decide, because of the provision of minimal standards through national insurance, not to work. This was not the case in the 19th century as the Poor Law did not aim to provide minimal standards, only a safety net for the destitute poor. The importance of this for Marshall was that individuals could not or should not be coerced into working: they needed to realise that it was their duty to work and not to abuse the system. Thirdly, Marshall believed in civic responsibility. This was an obligation that all citizens should undertake, although again he suggested it should not be compulsory. One issue he identified was the need for individuals to undertake what he saw as civic responsibilities towards 'serving the good of the community'. But what Marshall meant is not entirely clear.

This form of citizenship dominated the post war consensus around the role of the welfare state. The state was seen as having a moral obligation to its citizens in providing them with the rights and benefits of citizenship while the individual had an obligation to participate in society through paying taxes, working and acting responsibly. This type of citizenship, Marshall believed, was about 'active' participation although he did not believe in compulsion. Citizenship rights were made available by the state yet citizens were not forced to claim them. Obligations also existed but the extent to which people had to take part or fulfil duties to the community were, on the whole, determined by individual conscience. Marshall's form of citizenship was generally accepted as the way forward in giving access to public goods and encouraging greater social participation and cohesion.

### **Marshall and the problem of youth**

It is indisputable that Marshall's writings on citizenship were framed around the notion of adulthood. In discussing the meaning of citizenship and how it could be



expanded, Marshall was clearly talking about adult citizens. But what about youth and citizenship: how do young people experience it and how do they become citizens? Part of the problem in understanding what citizenship means for young people arises out of the complex meanings underpinning the concept of youth and how these discourses have influenced the experience of growing up in modern society. Generally youth is claimed to be a transitional time phase which exists between childhood and adulthood. This is usually explained as a period of the life cycle when a person undergoes rapid psychological and physiological changes which in many cases cause young people 'storm and stress'. Youth is generally understood this way in common-sensical meanings, yet in reality how does it match young people's experience of being young?

Cohen (1986), in his paper on the 'Rethinking the Youth Question' argues that such a common-sense view of youth has little to do with the realities of youth, suggesting instead that its construction has resulted from how the meaning of youth has been explained and researched historically. Central to our understanding of the youth phases has been the influence of biology. Up until the end of the 19th century the concept of adolescence did not exist in scientific language'. It first came to light through the classic works of Stanley Hall (1904) who, writing on the moral decline of youth in the newly growing urban industrial America, suggested that adolescence was a life stage clearly linked to psychological and physiological changes. Cohen suggests that these ideas have dominated, not only academic discourses but also our common-sense understanding of the youth phase, linking explanations of what it means to be young to biological changes.

Springhall (1986) challenges this dominance of biology, suggesting that, firstly, much of the evidence writers such as Hall drew upon was incorrect, and secondly, that the meaning of youth has historically and cross-culturally changed. Springhall suggests that by examining the notion of adolescence historically and cross-culturally it can be seen that any understanding of youth has to consider social and cultural meanings. Other writers have also raised this issue suggesting that the 'creation of adolescence' has more to do with social and economic change than biologism<sup>5</sup>. For example Musgrove (1964) argues that the myth of adolescence was manufactured by adults with the coming of the industrial revolution, to repress the young and keep them in a subordinate economic and power position. Although as Springhall suggests, it is difficult to claim that the creation of adolescence was a deliberate conspiracy by older generations it is an interesting point that shows how the concept of youth is consistently being redefined (Springhall, 1986 p.225). Gillis (1974) is less conspiratorial but makes a similar claim to Musgrove, suggesting that the 'invention' of adolescence came about as a by-product of the upper and middle classes sending their young people to boarding school in Victorian Britain. Even though Musgrove and Gillis claims are problematic<sup>6</sup>, the central thesis that adolescence is socially constructed and that it has historically undergone change has much to commend it and explains why young people's citizenship is difficult to define.

Writers such as Cohen and Springhall make three central points. Firstly, youth can be historically and culturally located as a time period of transition in which young people move from childhood to adulthood. Secondly, the transition process, while involving physiological and psychological changes, is not reducible to biology alone, other factors have to be considered. Thirdly, these other factors must

include social, political, economic and cultural meanings because historical and cross-cultural studies show us that the meanings of youth are continually changing and influenced by external forces. Citizenship, therefore, for young people is experienced as a transition status that is socially and culturally defined as the movement from dependant childhood to independent adulthood.

The impact of this social construction of youth has major implications on young people's rights. Marshall's dominant paradigm is therefore problematic as a framework for understanding the young's experience of citizenship. For example, Jones and Wallace (1992), highlight that it is generally assumed that legally becoming an adult takes place through the gaining of rights at the age of majority. But the access to rights is not consistent as they have become claimable at different ages, ranging from 16 to 26. Many of the rights that young people do have are inconsistent with the notion of the age of majority, seeming to have little relationship to a formal legal definition of when youth ends and adulthood begins. This inconsistency partly arises as a result of the historical fluidity underpinning the definition of youth within cultural and legal meanings (Springhall, 1986).

Thus in terms of a legal definition it is unclear when youth ends and adulthood begins. Youth is a stage when young people gain gradual access to adult rights but even when they reach an age when they gain a specific right it does not necessarily signal a shift into adulthood because some rights have more status than others; for example, reaching the age of eighteen and being entitled to drink legally in a pub. In terms of status this often indicates more about adulthood than, say, having the right to vote which suggests that status may be a more important aspect of the transitions into adulthood for young people than formal citizenship rights.

Gaining adult status is of central importance to being an adult. This process is complex and is socially and culturally defined. Willis (1984) suggests four particular sites where adulthood is achieved. These are: employment and the wage; independent living; relationships and parenthood; and independence as a consumer in the market. It is these sites that are recognised as key areas where adult status is achieved for the young.

Achieving adulthood status is not necessarily experienced simplistically; young people move from one stage to another. Parenthood may precede marriage or young people may return to live with parents after leaving home. In practice not all young people follow mapped-out stages, some are missed out and others reversed (Jones and Wallace 1992 p.101). It is also the case that these forms of adult status differ by class. The traditions of working and middle class communities may give higher status to different achievements such as getting a job or staying in further education. Divisions and differences may also exist in terms of gender, in that getting married and having a family may be given a higher status for young women in adulthood, while for young men having a job or leaving home and living independently may be more important in their claim to be adults.

The point of this discussion has been to show how Marshall's concept is inadequate in explaining young people's experience of citizenship. Biological definitions dominate our common-sense explanations yet these clearly fail to take into account how the notion of youth has undergone change and redefinition. Other factors are seemingly more important in considering how the young experience the processes of growing

up. Youth is a complex term that is continually being re-defined legally and culturally at all levels of society. Any kind of understanding of young people's citizenship has therefore to recognise the fluidity of its meaning and the ways in which it is continually being defined. To understand what it means to be a young citizen therefore requires a recognition of the social, cultural, political and economic context of the particular time period under investigation. It is to this issue that I now turn.

### **Youth, citizenship and the New Right**

One area where what it means to be young has seemingly undergone a major restructuring is the level of political discourse. Throughout the 1980s and 90s what was expected of the young and what they could expect from the state radically changed. This has come about as a result of the introduction of 'new ideas' from the political right. One of the central aspects of New Right thinking has been a change in attitude towards the role of the state, especially in the economy and the provision of social welfare and rights. This approach has challenged Keynesian state intervention, the commitment to full employment and the distribution of welfarism (King, 1987)<sup>7</sup>. In its place the political right have introduced policies [which have attempted] to 'roll back the frontiers of the state', to challenge and change the relationship between central and local government and to break what has been termed the 'dependency culture' of Welfarism (Roche, 1992). This has brought about massive changes in the relationship between the individual citizen and the local and national state. The political right advocate that individuals should have as much control over their lives as possible without interference from others, taking full responsibility for their actions. Individuals are seen as self-interested, rational beings who are capable of making judgements and assessments about their own needs and desires (King, 1987 p.10). The 1980s and 90s, therefore, can be identified as decades when the values of post-war welfarism were challenged and replaced by new social and economic values of 'popular capitalism' and individualism.

When it comes to the young, the New Right have a different approach to individualism and freedom. On one hand they reject the right of young people to take control of their own lives, insisting that intervention [especially by the family] is essential for young people's personal well-being. For them youth is a biological stage of development in which individuals are prone to act irrationally. This leads the political right to believe that young people are in need of help in their development, requiring either the family or the state to intervene. For example, in his speech to the third Ministerial Conference for the Youth Service, the participating Minister stated his belief in the need for intervention into the lives of young people;

*However, I come into this area of work with an abiding belief in the enormous scope for influencing the attitudes and decisions of individuals through helpful and positive action at an early stage... (Foreman, 1992)*

But the type and scope of state intervention which the New Right advocates reflects their political ideology. The result of this is that a specific policy agenda is constructed that aims to encourage young people to be independent and 'good' citizens by undertaking their responsibilities and obligations rather than giving or allowing them rights of their own. As we move towards the end of the 1990s it is becoming increasingly obvious that the impact of these policies has had major implications on the meaning of citizenship for young people and how it is experi-

enced on a day to day basis. The restructuring of social and cultural meanings of citizenship, through social policies, are therefore effecting what it means to be young in the 1990s.

### **The New Right and the youth labour market**

One area where major changes have taken place over the past decade is in the youth labour market. Opportunities for young people to move into adulthood, through gaining status and economic independence, have been greatly effected by the restructuring of the pathways that were traditionally available to the young (Cole, 1995; Jones and Wallace, 1992). For example, unemployment has become a central feature of young people's lives. Throughout the 1980s youth unemployment amongst school leavers increased from 7% to 12%, while amongst the 16 to 19 age group this figure rose to 20%. In comparison to other groups this age group was more prone to unemployment. Unemployment amongst 25-34 year olds averaged 11% while unemployment in the 35-49 age group averaged 8% (General Household Survey 1991).

Since the early 1990s unemployment nationally has been on the decline. Between the winters of 1992/3 and 1993/4 unemployment amongst the economically active fell by 183,000. At the same time employment grew by 157,000 with the greatest growth areas seeing a massive increase in women working part-time in the service sector. This apparent mis-match is a result of a general decline in people, especially older men, being defined as economically active. There has been a gradual decline in youth unemployment for 16-17 year olds although levels remain somewhat entrenched<sup>8</sup>. Nationally 1 in 6 16-17 year olds are unemployed while in Yorkshire and Humberside the figures are 1 in 4 (Unemployment Brief, July 1994). Of these it is claimed that 22,000 are receiving payment of the Severe Hardship Allowance (SHA) and 8,000 are receiving the Bridging Allowance (BA) leaving over three-quarters of these young people registered as unemployed without any income<sup>9</sup>.

Unemployment is not limited to those groups of young people who are disadvantaged. Changes in the labour market for graduates and the middle classes may also be affecting how citizenship is experienced for those young people who may well be deemed the more advantaged. Throughout the early 1990s graduate unemployment was unusually high. Opportunities for work were, in many cases, influenced by where young people did their degree, and if their qualification was vocational or academic. Recent figures published by universities suggest that the percentage of students still unemployed six months after graduation was greatest at institutions which were previously colleges such as, the University of Derby, and Luton (Independent, 27th June 1995). But other more established universities also have high levels of unemployment amongst their graduates. For example, over 13% of Keele graduates and 12.6% of students from the University of Leeds were still unemployed six months after graduation. Opportunities to find employment were also increasingly difficult for new graduates. As student numbers increased, graduate vacancies decreased. Between 1990-4 graduate job opportunities declined by 40% leaving competition for employment a growing problem for young people who had invested in education (Independent, 13th July, 1995).

Not only does it seem that unemployment is becoming inevitable for many young people, but changes in work are also affecting the youth labour market. Employment

opportunities and types of work available for young people have changed. With the decline of manufacturing and subsequent de-industrialisation, traditional jobs and apprenticeships in industry have been greatly reduced (Allen & Massey, 1988). New forms of employment, specifically in the service sector, have increased, providing jobs which are of a different nature, usually with less security and lower income (Allen & Massey, 1988).

These processes are not limited to the unskilled and semi skilled sectors of the labour market. Evidence of insecurity and casualisation within professional occupations is growing. As writers such as Will Hutton (1995) and Douglas Kennedy (1995) have argued, the 1990s have seen feelings of insecurity amongst the more advantaged groups increased by the introduction of short-term contracts and performance-related employment. Success, as constructed by the employers, is the only guarantee to further employment and job security. Getting 'jobs for life' or being able to develop a career in certain professions is becoming increasingly difficult for even the middle classes. The impact of this on youth employment opportunities is that the more advantaged or privileged young people are also finding their employment prospects limited, and career patterns broken or insecure.

In terms of policies towards employment and unemployment New Right advocates argue that the state should limit its intervention in the labour market and encourage, through the rolling back of the state, private enterprise to find the 'natural' levels of employment (Barry, 1989). But in the area of youth employment (and unemployment) there has been a growth of state intervention with the setting up and development of various work schemes. Since the early 1980s central government has undertaken specific policies towards unemployment and the lack of employment opportunities which have had a major impact on young people's experience of work.

Training young people in the skills necessary for the industrial needs of the country has always been a major responsibility of the state (Davies, 1986) yet throughout the 1980s there was a massive increase in Youth Training Schemes, the likes of which has never been seen before. Not only have these schemes increased, but it is also becoming evident that central government has seen the advantage of this approach as a method of teaching young people skills of the workplace and re-skilling through the introduction of vocational training. Bates et al. (1984) suggest that the emphasis of this approach to providing employment for the young has been to push responsibility on to the unemployed, blaming them for their failure to find work.

By the mid 1980s central government, in line with its economic policies, set about shifting the responsibility of running these schemes to the private sector in the form of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs);

*It is in the interest of both employers and young people that, through the new Training and Enterprise Councils, employers should progressively take over from government the ownership and development of youth training....*  
(Department of Employment, 1988, p.47)

Throughout the 1990s there has therefore been a massive growth of these privately run TECs around the country, although it is important to recognise that these are co-ordinated and overseen by central government in the shape of the Training



Agency. Intervention in the labour market, especially in relation to disadvantaged youth, may have changed, yet central government still clearly keeps a controlling hand on how youth employment should be shaped.

Intervention in relation to more advantaged youth has been less obvious. At one level, graduates are left to fend for themselves and are expected to get employment by competing within the market place, but as job opportunities decline and competition increases, more graduates are turning to either post-graduate vocational courses or to unpaid vocational training provided by the state. For example, Carter (1995) writing in the *Independent* argued that more graduates are turning to training schemes such as those offered by CITE Associates. These schemes are government approved and funded by TECs. They aim to find unpaid placements for unemployed graduates with the objective of increasing their employment prospects.

### **The New Right and Social Policy**

A second major development that has influenced what it means to be young in the 1990s has taken place within social policy. The New Right, influenced by writers such as Charles Murray argue that the state needs to discourage the young from being dependant on the state. The main thrust of this has been the removal of state benefits and rights for 16 - 25 year olds. For example, Jones and Wallace (1992) show how young people's rights to social benefits, housing opportunities and minimum wage protection have been eroded by policies that aim to increase independence from the state. Since 1979, benefits have either shifted towards means-testing or been removed altogether, leaving young people in a situation where economic independence cannot be gained through the assistance of the state (p.60-67).

The impact of this has been dramatic. Nationally 74,000 16-17 year olds are not working or receiving any form of benefit from the state (Working Brief, July 1994). This clearly has the potential of creating other social problems. For example, other sources of income for the young unemployed, who have no financial support from their parents, can involve the taking up of 'fiddle work' or getting involved in criminal activity. As Craine and Coles (1995) suggest, these are possible career choices as a result of the lack of proper job opportunities or limited unemployment benefits (p.8). These are not choices the young make lightly but, for many, choices are not the issue as no alternative method is available. Reducing benefits and young people's incomes therefore have the possible social consequences of increasing homelessness and criminalisation of the young.

Some of the reasons why young people lack an income may have arisen from changes that have been taking place around the 'available for work' criteria. Further attempts to increase pressure on the young unemployed to find work have created problems for young people. Since 1993 the Restart programme has radically changed, moving from being a day interview to a week course, to a part-time two week course. On top of this, new proposals are being piloted around the country to expand this programme into Jobplan Workshops and a Workwise scheme lasting four weeks<sup>10</sup>. All of these initiatives entail mandatory attendance with financial penalties for non-attendance<sup>11</sup>.

Moves have also been introduced aimed specifically at catching out the unemployed who claim to be available for work. One such method has been the introduction of a surprise 'Restart' interview that aims to check out job-seeking activities. Other methods have seen increasing pressure from the Department of Social Security on claimants to



fill 'hard to fill' vacancies. These are jobs that usually offer low pay, unsociable hours in localities with poor public transport. The implications for the young are that they continually have to justify what they are doing and are being pushed into jobs they do not want to do or else losing their benefit (if they are entitled to it). For example if a young person is disqualified from benefit they are suspended for 26 weeks without any form of income. Attempts to get young people back to work therefore are not about the young making choices concerning careers but about filling empty job vacancies and reducing unemployment figures.

Life without work is going to become increasingly difficult for the young. In the 1993 Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the introduction of the new Job Seekers Allowance. This was to be implemented in full by April 1996<sup>12</sup> and will radically transform benefit entitlement for the under 24s. Previously people made unemployed, who had full National Insurance contributions, were entitled by right to 12 months full unemployment benefit<sup>13</sup>. Under the new Job Seekers Allowance the unemployed who are entitled to benefits will only receive benefits for six months by right. The amounts paid will also be fixed in that the 18 to 24 age group will receive a reduced amount. The other six months entitlement will become means tested benefits. For example, Murray (1994) argues that people in the 18-24 age group with savings over £8,000 will suffer a 60% loss of income, those with savings of £3,000 will lose 30% and young people with no savings will lose 20% as they will be receiving the reduced rate<sup>14</sup>. The overall effect of this is that the incomes of many of the poorest in society will be greatly reduced.

But this is not all. Within the new proposals on Job Seekers it is planned to link benefit with a job-seeking contract in which claimants outline steps they intend to take to get back to work. There will then be regular checks to review what claimants have done. If this is deemed to be unsatisfactory then financial penalties will be imposed. Such a move could have a major effect on young people's entitlements to benefit. If recent evidence is anything to go by (see discussion above) then there is little doubt that this contract will result in further tightening of the availability for work criteria and thus increase the number of claimants who lose benefit.

The influence of this approach by the New Right to encouraging self-reliance and independence amongst the young has also had a major impact on how middle class young people experience their transition into adulthood. Young people from more privileged backgrounds will normally make the break from the family home by going to university. During the 1990s this method has remained central, with student numbers on the increase, yet expectations and policies of the political right have resulted in state support for this process being reduced. Using similar arguments to these to justify the reduction in social benefits, the New Right propose that the young should either be supported by their families or pay their own way through university. A number of policy changes have introduced this idea in practice. Firstly, in 1990 all students were disqualified from claiming income support and housing benefit between academic years. Secondly, the student grant has been frozen and is now being cut at 10% per year for the next 3 years. As a form of replacement, the government has introduced student loans in which undergraduates are allowed to borrow the money they require to complete their degree course. Thirdly, as a method of ensuring the most

needy do not suffer, hardship funds, that are means-tested, have been introduced through University finance. But evidence suggests that the money available out-strips the demand. For example, in 1993-4 over 58,000 awards were made to students totalling £17 million yet over 81,000 valid applications were received (Independent, June 28th 1995).

The result of these changes are that many students are facing difficult times and the transition into autonomous adulthood for them is also being either delayed or re-structured. At one level economic independence while at university is virtually impossible. Students are having to build up large debts that require them to work part-time while still studying. For example, in a recent survey by the NUS and NatWest (1995) over 68% of students claimed they were facing financial crisis with over a third of them stating they were having to work part-time. Levels of student debt increased by age with 17-21 year olds averaging £1,548 and 22-26 year olds reporting on average debt of over £4,000.

This growing debt crisis has major implications for the more privileged young people. Firstly, there are indications that many able students are not taking up places because either they fear getting into debt or they just cannot afford to go to university. For example, the annual report by UCAS (1995) identified over 39,000 students who disappeared from the system without trace. One explanation for this was applicants' increased fear of debt and uncertainty about the future (Independent, Sept.11th 1995). Secondly, students are having to rely more and more on parental support, both while at university and after they have finished their courses. A recent survey by Barclays' Bank (1995) suggests that parents are providing greater financial support for their children at university. This can, in many cases be in the shape of loans but evidence indicates that it is more likely to be gifts. Other trends show that as a method of leaving home and gaining independence, going to university has declined. Figures from the Universities Statistical Records show that since 1989 there has been an increase in numbers studying from home. For example, in 1993 18% of full-time undergraduates at London University were living at home, which was a rise of 24% from 1989<sup>15</sup>. Moving into autonomous independence and adult citizenship for more advantaged young people is therefore becoming a difficult process in which dependence on family support is central.

### **The New Right and the 'moral economy' of citizenship**

One final area in which citizenship for the young is being re-structured is in the 'moral economy'. By the mid-1980s, concerns were being voiced about the 'moral order' of an individualist based society built upon competition and 'market forces'. With tensions heightened by the 1988 budget, which seemed to reinforce economic individualism, the New Right 'discovered' the concept of the active citizen and the need to remoralize society;

*... this paragon has been invented in response to the argument that the free market, as promoted by Thatcher's government, is 'hard and uncaring'... the call to active citizenship is also an attempt to engender social cohesion ... (and) to counter the damaging assertion by the Prime Minister that 'there is no such thing as society'. (Lister 1990a p.14)*

This was seen as a concept that could help to 'bind' society together yet sit comfortably within the government's ideas of economic individualism. Active citizenship was an extension of individual responsibility in which individuals are not only responsible for themselves and their families, but also have a responsibility for their own communities;

*The sense of being self-reliant, of playing a role within the family, of owning one's property, of paying one's way are all part of the spiritual ballast which maintains responsible citizenship and a solid foundation from which people look around to see what they can do for others and for themselves.*  
(Thatcher, 1977, p.97)<sup>16</sup>

With this in mind, the government proposed that individuals should undertake voluntary work within their own communities by looking after the environment, the welfare of the most vulnerable, and making their communities secure and safe places to live in. Previously, this may have been seen as the duty of the rich through giving money, but today the government proposes that it should be extended to every active citizen not just through the giving of money but through the giving of free time (Hurd, 1988).

Much of this discussion on active citizenship has been aimed at disadvantaged youth. Concern about the moral education of the young working class and the effects of social change on their behaviour has a long history (Muncie, 1984; Pearson, 1983). In the early 1980s one particular response to the high levels of youth unemployment was the call for a return to a form of National Service. Youth Call claimed that young people without work were a danger to society, government therefore had a responsibility to develop a national army of community volunteers (Marsland, 1984). It was proposed that monies spent on providing unemployment benefit could be better spent on paying young people to undertake work in the community which would help reduce government spending and provide useful employment for the young unemployed. This idea, while much discussed, and supported in principle by the government, was eventually rejected. Their main concerns and reasons for rejecting it came over costs not principle. It was argued that such a scheme should be set up and run by the voluntary sector, not central government (France, 1990).

This issue is still very much part of the discussion on youth and citizenship. Two recently published reports have called for a 'Citizens Service' as a method of encouraging the young to be 'responsible citizens'. A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)<sup>17</sup> drawing upon the ideas previously presented by Youth Call, has proposed that a national service scheme could be set up for the young unemployed, helping to tackle many of the social problems associated with being out of work. This would offer participants £50 a week plus food and travel as well as benefit credits to use after an average service of three months. The second report by The Henley Centre, undertaken on behalf of the Community Service Volunteers attempted a cost benefit analysis for a voluntary scheme for 18-21 year olds. Costs were evaluated on the basis of young people taking part for a year while they received benefits plus £20 which offered the young a better deal than they were receiving on unemployment benefit.

The central objectives of these schemes are the 'encouragement' of responsibility amongst the young. They claim that young people would learn tolerance and

understanding through social mixing and duties and obligations by undertaking socially useful work. The question of compulsion is usually denied, arguing that the voluntary principle is enough to get young people to take part. For example the IPPR report suggested that young people would be more willing to participate as they would see it as 'an entitlement as well as a duty' (p.24).

Support for these ideas has been wide ranging, cutting across political divides. For example, Prince Charles, in a documentary (ITV 26/6/94) made a passionate plea for the creation of a national service which aimed to tackle unemployment and crime. John Major, on the other hand, has also indicated his interest in proposals that encourage social responsibility. He has agreed to help the Prince's Trust increase the numbers involved in their Young Volunteer Scheme from 2,000 to 25,000 a year. This has seen resources put into the Department for Education and the Home Office with the intention of funding pilot projects (Guardian 26/7/94). But these ideas have also been greatly supported by the political left. Questions of social responsibility were a major campaigning slogan of Tony Blair in the Labour party leadership elections. The ideas proposed by the Commission on Social Justice received general agreement within the Labour Party suggesting that, if elected, the setting up of a national voluntary scheme would be a serious consideration.

All these proposals ignore the previous debates and arguments raised in the early 1980s. Rationales for rejection of proposals similar to these made in the recent reports were developed by writers such as Jeffs (1984) in response to the ideas of Youth-Call. Evidence clearly identified problems for the massive extension of community service ranging from the lack of participation of the most vulnerable groups to job substitution and supervision of caring work. While questions of responsibility are important, this attack on the lack of responsibility fails to recognise (and define) the extent of responsibility young people already undertake in their everyday lives. The idea that the young are not socially responsible ignores and downgrades many of the tasks that young people undertake in their homes and local community. Responsibility has always been an important aspect of growing up and something that the majority have little objection to undertaking. The undermining of social responsibility is more likely to result from poverty and the lack of a job. Schemes such as these proposed by the IPPR and Henley Centre report offer little towards combatting these damaging experiences. As MacLegan (1994) argues;

*This latest burst of enthusiasm and publicity for volunteering holds one danger. It diverts attention, and potentially, resources from proper training and education. To meet the greatest need and give the best return, these are a priority. Any new scheme for school leavers or young adults should be judged simply by whether it increases real choices.*  
(MacLegan 1994, p.10)

The end result of this discourse over the morality of citizenship has been a restructuring of its meaning. It is a rejection of the notion that the state is responsible for providing rights and benefits for the citizen to claim as proposed by Marshall (1950). In its place the New Right have tried to assert a form of citizenship that has its basis in economic individualism and the responsibility of the citizen. Citizenship in this context is grounded in the private world of individuals or civil society and not within the relationship between the individual and the state;

*...in this discourse, citizenship is detached from its modern roots in institutional reform, in the welfare state and community struggles and re-articulated with the more Victorian concepts of charity, philanthropy and self-help.*  
(Hall and Held 1989 p.174)

Not only have the New Right reduced the rights of young people they have also attempted to shift the debate on youth and citizenship towards the notion of responsibilities and duties which also increases intervention and forms of control.

### **Conclusion**

As the previous discussions have shown, being a young citizen has taken on a new meaning in the 1990s. Citizenship for young people has been socially and culturally re-constructed towards the New Right's notion of independence and responsibility. Historically, young people's citizenship has been experienced as a series of transitions which are sited within areas such as the movement from school to work or going to university. These transitions still remain central, but changes in social policy and the moral economy have influenced how young people experience these transitions and therefore their citizenship.

One impact of the re-structuring of citizenship for the young is the growth and development of new forms of social controls which limit young people's choices and restrict their opportunities to become autonomous adults. These are most evident within policies that directly affect the lives of the more disadvantaged young people. For example, the 'available for work' criteria and Restart are clearly having negative impacts on young people's choices and opportunities to choose career paths. Similar outcomes may well result from the new Job Seekers proposals in that linking benefit to job searching could result in an increased number of claimants who have either no choice but to accept jobs that are low paid or else lose their benefit. The increase in social control of the young is also happening in the private world of individuals and civil society. Policies towards the re-moralizing of the young, such as those advocated by the political left and right, have clear social control functions attached to them. As Evans (1995) has argued, citizenship is not a neutral term. It has clear links to political ideologies and methods of social control.

A second and related outcome of this re-structuring of citizenship is that young people's autonomous independence has become reliant on family support. Such an outcome should not be a surprise. For the New Right, the family is the main institution that should be responsible for the young. It is the family that acts on behalf of all its members including its children. Responsibility, therefore, for both the welfare and discipline of youth is based in the family unit and not the state, as Fitzgerald points out;

*...the family is no longer to have the status of being a passive client; it is now to enjoy the 'freedoms' of the market and become consumer of welfare. The state is no longer to be the agent which calculates the social needs of the nation, this is now the function of the family ... the family must now take on the role of policing its members and the community*  
(Fitzgerald 1983 p.46)

The consequences of this emphasis is that responsibility for young people's needs, desires and control is undertaken by the family. Freedom or independence therefore is

determined and dependent on the family unit. Ideologically the political right may advocate and encourage economic independence for young people, but in reality their policies have succeeded in forcing them to be more dependent on the family unit.

The shape and extent of dependence on the family may differ between disadvantaged and advantaged youth but the outcome of this increased dependency may lead to problems for both groups. Disadvantaged young people who are unemployed for long periods of time without hope for the future may well feel psychological and physical stresses that affect their well-being and family relationships (Banks and Ullah, 1988). For the young who are either on low incomes or unemployed, living in the family home, especially if other members are unemployed (Hutson and Jenkins, 1989), can create tensions that will lead to family break-ups and homelessness. For example, Jones (1993) in her study into housing careers amongst Scottish youth, indicated that homelessness was more likely amongst those who left home for negative reasons.

Dependency amongst more advantaged young people has not traditionally been seen as a problem. Middle class youth are normally thought to have the cultural and educational resources to break free from the family home earlier than those who have long histories of unemployment and limited educational resources. But it may be the case that the lack of independence, caused by increased pressure of social policies that advocate greater self reliance, is also having negative outcomes amongst middle class youth. For example, the growing debt crisis amongst students may be seen, by parents, as the failure of their children to manage their own affairs and a sign of continued immaturity. University, is for the majority of students an opportunity to become autonomous adults, but increased debt may see parents demanding greater control, especially of spending, with the objective of reducing young people's autonomy. This may well create tensions within the family that has long-term implications for the parent-child relationship. Another possible outcome of this increased dependency, is that expectations from parents concerning success at university will be heightened. If parents are contributing more to the costs of their child's university education then it is possible that they will want to see greater returns on their investment. The result of this will be greater pressure on young people to be successful and if they are seen to fail or not reach sufficiently high standards then it may have serious implications for their relationships with their parents. For example, in her discussion on the constructions of success and failure amongst working and middle class young women, Lucey (1996) identifies how the experience of failure amongst advantaged groups may be leading to greater anxieties and pressure on their families and themselves. Disadvantaged groups construct success and failure differently to more advantaged youth, therefore, not achieving so highly is not such a problem for young people from working class backgrounds (Lucey, 1996). This finding suggests that if middle class families are expecting greater returns then it is likely that failure (in their terms) may well have serious implications for the well-being of young people.

As the 1990s progress towards the new millennium it is important that both the meaning and the impact of citizenship for the young is investigated in more depth. Greater dependency on families and limited opportunities for both advantaged and disadvantaged youth to move out into autonomous adulthood are likely to bring with



them more social problems. Policies that deny or ignore such developments will only delay the need for the creation of political objectives and resources that support and encourage young people's movement towards autonomy and adult citizenship.

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#### Notes

- 1 Paper first presented at the Youth 2000 conference July 1995
- 2 See Bendix (1964), Dahrendorf (1959), Lipset (1964) and Lockwood (1974).
- 3 See Barbalet (1988) for a critical review of this argument.
- 4 Springhall does acknowledge that 'youth' as a stage in the life cycle did exist previous to this time but he argues it was not given status or significance.
- 5 This term is taken from Cohen's argument presented in *Rethinking the Youth Question* (1986).
- 6 See Springhall (1986).
- 7 When the New Right talk about individuals they are often, in reality, discussing them in terms of the family. This is because they see the family as a functional unit through which the needs and desires of all members are met by collective purchases and incomes.
- 8 The number of unemployed in this age bracket fell by 2,500 to a total of 122,500 representing an unemployment rate of 17.4%.
- 9 SHA is usually paid to the young unemployed who are considered 'vulnerable' and with no other form of income. It is not a universal right but an award made by discretion. The bridging allowance is similar, in that it is a discretionary payment made for a maximum of 8 weeks out of 52.
- 10 These schemes are presently being piloted on 10,000 young people across the country.
- 11 Benefit reductions can be up to 40% (Working Brief, July 1994).
- 12 This date has now been moved to October 1996 because of technical problems.
- 13 This can be affected by the contributions of the claimant but even if reduced contributions have been made then some benefit may still be due.
- 14 Levels of benefit will also be influenced by the type of relationship young people are in. For a more detailed analysis see Murray (1994).
- 15 Regional differences exist bringing the average nationally to 13%.
- 16 Quoted in Lister, 1990.
- 17 This report was instigated by the Commission on Social Justice.

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## WHERE ARE COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACHES LEADING US:

*a critical response to McRoberts and Leitch?*

BERNARD DAVIES & ROD NORTON

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### **To theorise - or to act pragmatically?**

Though we have no first hand knowledge of the forms of training and qualification for part-time youth workers offered in the north of Ireland, we believe a response to the McRoberts and Leitch article which appeared in *Youth and Policy* 51 (McRoberts and Leitch, 1995) is essential. This is mainly because whether intentionally or not, it feeds the current pressures to locate all youth and community work qualifications within a 'competence' - and in particular an NVQ - framework. We also believe that, despite its 'academic' format, some of the writers' claims and conclusions have not been reached via the kinds of critical processes which today's conditions increasingly require.

For example, McRoberts and Leitch seek to reassure us that the youth work value base embodied in the Northern Ireland Certificate for Part-time Youth Workers which they discuss in their article has been safeguarded because 'key principles' like equality of opportunity have been 'explicitly stated' throughout its curriculum specifications (p. 26). However, how can we be sure that such words on paper are sufficient if those who have helped to produce them do not make explicit the theoretical and ideological perspectives on which they rest? How will we know that assumptions and principles which underpin not just the curriculum, but also the assessment structures and processes, are congruent with those of youth and community work itself?

Again, when breaking down the training into 'manageable learning elements' (p. 25), how have its designers safeguarded against the atomisation of the training tasks which, as McRoberts and Leitch acknowledge, is a risk? At the very least, does this not require of those making claims to important professional and policy break-throughs to offer some explicit clarification and then (re-) assertion of key underlying notions - in this case, for example, of how people can be helped to achieve the learning needed for the complex, dynamic and 'unfinished' practice situations for which they are being prepared?

At points in their article McRoberts and Leitch make somewhat selective use of some of our own published materials to suggest that they have undertaken these essential tasks. For example, they suggest that one of us has proposed (in Davies and Durkin, 1991) that youth workers can proceed solely on the basis of 'instinctive abilities'. However, they seem not to have noticed that much of the article to which they refer sought to locate the notion of skill and competence(s) in the development of both youth and community work practice and training over the last thirty years. Despite their own concentration on competences, they also seem unwilling to engage, even critically, with this analysis or to respond to its conclusion (p. 11) on the dangers of anti-intellectualism within youth and community work.

They do note (p. 25) that we regard competences as 'functionalist ... and rooted in the soullessness of behaviourism and positivism' (Norton et al, 1994). Yet, though clearly finding this interpretation unacceptable, they again fail to subject it to any

sustained critique or analysis, merely asserting that it is evidence of 'uninhibited, antagonistic venom' towards NVQs and then in effect dismissing it as unbalanced.

Despite this conclusion, they themselves then go on to raise (pp. 25-6) a range of serious concerns about competence-based approaches, including the risks of 'deprofessionalisation' which these pose, of 'minimising' youth work's value base and of creating 'a series of atomised, meaningless operations'. We would argue that, precisely because these are (indeed substantial) risks, the kinds of debate which we were seeking in our original publications are essential - not least in the pages of *Youth and Policy*.

Indeed, if we do not systematically involve ourselves in such debates, how do we even begin to defend the professional nature of that practice - about which, again, McRoberts and Leitch are clearly very concerned? Here certainly - and the current deprofessionalisation of training and qualifications for the Probation Service provides us with the starkest of warnings - the stakes are far too high for mere pragmatism to rule.

### **The economic and political contexts for competence-based developments**

McRoberts and Leitch particularly eschew what we would regard as essential analytical penetration in their responses to the wider economic and political conditions in which all of us now work. In the process they display that 'world is our oyster' mind-set which has too often characterised writing about, and policy developments within, the youth and community work field.

Their marginalisation of the issue of flexibility in the labour market illustrates this point particularly clearly. They refer to it in passing as 'a pessimistic notion' (p. 22). Yet, as millions of people in this country and indeed across the world could tell them, far from being an abstract intellectual construct invented by depressed economists, it is a harsh material reality. Between 1975 and 1993 the proportion of the adult population holding full-time 'tenured' jobs fell from 55% to 35% (Hutton, 1995, p 108), while in a single year (1994-95) the number of temporary jobs increased by 0.5%. (Brewster, 1995).

As we hope to show later, a link exists between 'this segmentation of the labour market that is sculpting the new and ugly shape of British society'. (Hutton, 1995, p.108) and the carefully orchestrated moves by government and employers to define workers' 'competences' more and more precisely for the jobs this labour market requires. However, for those concerned with youth and community work, the broader economic and political analysis which McRoberts and Leitch fail to provide is important for other reasons. For one thing, they are involved in and seeking to prescribe for an area of practice which has made claims to be rooting its work in precisely such an analysis. More pragmatically, they are focusing on an occupation which - as the General Secretary of the Community and Youth Workers Union has pointed out recently - has for far too long treated part-time youth workers as casual labour, as 'exploitable commodities' (Nicholls, 1996).

Perhaps most relevant to this debate however is the fact that an examination of the changes which have occurred over the past three or four decades in the ways youth work has been delivered and managed can throw a sharp light on the link between competence-based assessment methods and the wider political and economic context.

## Youth work as a quasi-profession

Since the publication of the Albemarle Report (Ministry of Education, 1959) a 'professional' model of practice has been dominant within youth work, taking its lead from the way doctors and lawyers have organised themselves. However, as youth work was never able to achieve the organisational autonomy and financial independence of these areas of work it became, along with teaching, a quasi-profession. The main features of this form of practice and organisation have been:

- a belief in the existence of a body of (albeit practice-related) theoretical knowledge to which all practitioners need to be introduced through education and training;
- regulation of occupational access through such initial education and training;
- a commitment to the well-being of the client normally overriding other considerations, including the interests of an employer;
- levels of autonomy which allow the practitioner to make 'in situ' judgements and decisions and to set work priorities;
- mediation of all this through a democratic public policy making process and within a framework of national legislation and state funding.

We fully understand why those who champion competence-based approaches have often been unconvinced by the legacy of such quasi-professionalisation for education and training for youth and community work. Indeed we ourselves have been and remain far from uncritical of it (see, for example, Davies, 1989; Davies and Durkin, 1991). In particular, by requiring that education and training for youth work (and later youth and community work) 'shadow' teacher training, it established course-based processes often overly concerned with the transfer of theoretical knowledge as the dominant routes to qualification. Later, in the 'Bessey' courses of the 1960s and 1970s, this model was replicated as far as was practicable in the education and training of part-time youth workers (Ministry of Education, 1962; Department of Education and Science, 1966).

This preoccupation with 'academic' content and outcomes had a number of unhelpful outcomes. For example, both because of its institutional base and its curricular emphases, it helped to erect barriers to entry to education and training and so to qualification and therefore the work itself. In doing so, it did great damage to youth work's development as a force for radical personal and community change (see Norton et al, 1994, pp. 42-46), not least by ignoring or marginalising the potential contributions of many activists from oppressed groups.

More substantively for the actual education and training provided, it also resulted in a constant struggle to achieve an effective and appropriate integration (even linking) of what were usually called 'theory' and 'practice'. And it often generated assessment methodologies and practices which, by failing to focus sharply enough on workers' ability to deliver a quality service to young people, were insufficiently rigorous.

However, despite these flaws, the quasi-professional model has brought some significant benefits. One of these is the struggle it has validated to establish autonomy for workers in defining the nature and outcomes of the work in dialogue with

young people and communities. This has been one of the main structural reasons why, until recently, youth work has been able to resist becoming just another overt and narrowly focused agent of social control.

Mirroring this field situation, students on the 'professional training' embodied in the full-time and part-time courses which emerged from the Albemarle period also acquired significant degrees of autonomy. Most significantly, perhaps, for the debate on competence-based approaches, their actual or potential employers had limited leverage on this training provision. In addition, they were granted time - a personal and occupational space, over an extended period - within which it was legitimate to do intellectual as well as 'applied' labour. Indeed, often despite the overall academic climate within which the courses operated, tutors strove to develop the group processes which this space generated to encourage and support a great deal of very personal learning for students. As a result, those who did gain entry to these courses encountered an often unexpected experience of 'higher' education which made many of them realise their potential for getting further professional and indeed academic qualifications.

In their critique of the Foundation Training which operated in the north of Ireland up to 1994, McRoberts and Leitch (p. 21) would seem to be endorsing many of the reservations expressed in the past about curriculum based quasi-professional courses and in particular that 'the relationship between (the) curriculum and standards of youth work performance was not always clear'. However, by failing to recognise that this is not the whole story - that they are dealing with an area of practice run through with intrinsic contradictions - they in our view make these criticisms in an unnecessarily competitive and one-dimensional way.

Thus, they themselves acknowledge that the competence-led scheme to which they are now committed includes a substantial course work element of 70 hours and that this is provided 'to enable the acquisition of necessary underpinning knowledge and to ensure that the "heart and soul" of group training is not lost'.

They also fail to consider that other elements of the Northern Ireland initiative have existed and still exist within the model they wish to reject. For example:

- Few if any part-time youth worker courses, especially since the establishment of NYA-endorsed Regional Accreditation and Moderation Panels, would not assume the need to integrate face-to-face practice into the overall learning programme, to be assessed against specified 'learning outcomes'.
- In our experience 'attentive and effective coaching and mentoring by skilled supervisors in the youth work setting' (p. 26) has long been a feature of many such courses.
- A 'portfolio' approach to personal learning for the worker and to course assessment is now also often included in such courses.

What they seem to be criticising therefore are worst-case scenarios within an admittedly flawed model. However, such an approach to policy and practice analysis does not in itself establish the total ineffectiveness of the model as such, nor that similar worst-case scenarios could not be identified for the alternative which they are advocating. Since we are all operating in a field of work which is



by definition highly ambiguous and contradictory, it is surely essential that we remain deeply sceptical of suggestions that someone, somewhere is developing a finished product.

### **The new managerialism**

By the late-1980s, the quasi-professional model of educational and welfare practice was coming under increasing pressure from Conservative governments. Indeed these new right ideologues were - and remain - impatient with the very notion of professionalism because of how, in their view, it was blocking some of the radical social changes they wished to promote. These particularly were designed to establish greater 'discipline' in 'the market' and more rigorous business methods in the public sector - including that flexibility of the labour market which, as we discussed earlier, has grown so rapidly over the past two decades. To achieve these goals as well as their wider social policy objectives, Conservative ministers believed that it was essential to destroy the autonomy of the professions and quasi-professions; and that, as its main funder, they should and could do this particularly within public services.

The result was a new 'managerialism' in the public sector which in a youth work context this has been manifested in:-

- increased use of short-term funding;
- more 'top down' objective setting;
- performance related management techniques such as 'performance indicators' and performance related funding;
- contracting out and the imposition of some purchaser/provider models;
- evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms imported from the business and commercial world.

These developments in effect represent a reassertion in the public sector of traditional scientific management principles - even though this has often been obscured somewhat by the use of concepts such as 'total quality management' and 'empowerment' (see Morley 1995).

Overall what such management approaches require is a redefinition of workers as 'human resources'. For employers and managers the key task then becomes defining as precisely as possible the functions, purposes and desired outcomes within an occupational area, with workers then being trained and resourced to deliver these outcomes. Workers are then assessed and sometimes paid on the basis of their ability to achieve the pre-set outcomes.

The application of this model to the education and training of youth and community work means at the very least the weakening, and ultimately perhaps the elimination, of any sense of workers' professional autonomy or of a role for young people in defining outcomes or priorities.

### **Competence-based approaches and the managerialist agenda**

Competence-based frameworks in general and NVQs in particular are being devised to support and indeed advance such labour market strategies. Increasingly employing organisations, funders and the 'new managers' looking for cheap and

flexible labour are using them to determine the required qualification standards and so increasingly to define the nature of the work itself. Within this, training rather than education is emphasised, with only what is seen as directly fulfilling the short term needs of the workplace being funded. Other focuses will not be assessed and therefore, by implication, will not be included in any training programme. In all this control over education and training is clearly being removed from workers and students, with 'users' of services being left even further on the margins.

It is important here not to overstate the argument. Some of the standards likely to emerge within the youth and community work sector, perhaps developed by independent organisations, may be based on older more liberal educational thinking, since this is a tradition which many youth service trainers will wish to defend. Indeed, many employing organisations are committed to dialogue and would not wish uncritically to take on the role defined for them by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications.

Nevertheless the long term prospects seem clear. Power will be shifted increasingly towards employers and funders. A framework will come to dominate which imposes external definitions of task and standards on workers. Employers will be free to define and redefine the nature of the work in line with the changing needs of organisations or agencies as propounded by the new managers, strongly influenced by governmental pressure and shaped by an increasingly casualised labour market. For, however 'liberal' an individual set of competences or well meaning those who devise them, they are in the end inseparable from a structure which in the long run is concerned with disempowering workers and young people and with asserting the control of employers and funders over the services that are available.

In passing, McRoberts and Leitch do recognise that these pressures are at work when they acknowledge that 'performance specifications ... are employer-led rather than employment-led'. However they fail to locate such insights in a wider analysis of what is happening to vocational training and qualifications. As a result they do not seem to be aware that the kind of competence-led schemes they are advocating could rapidly undermine the very worker-centred approaches they are adopting, to say nothing of the new national agreements on pro rata conditions for part-timers which, after some twenty years of struggle, have just been achieved.

### **Assessment**

As so often happens when competence-led approaches are being advocated in the youth and community work field, McRoberts and Leitch greatly oversimplify the nature of assessment in order to justify the highly technical assessment frameworks which such approaches impose. For us, any such discussion must start from the proposition that ambiguities and indeed subjectivities are intrinsic to any assessment process within youth and community work training; and that the kind of claims to 'objective assessment' made by McRoberts and Leitch (p. 24) are illusory.

For, unfashionable and indeed uncomfortable though it may be to highlight this, assessment in youth and community work ultimately involves one human being making subjective judgements on the actions and indeed on the attitudes and values of another human being. Needless to say, such a process must be set within tough checks and balances. The person being assessed (the worker) needs to be given the maximum information on the basis of their assessment. They are also entitled to expect that the assessors will justify what they do, how and why.

However, paradoxically, another essential safeguard has to be that assessors do not try to convince themselves or anyone else that they are acting entirely 'objectively'. That way lies, not just self-delusion, but dangerous arrogance - qualities to which NVQ assessment mechanisms are only too prone.

Such risks arise largely because the theoretical underpinnings of competence-based frameworks, with their roots deep in behaviourist concepts, ultimately assume that it is possible to identify a single model of what 'competent' performance entails. Indeed, according to Wolf (1994, pp 17-18)

*the idea that, for each role, there exists such an agreed notion of competence, which can be elicited and will command consensus, is fundamental to any assessment system of this type.*

A set of standards for each role is then required, based on this consensus. These involve elements of competence each of which is:

*...a description of something a person who works in a given occupational area should be able to do. It encompasses some action, behaviour or outcome which has real meaning in the occupational area to which it relates.  
(Wolf, 1994, p. 19).*

Such a description is accompanied by performance criteria which set out explicit measures of outcomes. An assessor then matches performance (usually) in the workplace against these criteria and makes decisions on whether an element of the assessment framework has been satisfactorily demonstrated.

About this process, Wolf concludes (p 24):

*As with all competence-based systems, a further implication in all this is that assessment will be unproblematic because it simply involves comparing behaviour with the transparent 'benchmark' of the performance criteria. Unfortunately, in practice, this turns out not to be the case.*

The claim of competence-based models to be scientific and objective is thus based on a very shaky theoretical foundation.

The risks inherent in such approaches are significant. In reality no consensus of the kind claimed is possible. The process of writing standards involves the imposition of some perspectives over others. Since competence-based frameworks are, by design, employer-led, the perceptions of 'competent' performance which will come increasingly to dominate the profession are likely to be managerialist.

Employers and managers are also likely to play a leading role in implementing competence-based schemes and awards. It will be they who apply and interpret the standards and since the framework is work-based and claims to be both scientific and totally objective, it is likely that line managers will increasingly be used as assessors. In some (perhaps many) situations, workers and students will be in the position of needing to show that they can 'fit' their employer's definitions of the work to the satisfaction of their line manager.

Here again, objectivity will be impossible. Assessors will be assessing in vastly different contexts, using methods of aggregating performance which vary significantly. Research

has shown that such assessment outcomes cannot hope to be consistent or fair when using this methodology (Wolf, 1995; Wolf and Silver, 1986).

For any worker having to deal with single, trained assessors with the primary on-the-spot responsibility for making assessment decisions, such a scenario is unlikely to be satisfactory. In a Service where concepts of empowerment and participation are still taken seriously by some, it is likely to threaten and in due course undermine some of the basic principles of service delivery. It will also allow employers and the new breed of managers - confident that they are operating 'scientific' assessment processes which are unproblematic - to control access to the profession by controlling definition of good practice and by directly assessing employees against this themselves.

The implications of all this for equal opportunities are startling. According to the new frameworks, there need be no problem with, for example, a full-time, white, male, middle class line manager - who will be unlikely to have had any relevant training since at present this is not seen as necessary - making assessment decisions on the work performance of a part-time, Black, working class woman. Because the assessment process and standards are seen as self-evidently 'scientific' and 'objective', it will be assumed that all power differentials between worker and manager/assessor have been overcome and that therefore the outcome is self-evidently fair and that the process itself straightforward. In fact, research has shown that this simply is not the case. Given the nature of oppression in our society, we simply do not accept that such assumptions are valid or acceptable.

The NVQ framework, it is true, does provide for external verifiers whose role is to validate the assessment processes of individual providers and to ensure they accord with agreed practice. However, their role is not to validate individual assessment decisions. Indeed as the role is essentially a technical one, verifiers may not even have a background in the occupation they are appointed to verify. This has led some commentators to complain that virtually no independent validation exists for NVQ assessment decisions (Wolf, 1995, p. 56).

### **Learning - or assessment?**

These seem to us to amount to fundamental criticisms of competence-based approaches - some of them, it should be noted, from people who have for long been NVQ 'insiders' - which McRoberts and Leitch contrive to overlook or ignore. Nonetheless, youth and community work, and especially its trainers, seem now to be running so scared of current pressures towards vocationalist, technicalist and pragmatic perspectives that assessment appears to be, not just unproblematic, but all that matters. Their obsession, it would seem, is with demonstrating that they can produce practitioners who are as objectively 'effective' and 'competent' as any other occupational group, to the virtual exclusion of other key focuses for action and development, and regardless of the effects of all this on the defining principles of this area of practice. Somewhat defensively, in the present climate, we need to add that this statement should not be read as meaning that we see assessment as irrelevant. Far from it - not least because of the pain and damage we have seen poorly conceived and executed forms of assessment cause for those being assessed.

Nonetheless, we cannot regard assessment as sufficient in itself to guarantee relevant and effective youth and community work practice. It should not therefore lead us by

the nose and thereby force us to take our eye off other no less essential elements of what we need to do when we embark on those elusive processes we choose to call 'training' and 'qualification'.

For, at the heart of these processes are people, adults, whose impact will continue to depend on their exchanges with the young people and the communities with whom they work. This is not to say that only natural-born youth leaders need apply. But it is to remind ourselves that such exchanges will always be dynamic and ambiguous and that above all it is precisely in the personal negotiation of these highly contradictory and unpredictable processes that youth and community work 'skill' and 'competence' lie. (See for example HMI, 1987). If workers are to practice 'effectively', 'training' - including the ways in which it assesses those going through it - will therefore need to be congruent with such processes, in particular by deliberately and centrally affirming 'the person' and developing her/his confidence and self-belief.

Clearly, such learning cannot just be superimposed on workers by some externally defined 'curriculum' or assessment framework. It will require their engagement in a range of individualised and group processes which systematically touch (intellectually as well as emotionally) these personal dimensions of their selves and thereby develop them further. This is why we question fundamentally approaches which start with and are then dominated by considerations of assessment frameworks, why unapologetically we continue to advocate and support 'group-based, process-led' forms of learning as the core of training and qualification for youth and community work and why we continue to hold to theoretical and ideological forms of analysis and perspectives which support such approaches.

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## MAD, BAD OR MISUNDERSTOOD?

*A Critical Analysis of State Responses to Children and Young People Whose Behaviour is Defined as 'Disturbed' or 'Disturbing'.*

VICKI COPPOCK

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### Introduction

The behaviour of children and the question of social control are subjects on which opinions-both lay and professional - abound. The 'mad', 'bad' or 'sad' child provokes intense debate. Such debates invariably turn on the conflated issues of 'acceptable' behaviour and 'normality'. The process of defining, identifying, explaining and responding to deviant or 'abnormal' behaviour becomes the vital reference point against which 'normality' is itself defined. Yet it is an arbitrary process which draws boundaries around 'normality' without reflecting on historical, cultural, ideological, socio-economic and political contexts. This paper offers a critique of this process as it relates to children and young people whose behaviour is defined as 'disturbed' or 'disturbing'.

While clinical studies have attempted to give 'scientific' rigour to judgements about 'disturbed' or 'disturbing' behaviour in children and young people, these primarily rely on adults - parents and professionals - to make the initial judgement which determines a particular behaviour as problematic. Thus, 'we have to see clinicians in their social role as authoritative interpreters of disturbance, adding a further layer to the common-sense definitions used by parents' (Grimshaw and Berridge, 1994 p8). As Derek Steinberg (cited in Malek, 1991 p44) states:

*The process by which adolescents become psychiatric patients has as much to do with the feelings and behaviour of other people, and with social customs and routines, as with anything happening inside their heads.*

This is not to deny that many children and young people experience mental distress. Nor is it suggested that parents and professionals are engaged in a conspiracy of ill-will. However it is the contention of this paper that the medical model of mental health (which dominates all understandings of child and adolescent mental health) is not always a reliable indicator of, nor an appropriate response to, that distress. Such scrutiny is essential given the extent to which the medical model is used in professional interventions which impact on the lives and opportunities of children and young people.

The paper begins with an historical and theoretical analysis of how the mental health of children and young people has been constructed. It moves on to explore the problems associated with the process of defining mental 'health' and 'ill-health' in children and young people, along with its consequences in terms of inconsistent institutional responses. The implications of differential interventions for the rights of children and young people are also highlighted. Contemporary debates concerning the perceived deterioration in the mental health of children and young people are critically examined, along with official proposals for a coordinated child and adolescent mental health service. The paper concludes that any way forward must involve a fundamental change in adult-child power relationships.



## Historical and theoretical contexts

It is impossible to comprehend the significance of contemporary understandings of 'disturbed' and 'disturbing' behaviour in children and young people without reference to individual, and in particular developmental psychology as the key framework of explanation. Individual psychology arose in the context of late Victorian 'scientific' enquiry. Scholars of evolutionary theory, anthropology and philosophy, obsessed with numbers, measurement and quantification, searched for social laws which could explain human behaviour. As part of this positivist tradition, 'child study' - observing, weighing and measuring children, documenting their interests and activities - reflected the increasing importance of 'science', not only as a set of procedures for conducting research, but also a set of practices associated with the modern state (Burman, 1994). Nik Rose (1985) highlights the centrality of individual psychology in the role of classification and surveillance. Gradually 'common-sense' assumptions were translated into 'scientific truths', creating the context for, and giving legitimacy to, increasing practices of social regulation and reform. In this sense commentators have pin-pointed the emergence of individual psychology as, at least in part, a response to wider social and political concerns of the late nineteenth century (Rose, 1990; 1989; 1985; 1979; Donzelot, 1980; Foucault, 1979; 1977).

Psychology offered the 'tools' necessary for the identification, classification, control and regulation of those deemed threatening to the social order. The establishment of compulsory schooling provided the psychologists with living laboratories where they could observe large numbers of children (Rose, 1990). Masses of data could be collected, standardised and analysed in such a way as to construct norms for childhood growth and development. Mental testing provided an instrument whereby what was to count as 'normal' or 'abnormal' mental health and/or ability could be established. Yet as Erica Burman (1994 p16) observes:

*The normal child, the ideal type...is a fiction or myth. No individual or real child lies at its basis. It is an abstraction, a fantasy...a production of the testing apparatus that incorporates, that constructs the child, by virtue of its gaze.*

Moreover, the practice of 'scientific' research was dominated by the preoccupations and priorities of white, middle class men. What was to be known about children and 'childhood' bore the hallmarks of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism.

For Alan Prout and Allison James (1990) three themes underpin the construction of the 'normal' child - rationality, naturalness and universality. 'Rationality' is taken to be the hallmark of adulthood, reinforced by a false ideology of childhood irrationality and incompetence. So 'childhood' is constructed as an 'inferior' binary opposite to adulthood and the assumed 'incapacity' of children for rational thought confirms and legitimates their powerlessness. 'Naturalness' and 'universality' imply inevitability, leaving little or no room for contradiction or conflict. The 'normal' child takes on an eternal, timeless quality, so embedded in the general consciousness it becomes taken-for-granted. So much so that the premises upon which it is based - white, western, middle class, male - have seldom been exposed, let alone challenged. Such conceptions ultimately fail to acknowledge the differential experiences of children and young people on the basis of their 'race', culture, class, gender, sexuality, disability and, of course, age.

A range of theoretical models of human behaviour emerged from the late nineteenth century onwards, co-existing and competing with each other, and tending to polarise

around the 'nature' - 'nurture' debate. The search for the 'x' factor - that which distinguishes 'normal' people from 'abnormal' people - has embraced such diverse issues as poor parenting (i.e. mothering), faulty social learning, biochemical imbalance and genetic structure. However, what they all have in common is their focus on individual, familial and/or social pathology and the overarching application of the 'medical model'. As David Hargreaves (cited in Ford, 1982 p35) explains, the medical model approach adopts 'the whole conceptual apparatus of symptom, syndrome, diagnosis, aetiology, pathology, therapy and cure'. Research has demonstrated a wide discrepancy between the criteria used for the identification of 'problem behaviour' and the assessment of individual cases (Hersov, 1986 in Kurtz et al, 1994 p3). The medical model conveniently disguises these disparities. It is in the acceptance of a specific behaviour as a 'problem' (an 'illness' to be treated) that professional power is located. Once such agreement has been reached the only point of professional debate is *which* 'treatment' should be given, *when* and *where* (Ford, 1982).

The model generates a polarised understanding of mental health rather than one which recognises human behaviour as richly diverse and 'fluid' along a broad continuum. It also fails to acknowledge that knowledge is not produced, nor do professionals practice, in a vacuum. 'Race' and gender characteristics, for example, clearly demonstrate the operation of subjective assessments in this field (Fernando, 1991; Russell, 1995). Discourses around femininity and masculinity have produced gendered constructions of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' behaviour for girls/women and boys/men. While 'for boys, aggression, assertion and delinquent behaviour are deemed natural, part of their progressive development...(for girls)...any deviance has been viewed as a "perversion" or the result of individual pathology which rejects passive, naturally feminine behaviour' (Coppock et al 1995 p29-30). Similarly, an examination of the history of psychology and psychiatry illustrates the way in which ethnocentric and racist thought and practice has permeated these disciplines (Fernando, 1995). Negative stereotypes of black and ethnic minority children and families in Britain have been incorporated into the knowledge base and practices of professionals, constructing them as 'pathological' and 'deviant' (Dominelli, 1988; Rooney, 1987; Torkington, 1983; Hall, 1978).

The role of the state in relation to child health, welfare and education has been well-established through a 'mushrooming' network of institutions and academic/professional disciplines - medicine, psychology, psychiatry, health visiting, teaching, social work. Although by and large each profession has developed within its own distinct institutional framework, professional practices and professional power are united through the knowledge base of individual psychology, what Nik Rose (1985) refers to as 'the psychology complex'. Thus while it has been widely acknowledged that services for children and young people have been far from unified, evolving in an uneven, uncoordinated fashion (NHS Health Advisory Service, 1995 p2), a professional unity can be identified which relies on the dominant ideas of development and socialisation in understanding the mental health of children and young people. Michel Foucault (1977) has referred to these as 'regimes of truth', which are inscribed in the working practices of such professionals.

### **The problematics of the defining process**

While theoretical developments and changes in practice imply a journey of innovation and progress in this field, critical research has revealed this to be a misleading assumption. The historical vagaries concerning definitions of 'disturbed' and 'disturbing'

behaviour in children and young people, when set alongside the structural inconsistencies in service development clearly expose the scope for significant professional discretion and autonomy in decision-making processes. Although constructions of 'normality' and 'abnormality' have been firmly institutionalised in the state's response to children and young people, the 'catch-all' nature of the formal diagnostic labels used allows for a very wide interpretation of 'disturbance', from lying and disobedience to attempted self-harm (Jaffa and Deszery, 1989). Moreover the circularity of definition is exemplified in one of the most recent studies on the prevalence of child and adolescent mental health problems and disorders (Wallace et al, cited in DoH/DFE, 1995), where mental ill-health in children and young people is defined as 'a disturbance of function in one area of relationships, mood, behaviour or development of sufficient severity to require professional intervention'. Within the medical model, therefore, the presence of certain behaviours are at one and the same time taken to signify the existence of, and be the consequence of, some 'abnormality'.

The claim to specialist knowledge is central as on it rests the professional's claim to be qualified to know better than their clients, to be trusted by the public and be conferred reward, prestige and the power to intervene (Williams, 1993). 'Expert' control distances parents and children through the use of technical jargon which confuses and often predetermines outcomes through a subscription to categories or disease models. For parents the model has attractions in that they can express relief at having an explanation for their child's behaviour which absolves them of the charge of 'bad parent'. For professionals the model allows them to be 'caring' while also repressing deviance, through the provision of 'help' or 'treatment'. In both cases the constraints of the model allows adult definitions of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' behaviour to prevail, leaving little or no room for any alternative understanding of the behaviour as an appropriate and reasonable response to a stress in the relationship between adult(s) and child/young person - a relationship which is itself rooted in wider structural relations.

Research examining agency intervention in the lives of children and young people considered to be 'disturbed' or 'disturbing' (Malek, 1991) has identified the involvement of four main systems - education, social services, health and criminal justice. Substantial numbers of 'difficult' children and young people have been located in residential care facilities of various kinds (Department of Health, 1992; Berridge, 1985; Parker, 1988; Grimshaw and Sumner, 1991; Bebbington and Miles, 1989). Moreover, research indicates that all of these systems are broadly dealing with the *same* types of behaviours (Malek, 1991; NHS Health Advisory Service, 1986).

Each system assigns its own diagnostic label or definition derived from the historical vagaries and precedents of its particular professional knowledge base. Consequently a child or young person could be given the label of 'emotionally and behaviourally difficult' (education - 'special needs'); 'beyond parental control' (social services); 'conduct disordered' (health - psychiatry) or 'young offender' (criminal justice). Such research not only demonstrates the arbitrariness of the processes by which 'disturbed' and 'disturbing' behaviour in children and young people is defined by parents and professionals, but also reveals how the diagnostic label applied is contingent upon the first point of contact, identification and referral. Thus, the defining process is as much a cause of concern as the definitions themselves.

The process is regularly set into motion following parental complaints concerning a child's or young person's 'intolerable' behaviour (typically: disobedience, lying, staying out late, running away, truancy, theft, verbal and/or physical violence) (see: Grimshaw and Berridge, 1994; Jaffa and Deszery, 1989; Steinberg, 1981). Where help is sought invariably determines the route to provision. If pursued through the family doctor or health visitor, the 'problem' will be diagnosed within a medical framework, most likely following the route to child and adolescent psychiatry. If it is pursued through school, it will be given an educational focus and will be referred to an educational psychologist. Within social services, it is likely that it will be defined as a social/legal 'problem', depending upon whether or not the child or young person has committed an offence. In Malek's (1991) research professionals revealed that diagnoses are often made for administrative and bureaucratic reasons and do not always give a realistic indication of a child or young person's situation. Certainly it does not follow that routes to provision are the result of rational assessment and planning as the medical model would imply. Moreover, within each system and at each stage of the defining process, assessments of the child's or young person's behaviour operate within the determining contexts of 'race', class and gender, producing fundamentally different patterns and outcomes for working class girls and boys and for black and white children and young people (see: Grimshaw and Berridge, 1994; Children's Legal Centre, 1994; Harris and Timms, 1993; Cain, 1989; Harris and Webb, 1987; Morris and Wilkinson, 1983; Hudson, 1983; Campbell, 1981).

Once 'the problem' acquires the status of needing 'expert' intervention, things can be done to children and young people that would not otherwise be possible - e.g. formal assessment and statementing under the 1981 and 1993 Education Acts; removal from home under the provisions of this legislation for residential 'special' education; removal from home under the provisions of the 1989 Children Act, the Criminal Justice Acts (1991 and 1993) or the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act to be 'looked after' by, remanded into the care of, or serve sentence in the care of, the local authority; and admission to a residential psychiatric facility either with parental consent or under the 1983 Mental Health Act. Thus, not only is the process governing which 'system' the child or young person is dealt with erratic, the implications of being 'treated' in one system or another can be far reaching as each system offers different legal rights to children and young people. While concerns have been expressed generally about the safeguards which are supposed to ensure that their rights are protected, and a wide range of institutional and personal abuses have been identified in all settings, the work of Mhemooda Malek (1991), Rachael Hodgkin (1994; 1993) and the Children's Legal Centre (1995; 1993; 1991) has revealed how the mental health system offers children and young people least protection from such abuses.

### **The rights of children and young people in residential mental health settings:**

Interventions in the lives of children and young people because of their 'disturbed' or 'disturbing' behaviour can escalate into a spiral of increasing restriction. Many children and young people find themselves in residential mental health settings either because of a lack of resources within one of the other local authority systems (Malek, 1991) or because one of these systems has deemed the child or young person to be too disturbed to be looked after by them (Ivory, 1991). Once within this system measures of control take on an overtly medical focus.

It has long been acknowledged within critical psychology and psychiatry that it is easy to dress-up oppressive control and call it 'therapy' (Edelman, 1977). This is particularly poignant in relation to children and young people who are defined as 'disturbed' or 'disturbing', given the dominantly paternalistic framework governing child welfare interventions. In addition to the routine practices of behaviour modification, seclusion or solitary confinement, psychiatry has an even more powerful method at its disposal - drug 'therapy'. Therefore, having their 'difficult' or 'disturbing' behaviour dealt with within the mental health system has potentially grave consequences for the civil liberties of children and young people (Hodgkin, 1994; 1993).

Although children and young people in mental health care can be afforded protection under the 1983 Mental Health Act if they are 'formal' patients, more than 90% are admitted 'informally' by their parents or the local authority looking after them (DoH, 1986). The term 'informal' is often incorrectly substituted by the term 'voluntary' - a blatant misnomer. There is no legal framework within which the rights of children and young people in these settings can be safeguarded, particularly in relation to restriction of liberty, consent to treatment or complaints procedures. There is no access to Mental Health Review Tribunals, nor do they come within the scope of the Mental Health Act Commission. The Commission itself expressed considerable concern about the lack of safeguards and requested that its remit be extended to cover informal patients. In consequence the Department of Health issued a New Code of Practice to the 1983 Mental Health Act in Spring 1990 (revised November, 1993 to harmonise it with the 1989 Children Act). The purpose of the Code was to supplement the Act offering practical guidelines and guiding principles around admission, consent to treatment and complaints procedures. However there is no legal duty to comply with it.

The Children's Legal Centre (1993 p3-6; 1991 p24) has accumulated substantial evidence of practices which continue to give cause for concern:

- lack of knowledge and implementation of legal rights concerning consent to medical treatment, and a general lack of rights to self-determination;
- ongoing segregation outside mainstream institutions and schools, away from family, community and friends;
- discriminatory practices leading to unjustifiable intervention and detention on the grounds of class, 'race', ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability etc;
- unnecessary restriction of liberty, use of 'restraint', locked rooms, seclusion, time-out etc;
- inadequate assessment and, thereby, lack of care;
- indiscriminate use of drugs to control rather than 'treat';
- inappropriate and degrading behaviour modification techniques - deprivation of sleep, food, clothing, family contact;
- ongoing placement of children and young people in adult psychiatric facilities;
- lack of rights to confidentiality and privacy;
- use of peer pressure/bullying to maintain discipline.



This would suggest that professional practice is not reflecting the spirit of the Code. A number of commentators have asserted that it is the reliance on common law and discretionary guidance and the reluctance of professionals to *formally* detain children and young people under the 1983 Mental Health Act which leaves them exposed and vulnerable to human rights abuses (Bates, 1994; Fennell, 1992; Masson, 1991). This reluctance stems from the 1957 Percy Commission which stated that children and young people should normally be admitted 'by the exercise of normal parental authority' (cited in Bates, 1994 p133).

However, since the 1969 Family Law Reform Act, sixteen and seventeen year olds have had a statutory right to consent to medical treatment and since the landmark ruling in *Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority [(1986) A C 112]*, under-sixteens have had a statutory right to consent to treatment (without parental knowledge or consent) provided they have 'sufficient understanding and intelligence'. This ruling was thought to have marked a new era in relation to children's rights as it dismissed the idea that parents have absolute authority over their children until they reach eighteen. The *Gillick principle* was evident in the 1989 Children Act and bolstered by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the same year. Sadly, a series of high profile cases have cast doubt on the scope of the *Gillick* decision in relation to the right of a child or young person to refuse consent to treatment (Bates, 1994; Fennell, 1992; Freeman, 1993; Lawson, 1991; Masson, 1991). It had been assumed that a *Gillick competent* child was entitled to both consent to treatment and *refuse* consent to treatment. However, the Court of Appeal has decided that any person with parental responsibility, (or indeed the High Court with its inherent jurisdiction) in certain situations, is able to override a child or young person's right to refuse treatment.

The cases of *Re R*, *Re W* and *Re H* (cited in Children's Legal Centre, 1995; Bates, 1994; Fennell, 1991; Freeman, 1993; Lawson, 1991; Masson, 1991) all involved consideration of the compulsory treatment of 'disturbed' children and young people. In each case the child or young person's right to refuse medical treatment was overridden. Moreover, their refusal to consent to treatment was taken as indicative of their *Gillick incompetence*. Phil Fennell (1992, p327-328) suggests that this is problematic:

*What is not acceptable is the automatic assumption that refusal is irrational and can be overridden whether or not the patient is competent. This is the very assumption which underlies Lord Donaldson's guidance - that children under 16 are never competent, even if they are Gillick competent, to refuse treatment as long as someone else with a concurrent power of consent agrees to it.*

Adults are presumed to be competent unless there is evidence to the contrary. Thus, it is the severity of the test for *Gillick competence* which 'provides the basis for decisions in individual cases which ignore the child's wishes' (Masson, 1991 p529). From this Judith Masson (*ibid*) deduces that it is almost impossible to envisage a situation where a child or young person with a mental health label could ever refuse treatment. She challenges the paternalism inherent in the Court of Appeal decisions which allows adult views to dominate and suggests that this stems from 'the belief that paternalism is better than self-determination where decisions relating to children are concerned'.



### **The current 'crisis'**

It is clear that the current situation is a legal minefield where all the debating is being conducted by adults, leaving children and young people, as so often before, firmly out in the cold. The small steps that were being taken towards involving them in decisions about themselves, respecting their views and enabling them to take more responsibility for themselves have been exposed as flimsy rhetoric. This is all the more worrying given current statistical evidence pointing to an alarming increase in the numbers of children and young people being admitted to residential psychiatric care. Department of Health statistics have demonstrated a sixty-five per cent increase in admissions over the five year period 1985 - 1990 for those aged ten to fourteen years, and a forty-two per cent increase for under ten year olds (Rickford, 1995; 1993a and 1993b). Clearly this means that considerably more children and young people are experiencing the overtly medical, psychiatric system with all that this implies for their civil liberties. Such a dramatic statistical trend warrants closer examination and an understanding of the context of change.

These statistics, coupled with intense media coverage of a number of high profile cases such as the killing of James Bulger, have provoked extensive debate around the notion of a 'crisis' in the psychological health of children and young people. It is suggested that society is witnessing unprecedented levels of 'disturbed' and 'disturbing' behaviour in children and young people. Moreover, this alleged deterioration has been powerfully connected to notions of increased violence and lawlessness, not only by the media and politicians, but by professionals claiming to be working in the interests of children and young people:

*Most of us in the field agree that the degree of distress in young people is much more extreme now. They are exhibiting more extreme behaviour and are given to finding more violent solutions to their problems.*  
(Peter Wilson, Director, Young Minds cited in Sone, 1994 p16)

Similarly, Sue Bailey, consultant adolescent forensic psychiatrist, claims to be dealing with 'slightly more psychotic children than two years ago' (ibid). While such behaviour could be interpreted as a heightening of resistance from children and young people - a challenge to adult social control, in reality the intertwining of the 'mental' and the 'moral', so evident in the Victorian understanding of deviance, has gained a new lease of life. Politicians (across the political spectrum), social commentators and professional 'experts' have been busy with television, radio and newspaper 'specials' devoted to the subject of whether children and young people are 'madder' and/or 'badder' than before. Explanations offered are varied but cover familiar ground as illustrated in the following quotations:

*I believe that human nature spurts out freaks. I believe these two are freaks and they just found each other.*  
(Detective Sergeant Phil Roberts, Interviewing Officer, Bulger Investigation, *Public Eye* 24 November 1993)

*Evil can creep up on children.*  
(John Patten MP *Newsnight* 24 November 1993)

*By the age of ten a child should have developed a conscience. By the age of ten some children's experience of life has left them without a conscience at all.*  
(Mark Easton, Reporter, *Newsnight* 24 November 1993)

*Unmet emotional needs lead to inadequate parenting and damaged children.*  
(Doreen Goodman, *What About the Children?* *The Guardian* 22 February 1993)

*Jonathan, born in 1982, must have spent his first years in an atmosphere of tremendous maternal tension.*

(Gitta Sereny, *The Independent on Sunday* 6 February 1994)

*Since all children are highly impressionable, how can we possibly avoid some savage social penalty in later life?*

(Consultant psychiatrist, Parkhurst Prison, *The Guardian* 22 February 1993)

*I've seen a growth in violent behaviour by boys who were brought up with no male figure. They feel close, dangerously close to their mothers and are frightened of it.*

(Valerie Sinason, child psychotherapist, *The Sunday Times* 21 February 1993).

Biological determinism, religious/moral degeneracy, attachment failure, maternal deprivation, environmental determinism, paternal deprivation, ill-discipline, bad teachers, broken homes, single mothers, video nasties, the list is almost endless. Those who support the assertion that there is a real increase in the mental ill-health of children and young people use these explanations in two distinct ways - those who 'blame the victim' and those who see the children and young people as blameless victims of a deteriorating society. However, what they share is the assumption of pathology. By contrast, Mhemooda Malek (1991) has challenged this notion of a 'crisis' in the behaviour and mental health of children and young people. Her research reveals that many children and young people find themselves in psychiatric care due to a lack of resources within their local authority social services or education departments. As resources have diminished within these systems so increasing numbers of children and young people are spilling over into the historically better resourced 'health' system, giving the impression of an increase in 'madness'.

This observation is supported by many practitioners. Dr Greg Richardson, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, commented in *The Independent on Sunday* (4 April 1993), 'I have a lot more pressure to admit young people for problems previously dealt with by social services'. The Association of Metropolitan Authorities have expressed similar concerns (cited in Sone, 1994). Another consultant stated that between sixty to seventy per cent of the children in the psychiatric unit of which he was in charge were there for conduct disorders rather than any specific psychiatric illness. He concluded, 'if they have not got an illness that is treatable, they do not belong in hospital' (ibid).

Nevertheless the professional and political interest in the subject of child and adolescent mental health has intensified in the wake of the 'crisis'. A series of official documents have been published reviewing child and adolescent mental health services in *all* of the relevant systems (Kurtz et al, 1994; DoH/DFE, 1995; NHS Health Advisory Service, 1995). A substantial overhaul of current provision is proposed which would involve 'the adoption of a coordinated, tiered, strategic approach to the commissioning and delivery of child and adolescent mental health services' (NHS Health Advisory Service, 1995 p2). This recommendation is a response to the key findings of the review - 'that child and adolescent mental health services are essentially unplanned and historically determined; that their distribution is patchy; that the work being done is variable in quality and

composition; that the work they do seems unrelated in strength or diversity to systematically considered local need' (ibid p3).

The key proposal is a four tiered service. Tier 1 includes professionals who represent the first point of contact between a child or young person and their family and child care or health agencies such as GPs, generic social workers, teachers, police, school medical officers, school nurses and health visitors. It is intended that these professionals provide access to the more specialised services by explicit routes which have been negotiated and instituted locally. Tier 2 consists of interventions by *individual* specialist child and adolescent mental health professionals such as community psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers, psychotherapists and occupational therapists. It is envisaged that these staff will also provide support, consultation, education and advice to staff at Tier 1. They will also act as gatekeepers for access to services at Tiers 3 and 4. Tier 3 consists of interventions by *teams* of the specialist child and adolescent mental health professionals identified above. It is expected that these staff will bring coordinated interventions to more complex problems which cannot be managed at Tier 2. They act as gatekeepers to the highly specialised services of Tier 4. Tier 4 provides for very specialised interventions and care for example: out-patient mental health services, in-patient mental health services, special units and secure forensic mental health services. The proposals also include: joint assessment of population needs, individual needs, agency needs research and development needs, and staff training needs; joint agreement of strategy; joint service planning; joint care planning, care management and care programming; joint purchasing; and joint evaluation and monitoring.

Such a model requires significant resourcing if it is to work. It also demands that the various systems dealing with the 'disturbed' and 'disturbing' behaviour of children and young people, with their different agendas, ideologies and languages, put aside their professional rivalries and interests. Such an ambitious task has to date proved unattainable (NHS Health Advisory Service, 1986). What is fundamentally different however is the strong business management emphasis in all current documentation. The language of the market is all pervasive - purchaser/provider; clinical audit; rational planning; joint commissioning.

Mary Keegan Eamon's (1994) critique of state responses to child and adolescent mental health in the USA signals a worrying trend which could be replicated in the UK. Calls for coordinated services and comprehensive networks have by and large been ignored by the federal government. Instead the marketplace has been allowed to flourish and dictate 'appropriate treatment' for children and young people. The rapid growth of for-profit child and adolescent mental health establishments has almost totally accounted for the dramatic increases in the institutionalisation of children and young people in the USA. At the same time public services have been subjected to massive cutbacks and decline. Moreover it is rebellious, disruptive or non-compliant children and young people who are typically being admitted (Weithorn, cited in Keegan Eamon, 1994). In some states the staff in these establishments determine what is 'medically necessary' for a child or young person, exposing an inherent conflict of interest when profits are dependent upon admissions. While the UK experience has not yet reached this state of affairs the signs are not reassuring. For example the private tendering for the provision of secure training units for twelve to fourteen year old children provides a clear indicator of the political direction, driven by free-market, economic libertarian imperatives.

## Conclusion

Although concerns have continually been expressed about the behaviour of children and young people throughout this century and these have elicited ongoing responses from the state via a range of 'professional' interventions, there is a sense in which the contemporary 'crisis' reflects an intensification of a much wider 'moral panic' around 'childhood' itself. This would imply that it is *adults'* fear of loss of control, loss of power over children and young people, which lies at the heart of any notion of 'crisis'. Psychological and psychiatric 'expertise' has inspired panic in adults about 'childhood', predicting catastrophe from the slightest parental 'mistake'. It has cultivated a belief in the ability to know, understand, predict the course a 'normal childhood' should take. It is this claim that has been found wanting, leaving adults understandably bewildered. Through critical research and analysis, professional discourses around mental health which underpin and legitimate adult power over children and young people have been exposed as at best spurious, at worst blatantly oppressive. The definition and demarcation of mental 'health' and mental 'ill-health', of 'normal' and 'abnormal' 'childhood(s)', are riddled with social and political meanings.

None of the rhetoric can disguise the fact that the UK government's commitment to the holistic well-being of all children and young people is woefully inadequate, fragmented and under-resourced (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1995; Hearn, 1995; Children's Rights Development Unit, 1994; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1993). In this context it is hard to envisage a fresh enlightened approach to the mental health needs of children and young people. Rather the proposed changes may merely facilitate a further consolidation of professional power in the long history of policy, legislation and practice which has served to strengthen adult control.

In all this there is a desperate need to construct new ways of responding to children and young people in distress. The Children's Legal Centre (1991 p25) have pointed to the lack of 'ordinary' people and places to whom children and young people can turn when they are distressed. It is suggested that there needs to be, 'a shared and common responsibility, not merely within the obvious statutory, voluntary and private agencies, but throughout society to enable children and young people to receive the help and advice they need'. In this sense a positive approach to the mental health needs of children and young people can only be achieved in the context of a wider change in adult-child power relationships. This demands that children are respected as people first; that they are listened to and that they have the right to make informed decisions about their lives; free from adult judgements concerning their competence to do so. Far from idealistic such an approach is epitomised in the work of such agencies as *Advice, Advocacy and Representation Services for Children and Young People* in Manchester. Practitioners need to acknowledge that while their practice is grounded in the traditions of the medical model of mental health they will fundamentally fail children and young people. They must retreat from institutionalised 'age patriarchy' which involves the abuse of knowledge and power. Moving on means dealing with the messy contradictions inherent in adult-child relationships. It means asking questions, recognising inadequacies and challenging oppressive structures. Only then will adultism be broken down and the human rights of children and young people respected.

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# WORKING SPACE

## NEW LIMITS ON HOUSING BENEFIT PAYMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

KAREN MEE

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Hardly a day goes by without the social security system in Britain hitting the headlines. Those headlines are usually concerned with the need to clamp down on fraud, streamline the system and save the tax payer money. The targets of these 'clampdowns' are invariably the most vulnerable in society. They include single parents, those on disability benefits, asylum seekers and refugees and of course young people. In this article I want to look more closely at the proposals to limit Housing Benefit to young people. As a worker who supports young homeless people moving into their own tenancies I am deeply concerned that these proposals will increase homelessness and vulnerability amongst young people.

*Housing Benefit should not provide an incentive for young people to leave the parental home unnecessarily or to take on high priced accommodation at the taxpayer's expense. (Peter Lilley, social security secretary 28th November 1995).*

This was one of the arguments used by Peter Lilley to justify the limitations placed on Housing Benefit for young people. It is an argument based on fantasy, not fact. Housing Benefit payments are already limited to market rents and Housing Benefit payments would not allow anyone on a low income or on benefits to occupy 'high priced' housing. But more importantly many young people today are forced to leave home, not in a planned and organised way, and certainly not to 'get rich' on benefits, but in a crisis and out of necessity. The project in which I work, based in central Newcastle receives in excess of 100 referrals a year from 16 to 25 year olds. The vast majority of these young people have been forced to leave the parental home or have been in local authority care.

The Government estimates that around 177,000 single people under 25 will come under the scheme and of these around 144,000 will have their benefit entitlement reduced. The stark consequence of this could be 144,000 young people facing eviction.

The factors which cause youth homelessness are often the result of a combination of governmental policies cutting across an individuals personal circumstances. For example, unemployment and poverty are often the causes of family breakdown. The fact that under 18 years olds cannot get benefits if still at home often means parents cannot afford to keep them. The reductions in student grants can lead to poverty for large numbers of students. Other cuts in general resources for communities all add to the pressure which is placed on families trying to make ends meet. For care leavers, lack of money has meant many local authorities, including Newcastle, have failed to meet their obligations to provide aftercare support leaving care leavers to support themselves in their own tenancies, entirely dependant on benefit.

These young people have both a right and a definite need to self contained, safe and affordable accommodation and there is much research to show that this is the preferred option for most young people (see Gilchrist and Jeffs, 1995). However, the government have gone ahead with new regulations surrounding Housing Benefit which are due to come into effect on the 7th October 1996. The regulations expect young people to occupy 'modest accommodation at the cheaper end of the market' and proposes to limit Housing Benefit to a local market rent payable for 'non selfcontained' accommodation ie. bedsits and rooms in shared flats and houses.

For all young people leaving home the current benefits system can hardly be seen as an incentive to do so. A weekly benefit of £36.80 leaves an average young person with £2 or £3 per week 'disposable income' after fuel bills, water rates, food, travel and other essentials. This £2 or £3 a week is all the resources a young person has for buying clothes, socialising and so on. It is not even enough money for a packet of cigarettes or a cinema ticket, let alone for topping up rent payments left short by the new limits on Housing Benefit.

Some of the results of the new regulations on Housing Benefit will be immediately visible. We have already had reports of Bed & Breakfast establishments on Tyneside refusing to take in the under 25s. The new regulation will not affect local authority housing where it is available to young people, but the choice of options for young people will clearly be reduced, particularly in the private sector, the very sector in which the government hope to encourage growth! Quite simply many landlords will not be prepared to let to under 25 year olds.

But some of the most worrying and long term consequences of this new regulation will take some time to become apparent. Young people will slowly get deeper into debt. They may miss fuel payments in order to meet their rent payments. They may eventually face fuel disconnection, they may panic at the scale of their debts and abandon the tenancy. They would then be struck off the housing provider list and fuel companies could make it very difficult to get a tenancy in future. The pressures and stresses of debt, homelessness and insecurity may force some young people deeper into crime or drug abuse and exploitation and ill health. Young people may get into relationships where they are totally financially dependant on their partners and therefore unable to leave, once again making them vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and ill health. These are speculative but, perhaps, not unrealistic possibilities where young people are plunged into cycles of homelessness, poverty and vulnerability.

The experience that we have had supporting young people in shared and joint tenancies shows that sharing is not an easy option. Organising shared budgeting and bill payments, for example, can lead to disputes between young people, an increase in arrears and back to the possible scenarios outlined above.

The effects of the limitations on Housing Benefit will increase youth homelessness and only serve to marginalise young people still further from mainstream society. The amount of money saved from the Housing Benefit budget will be eventually dwarfed by the extra expenditure required to mop up the effects of increased youth homelessness. But as a worker confronting on a daily basis the effects of homelessness on young people I am not only angered and concerned by the actual consequences of this legislation but also by the hypocrisy and double standards that it illustrates in the

government. At what age did Peter Lilley and his contemporaries actually leave home. They probably went to university at the age of 18 or 19 and stayed in halls of residence. They are likely to have their first salaried job at the age of 22 or 23 and will have rented accommodation or perhaps even obtained their first mortgage. If students with parents who can afford to support them and young people who are working can go through the process of leaving home why shouldn't young people who are on youth training schemes or unemployed be able to do the same thing?

We also need to challenge the assumption that young people do not need or have a right to self-contained housing. What makes the under 25s different from the rest of society that they are expected to live in shared accommodation. I would argue that all members of society are entitled to live alone if they so choose.

As workers what can we do about the change in regulation which has already gone onto the statute books? *Kids Moving On* is an independent forum of workers who help young people make the move into independence. We are based in Newcastle and were concerned enough by the implications of this change to launch a campaign. The aim of the campaign is to fully repeal the regulation. We are a broad based campaign and to that end any activity is welcome from letter writing and petitioning to media work and information sharing. If you would like to get involved in the campaign please contact Kids Moving On through Karen, Sharon or Pam at Homeless North on 0191 232 7092. Alternatively, write to the Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley, or to Chris Smith, the Shadow Social Security Secretary. It is important not only to attempt to change current government policy but also to ensure that a future Labour government will make the necessary changes.

The limitations to young people's access to Housing Benefits cannot be allowed to become an accepted part of our society. Young people are already penalised and scapegoated enough. It is the responsibility of workers who can see the long term implications of this change to speak out.

**Karen Mee** is a Housing Support Development Worker on the Start Up Scheme at Homeless North in Newcastle.

**Reference**

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*Judith Mabey and Bernice Sorensen*

**Counselling for Young People**

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ANN G. BEYNON

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For whatever reason counselling for young people in this country is an under-resourced provision, viewed very often in the field with suspicion or at best with simply little understanding of what it is about. Judith Mabey and Bernice Sorensen have taken an important step, towards disabusing the ignorance and challenging the wariness by writing this book.

They have presented a composite picture of the nature and practice of counselling with young people, with detailed accounts of the services offered by individual agencies and organisations nationally. I think it will prove an important reference book for practitioners, managers and even fund raisers; it is a timely record of this pioneering and uniquely important work undertaken with young people during the past twenty years.

The historical context of counselling for young people is clearly stated in the first chapter with an overview of the development of Youth Culture and an account of the origins of professional training and national organisations which responded to the growing national and international, eg. World Health Organisation (WHO), recognition of the emotional and social needs of young people. Early definitions of practice in this helping field are quoted, and the scene is set, including a helpful account of the youth advice centres (JACs) in the Netherlands which acts as a useful comparison to current provision in this country.

In describing four theoretical models of counselling; person centred, problem solving, existential and psychodynamic, the writers identify the different ways in which each approach can meet the core needs of adolescents, helping them to emerge into young adulthood with a felt sense of self value and an ability to claim their inalienable right to an equal, separate and valued place in society.

We are not allowed to forget, even in this presentation of appropriate theoretical models that current financial constraints put severe limits on available provision. This is clearly illustrated by accounts of the services provided for four well established counselling agencies and services, in particular the work of the educational welfare services and special provision within the education service for young people who cannot function within mainstream education settings for a variety of circumstantial, emotional or behavioural reasons all of which services are over subscribed and under resourced.

I found the presentation and account of existential counselling particularly clear in identifying the adolescent's emerging struggle with the reality and concepts of death, meaning, isolation and freedom and responsibility. As the authors explain 'Existential counselling encourages the young person

to go in the direction conscience dictates with the realization that this will inevitably bring responsibility towards oneself and towards others and will include the experience of both success and defeat.'

In Chapter Three the writers establish the function of counselling in enabling young people to interact effectively in personal, educational and work contexts and the responsibility which this places on every counsellor, (whatever their theoretical orientation) to create a safe working environment. The issues of contract setting, time and commitment, power within the counselling relationship, abuse of clients, supervision and assessment are all addressed. In all of these issues, the potential inexperience, vulnerability and powerlessness of the young person is recognised.

The position and experience of Black and Asian young people faced very often with no choice of Counsellor; Black, Asian or White is identified. In our society where racism is a grim reality for young black people the writers ask 'how are white counsellors to monitor the way in which they use or misuse their power in the counselling relationship?' The sections on supervision and assessment make the distinct and demanding nature of counselling, and particularly with young people, very clear. As they say, walking the tight rope between acknowledging the young person's right to autonomy and responding to his or her vulnerability within the framework of the law which must not be ignored can be particularly challenging to the counsellor.

I found the chapter headed 'Specific Issues in Counselling for Young People' extremely valuable. To my knowledge detailed presentations of the counselling needs of this client group are still thin on the ground. The account of the work with a young woman who was self mutilating and causing great concern to her strictly religious family was both impressive in itself and illustrative of the basic need for personal space and respect particularly during adolescence. After nine months of work during which the young woman scarcely spoke; she said quietly during her last session with her counsellor, 'I want to thank you for being here for me and for allowing me to be quiet.'

The detailed guidelines to setting up a counselling service for young people are thorough and include the provision of information and support alongside on going counselling.

Issues of particular sensitivity are highlighted such as referral, both between agencies and parent referrals; and the crucial initial stage of needs analysis carried out in consultation and negotiation with young people. It is vital that the interfaces between counselling, social work, teaching, youth work and other helping activities for young people are managed with respect and a commitment to developing mutual support and understanding, if young people are going to benefit from counselling in the context of the conflicting, demanding and often distressing events and activities in their lives. The writers have clearly given this aspect of establishing a counselling provision careful and thorough investigation. The importance of effective liaison, good communications and training for allied workers is emphasized, as is the counsellor's commitment to

offer confidentiality to her or his client. This has often been an area of contention with this client group, particularly when disclosure of abuse happens; this issue is debated in detail and substantive guidelines for working within a commitment to confidentiality are recommended.

The concluding critique of counselling provision for young people is I think significant in presenting a picture of excellence in a small number of services in different parts of the country. Counselling for young people is clearly needed and being taken up wherever it is available. Mabey and Sorensen have I think established the necessity and unique importance of counselling for young people beyond any reasonable doubt. Their book is a testament to the commitment and dedication of so many skilled and sensitive workers who are determined to implement the expansion of counselling for young people at a period of our history when norms and patterns of behaviour are changing and challenging our ability to parent and educate each new generation successfully.

*Ann G. Beynon is currently Co-ordinator of Information Support Work in the Nottinghamshire Youth and Community Service.*

*John Triseliotis, Moira Borland, Malcolm Hill and Lydia Lambert*  
**Teenagers and the Social Work Services**

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**JIM GODDARD**

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On the whole, this is a clear and well-written study of the services provided for teenagers in five local authority areas over the period of a year. It assumes a good working knowledge of relevant child-care legislation and issues on the part of its readers and is consequently demanding and detailed, but not overly so. An in-depth, qualitative approach is adopted, based on five hundred and eighty two interviews with social workers, young people and parents. This forms the basis of the analysis and provides a focus for understanding the real meaning of social services intervention for the young people involved.

Its main problem, however, centres around the methodology adopted. One hundred and sixteen young people between the ages of thirteen and seventeen were eventually recruited via social workers and foster carers. There is no explanation of precisely how this was done. This, and the use of this method of recruitment itself, suggests a worrying degree of naivety on the part of the authors. The vast majority of the young people were already

known to the agencies involved. To what extent may social workers have been selective in their recruitment (to protect either themselves or to aid the study)? The authors acknowledge that 'the effect on the sample social worker bias and some young people's reluctance to take part can only be inferred' (p.41). A vital issue, but this is all the comment it receives. The basic goals of the study are not wholly undermined by this, but it is questionable whether one should be seeking to draw conclusions from the views of 'samples' recruited in such a vague way. Anyone with experience in this area, particularly in the field of user participation, should be aware of how experienced many social workers are at screening-out dissident or uncomfortable voices - for a whole variety of reasons, not all of them necessarily malign. Meetings with other groups of young people were arranged in order to check the representativeness of the sample, but there is no comment on how these were recruited. One only hopes that it was not through social workers.

Nevertheless, the results still make interesting reading. Looking at the views of the three groups involved is, at times, particularly revealing about the mis-matches in perception between young people, social workers and parents. These differences emerge in such areas as the extent of leaving care preparation (young people being highly critical of its lack) and the importance placed on practical employment and educational issues (more by parents and young people than social workers). While these are familiar issues, it is important to note that it is social workers themselves who are most likely to be underplaying the importance of educational ambition and leaving care preparation rather than young people or parents.

The demands of the methodology, with an attempt at two interviews with the young people, social workers and parents involved (at the start and at the end of the year), explain the relatively small sample size. However, what is gained in quality is rather lost in generalisability. The sample is too small to make any significant generalisations - although the widely-agreed benefits of residential schools is at least an interesting finding worth exploring further. Covering service delivery over the course of a year also places limitations on what can be said. The authors acknowledge this, but nevertheless proceed to make a number of recommendations in the final chapter. Inevitably, these are of the rather general kind and will be familiar from a number of previous studies (e.g. greater inter-agency co-ordination, longer support periods for young people leaving care). While these points bear repetition, they seem to stem as much from the authors' general experience as they do from the strict implications of this particular study.

In sum, this is worth reading for a detailed review of the services provided for this age group and for genuine interest of its approach. But it needs to be read cautiously, not as in any sense representative - for the reasons already given.

*Jim Goddard is a Lecturer in Public Policy at the University of Portsmouth.*



David Drew

**'Race', Education and Work : The Statistics of Inequality**

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ANDREW WEST

This book challenges many generalised assumptions built partly from other research about, for example, under-achievement of young Black people (especially Afro-Caribbean) in comparison to young white people. It is effectively a long research report of the social scientific sort, with lots of graphs and tables. It is ultimately drawn from a very large data set (28,000 young people) which has been effectively and skilfully used. But while it has important and interesting points to make, and engaging opening and closing chapters, the overall effect of the main body of the text is dull, and this will probably be a book limited to some researchers and others fond of describing and interpreting human behaviour en masse and with debate over statistical methodology. But it has to be said that things do brighten up to the end of chapter seven, with a discussion of values in research drawn from an ongoing public debate. More of this below.

The book aims to present a 'statistical analysis of the "race", gender and social class differences in educational attainment and progress into jobs of 28,000 black and white young people aged 16-19, charted through the Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales' (p1). Although gender is looked at throughout, the main focus is on race and social class. Drew commends the Youth Cohort Study to us as providing 'a set of data which is the strongest and most reliable of its kind in England and Wales and enables detailed analysis to be carried out of the progress of young people, either through post-compulsory education, or into the labour market' (p66), although he notes limitations, that it probably errs 'on the optimistic side when it comes to looking at the experience of ethnic minority groups' (ibid).

The opening chapter briefly reviews the complexities of individual backgrounds and collective strands and social categories, ethnic and class identity and concepts of racism, in particular taking up the view that there has been an emphasis on colour racism at the expense of concern about cultural racism. In the book, however, Drew is only able to distinguish white, Afro-Caribbean and Asian, or white and Black, limited by his data sets. Chapter two looks at the issues emerging from previous studies into 'educational experiences of ethnic minority young people'. In some respects Drew's use of ethnic minority when he usually means Black, Afro-Caribbean and Asian, given his earlier comments on cultural racism, are not helpful.

The third chapter discusses methodology, the design, sampling and weighting of the Youth Cohort Study and then we move on to his main presentation. This comes in three parts: 'Home and School at 16', an examination of the social background and examination results; 'Post Compulsory Education', looking at rates of participation in further, post 16 education; and 'The Youth Labour Market'. Having established that participation by ethnic minority

young people in post-compulsory education is high (albeit with ethnic differences), he goes on to model entry into the labour market, and show that 'once attainment and route into the labour market are taken into account, ethnic origin...is invariably the single most important factor. This means that Afro-Caribbeans and, to a greater extent, Asians, are at a disadvantage relative to their white peers. This provides strong indirect evidence for the continuing effect of racial discrimination in the labour market' (p176).

It feels as though many would say 'so what' to such a conclusion, feeling that they knew it, that it is obvious. But these would be the converted, and others need to be persuaded through the production of evidence, and statistical evidence counts for much in this part of the world because it is deemed scientific. (Witness, as I write, the continual pronouncements of the government that it will rely on scientists to make statements and deliver us from the 'beef crisis'.) Others are not to be convinced at all, simply because their basic belief system will not allow for any evidence - they will not shift: so works like this have validity in adding to the material available for use but are unlikely in themselves to move the mountain of racism. Here, though, comes the public debate, only briefly discussed, over accusations that Drew and others are 'antiracists' with particular positions which do not sit well with research: 'he (Hammersley) argues that research should return to being "value neutral", an old argument based on a naive idealized and ideological understanding of the way research in natural science and social science is conducted' (p190). (A point which might well be usefully taken up in any review of the beef crisis.) Sadly, the debate is not taken further, although quite well-rehearsed elsewhere but not so much in a quantitative context.

Drew's work is careful, for example in interpreting data such as where 'the Asian group was more likely than the white group to be in owner-occupied housing' he reminds us that 'this should not be taken to mean that the Asian households were more affluent; owner occupation amongst Asians is high amongst all socio-economic groups' (p71), and notes problems (p184) that may have affected Afro-Caribbean males in the survey. This last would have been worthy of more discussion; that it was not included is probably due to considerations of audience - of being too complex or academic. But this book, derived from a PhD thesis, is not going to be for the layperson. That said, it should be widely used in universities and colleges, both for its subject and method. Its messages, which are well summarized at the end of chapters and again in the conclusion, should be disseminated in other forms as well.

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*Helen Wilkinson*

**No Turning Back: generations and the genderquake**

Demos 1994

ISBN 1 898 309 75 2

£5.95 (pbk)

JEAN SPENCE

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This is an enthusiastic little book. The author is enthusiastic about the actual change in gender attitudes and values of the 'seven million generation' of young people between the ages of 18 and 34 in 1994. She is also enthusiastic about the actual and potential changes in social, economic and political organisation and process which these attitudes and values imply.

Wilkinson bases her arguments primarily upon information provided by Synergy, who have gathered data about values for market research purposes over a period of twenty years. The source for the particular information presented in this book through 'value maps' is a survey carried out in 1993 using a random sample of 2,500 15-75 year olds. These value maps indicate significant changes in attitude between the older and younger generations and a clear movement away from rigid gender views among the 18-34 generation towards a more androgynous mode of being and thinking.

Drawing on a range of supportive evidence, Wilkinson suggests that these value changes have some correspondence with changes occurring in the workplace. These changes include a feminisation of work and of working processes and practices as well as an increase in the numbers of women in the labour market in general. The effects of all this seem to be a fundamental and irreversible shift in gender roles and status towards a greater parity between the sexes. Wilkinson acknowledges that this is partly an outcome of the impact of feminism upon social institutions and attitudes but suggests that the data indicates that feminism is no longer a relevant philosophy in the new situation.

However, it is acknowledged that the value shifts which have occurred in the period since the Equal Opportunities Legislation of the 1970s have not been fully matched by the nature of institutional change across the board. In many situations, institutions have lagged behind in their policy making and are out of step with the aspirations of both men and women of the generation in question. The consequences of this are costly for society. Welfare is not clearly targeted. Firms are losing female staff who are preferring to set up their own businesses and most significantly, the failure of political parties to address the concerns of this young generation has resulted in their massive depoliticisation. Wilkinson is suggesting organisational changes in social policy, economics and politics which will endeavour to make the practices of public life more congruent with the new private values which are here to stay.

I found this book both interesting and irritating and wondered if my irritation was personal, connected to the fact that I am older than the 7 million

generation, and therefore am hanging onto outdated values. For instance, I was politically and personally influenced by feminism which I still per-versely believe has much to offer to the younger generation as well as the older. It seems to me that to write off the insights of feminism is to lose the opportunity to name and organise around what the author admits continues to be an unequal situation between men and women. There is no guarantee that institutions will seek to catch up with attitudes.

Attempting to be more objective in my analysis of my response to Wilkinson's arguments, it became apparent that I have little dispute with the evidence presented from the survey, even if I am suspicious of the purposes for which this information was gathered. Indeed, it would be very odd if the 18-34 generation had not shifted their attitudes and values significantly in the light of the fundamental social and economic changes which this country has experienced in the last 30 years or so. Young people of course have been particularly affected by changes in the job market and the work place. Increased insecurity in relation to this has undoubtedly impacted upon attitudes and values and political perspectives. This has been reinforced by the hegemony of right wing government experienced by this generation virtually throughout the whole of their adult lives. I wonder how the value maps would have looked if the generation had been taken to be those aged between 30 and 47. There does seem to be something very arbitrary about generational analysis.

There have clearly been some gains for young women, indeed for all women, significantly in education and career opportunities, as a result of feminist political activity and struggle during the late 1960s and the 1970s. Inevitably the terms of the debates change. If feminist arguments and struggles have had an impact, then the debate moves onto other areas of concern in relation to gender. One of these areas might be, as the author suggests, to take more seriously the impact of changing power relations upon men.

Wilkinson acknowledges that there is still some distance to travel before we can claim to have achieved institutional gender equality. Why then is she so keen to dismiss the value of feminist thought in addressing that? Moreover, to present the gains made by women as absolutes, is to completely flatten out the difficulties of the Equal Opportunities approach to organisational practice which has provided for greater flexibility, admittedly to the benefit of some of us, within an inherently unequal situation. The gains won by women have only differentially enabled us to achieve a narrowing of the gender divide, whatever our values. It would, perhaps, be an interesting exercise to analyse the change in status and relative income associated with those professions where women have been able to achieve improved access.

There are some questions to be raised about the way in which figures are presented unproblematically in this text. Wilkinson talks about a narrowing of the differences between the sexes in the job market, but does not really consider the full implications of this. Why are the gaps narrowing? Are male rates of income falling towards the low rates earned by large numbers of

women? Does feminisation of the workplace lead to overall lower status, wages and worse conditions in some areas?

In such a short book, attempting to say quite a lot, it is inevitable that there will be generalisations. However the author has a tendency to universalise in a manner which ignores the significance of structural inequalities other than gender. Class is occasionally mentioned, yet it is suggested that it is of less significance than gender in the expression of values. Racism, disablism, homophobia as attitudes and values inscribed within generations and within institutions are simply not mentioned. The inequalities upon which such negative values are based are therefore not addressed. They are not part of the survey material.

While the author suggests that the essentialism of feminist thought is problematic - and I agree with her - she herself tends towards an essentialism of generation. There is some acknowledgement of difference but in concentrating particularly upon dominant trends she fails to appreciate the significance of difference within the generation in question. As a consequence, there is an absence of any concept of gendered struggle except as an issue of identity and private life. Changes in public life are understood here as an issue of rational policy-making and the author is urging policy makers to change rationally. She is not raising fundamental questions about, for example, the distribution of wealth or the over exploitation of some sections of the workforce - particularly women and young people. In a sense, the questions she raises are not really contentious insofar as they would fit within the discourses of any of the mainstream political parties.

In addressing pre-existing economic and political institutions and asking them to focus more upon the changes in values in order that greater harmony, prosperity and dynamism is achieved, some fundamental questions are avoided. It is one thing for any of the three major political parties to become more aware of the issues which young people feel are important and to incorporate these into their policy making, it is quite another thing for the alternative organisations which are being created by young people to achieve influence and power at a political level in their own right. The changes suggested by the shift in values are probably much more radical than Wilkinson suggests.

Gender might not be a key feature signifying the manner in which young people organise themselves. However, given the continuing gap between values, aspirations and institutional reality, it is not impossible that as young people become differently politicised, gender will once again become a concern. This book, which rides the post-feminist wave, does not allow for that possibility. I do not believe we can be so self-assured about the nature of the society we are currently creating.

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Stephen J. Ball  
**Education Reform**  
 Open University Press 1994  
 pp 148

BRYAN LANGLEY

In eight chapters Ball analyses the educational reforms begun with the demise of TVEI, in the mid-eighties. His attention is concentrated upon secondary schools, but the findings relate to all sectors. Since publication, nursery schools and play-groups have entered the market place with the voucher scheme announced in November, 1995.

This is not an easy book to read, requiring a high degree of commitment. For non-educationalists there is a helpful glossary of agencies and actors, but for those unversed in the culture of the sociologist, there is little quarter given. Am I the only one oblivious to: 'Foucault's dystopia of hierarchical observation as a heuristic device?' or challenged by 'The micro physics of oppression, not, that is the long, coercive arm of the state at work, but a bottom up, capillary process of local and unstable relations?' well, I'm aware of them now and I suppose that's what books are for. However, this small work is far too important to be restricted to academics. It's message is prophetic and it relates to every citizen; it proclaims the plotted and planned demise of public service and the consequent aggravation of all forms of deprivation and social disadvantage.

Chapters One and Two are for aficionados, they deal with the technicalities of the analysis. Whilst well done, they are the 'installation instructions for gas-fitters' essential but not spell-binding for the average householder. Details of three epistemologies (post-structuralism, ethnography, and critical policy analysis), 'fighting hard to be heard in this theory work', don't have the same bite as 'When shall we three meet again?' Theoretical heurism and discussions of policy as text, and policy as discourse can have a soporific effect.

Chapter Three is like a splash of water from a mountain spring. The title itself: 'Education, Majorism and the curriculum of the dead' sums up so neatly so many of our problems. It outlines the growing influence of the Centre for Policy Studies and the ascendance of 'cultural restorationism' goodness only knows what happened to the 'post-Fordist' Lord Young initiated TVEI school of thought that promised, and nearly delivered, so much. How the restorationists must have cheered when 'If' was voted 1995 Poem of the Year. How comforting for 'Honest John' and his anti-intellectual, university of the streets, to be at one with his electorate. Thatcher-spice unleashed such a torrent of propaganda and derision, that anything associated with progress was swept from the political agenda. In its place has been imposed a fossilised curriculum reminiscent of the 19th century Revised Codes. Plowden has been vilified, and the National Curriculum has been designed so the children can learn *from* history, and for example *about music and geography*. Anything remotely liberal is smeared 'loony-left' and viciously attacked



for daring to be. I wonder where Spadge Hopkins (remember the sepia schoolroom in Cider with Rosie, and his relationship with 'Crabby B') is now? What an enlightened Tory front bench spokesman he would make.

In chapter four, there is empathy for teachers! They have been changed from professionals to technicians and almost disempowered in terms of policy formulation. Their involvement with school development planning is viewed as something of a ruse. All that teachers can do in schools struggling for resources, is prioritise cuts. They are empowered only to the extent of choosing their own sorrows. Ball acknowledges that the meaning of teaching and the nature of teaching as a career are at stake, as is, in general terms, *the future of education as a public service*.

Chapter five, dealing with the entrepreneurial culture of the self-managing school is engrossing. Those venerated duos: Hargreaves and Hopkins (no relation to Spadge!) and Caldwell and Spinks attract some well deserved academic wellie. Ball feels very strongly about their anodyne, sanitised approach to LMS, fit only for the 'World of Mary Poppins'. Their texts describe that wholesome and 'clean' situation, where money is not an issue. The mind flicks back to a 'Carry On' film with Kenneth Williams cast as the head, rather than the rascally Sid. What Ball is saying, is that, assuming senior management of schools were working to capacity before LMS, what is now ignored? Why, before LMS did schools not have additional resources allocated *in addition to those already in place* to undertake financial responsibilities under the control and direction of the head. Schools should not have to use educational resources to service LMS. In reality, senior management has become a vehicle for delivering under-funded national reforms rather than a vehicle for promoting curricular initiatives arising within their own institutions.

Ball begins a well argued critique on the governmental ploy of steering from a distance. The state sets the field of play, makes the rules, controls the purse strings and then gives a local agent 'complete autonomy' to provide a service, preferably in competition with others. When things inevitably go wrong, the government blame the local agent. This was the technique used to great effect throughout 1994 to explain why schools were unable to maintain staffing levels. Some thought that the government had not funded the 1994 teachers pay award; in fact the shortfall was due to reckless financial management at *local level!*

Chapter six considers the challenge of 'new headship'. Ball posits three major differences from 'old headship'. These are:

1. Relationships with the governing body;
2. Duties as a financial manager;
3. Separation of heads from the body of teachers. Heads as managers of teachers rather than chief amongst fellow professionals.

In addition heads are obliged to concern themselves with marketing and public relations to unprecedented levels.

Some would consider it the duty of governors to formulate policy which the head manages in operational terms. This is the Michael Howard approach used to such telling effect in the prison service. When things are going well, it's a wonderful policy, but when things go haywire, clearly it's an opera-

tional defect. I term, this the 'Howard Effect'. Most sane folk dispute the existence of such a neat boundary. Stuart McLure (former TES editor) says that in practice, control comes down to the relative weaknesses of heads and governors, but that trials of strength, manipulation, and conflict hardly seem the basis for new flexibility or clear and effective school leadership.

Most heads would admit spending a disproportionate amount of time on finance ensuring value for money. This is hard, essential work, but it is not why heads came into education, and it is of little immediate help to classroom colleagues. Not inconsiderable salary increases, including some locally negotiated have further pushed heads away from staff and towards their paymasters. Ball refers to this as: 'The co-option of heads by the government'.

Since funds follow pupils, they are viewed as customer/consumer/clients. The 'right' sort of child is to be courted. In over-subscribed schools, parents must defer to the establishment.

Conversely, struggling schools, wishing to survive, must guess at policies that could appeal to families with the 'right sort' of child. The two types of leadership are quite distinct. The Tony Blair leadership model for New Labour must be familiar to so many heads trying to boost enrolment. 'Vote for us, and we'll be what you want us to be...But vote for us'

'Restorationist' schools will flourish, whilst others will wither and perhaps even die. If Nature is too slow, then OFSTED can supply the dagger thrust. What sort of a head would you be? I'd be tempted to call my school something like The Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, Margaret Thatcher, Standards Matter Academy. That should work!

The market theme is developed further in chapter seven. Enrolling for a school is not as straightforward as buying a car. Schools must respond to expectations of families (I use this term since all evidence indicates that enrolment is a family decision, rarely only a parental one). The market orientates the public entrepreneur (i.e. head) towards the effective consumer. The gifted, high status youngsters are at a premium, whilst limited, difficult, disadvantaged children are not so immediately attractive. Schools are usually very reticent about publicising outstanding work in SEN. Young people who don't conform easily are in danger of becoming the 'untermenschen' of our society (as I write, NAHT are requesting permission to exclude difficult pupils for up to 45 days per term). Perhaps one day, doctors will only accept really healthy patients, and dentists will only treat those with healthy mouths. We are an excellent school; we only take pupils who don't need teaching.

Places in the 'best' state schools (i.e. those in the most affluent of catchment areas), City Technology Colleges, and Public Schools (via the assisted places scheme) are ear-marked. They are Thatcherite laurels awarded for being successful, for parental commitment to family, for self-improvement, and for downright deservingness. All parental criteria 'and so shall the sins of the father be visited upon the sons (and daughters)'. So that's hereditary meritocracy!

The final chapter deals with 'competitive schooling' and the ousting of ethical professionals by technocratic managers. Gone the care for all young people, philosophically enshrined in the Butler Act (Hey! wasn't he a Tory?). In its place a free market for desirable clients and competent customers, 'Thatcher's children'. There has been a values drift avalanching into a values attrition. In the chess sense educationalists are in 'check', they have only one move, they must conform to the market. This contrast between comprehensive school and market values is brilliantly summarised in a table, ripe for plagiarism (doubtless it will appear on OHP transparencies and hand-outs wherever education is cared about).

Without any effective opposition, the government has virtually destroyed LEAs, set school against school, teacher against teacher, pupil against pupil and family against family in the scramble for the relative advantage to be gained from education. This solitary, egocentric view of fulfilment free from the tiresome moral demands of others cannot be worthy of our 'sceptred isle'. How much better to return to a policy of common-sense and values (no...they do not have to be mutually exclusive). R. H. Tawney in the early days of the Labour movement urged that what a wise and caring parent wished for their children, so should a nation care for all of its children! Ball ends his book in similar vein, quoting Benton:

*The highest and most worthy exertions of humanity can flourish only where the intensity of social bonds and civic virtue also flourish.*

This small book makes an immense contribution to the understanding of contemporary schooling. From the bleak picture it paints comes a minute cinder glow; perhaps, in the true tradition of Victorian melodrama, all is not yet lost. LEAs and teachers are fixed, pickled in preservative. Only government can undo the ideological damage. It must acknowledge that education of the highest order, for all, can only be achieved through a public service properly administered, monitored and funded.

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*Jostein Gaarder*

**Sophies World**

Phoenix House 1995

ISBN 1 897580 42 8

£16.99 (hbk)

pp 403

**ANDY GIBSON**

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Sophies World tells the tale of 14 year old Sophie Amundsen's discovery and education in philosophy. It does this by tracing her developing relationship with a teacher of philosophy and the course of learning he takes her through. As the story, and the philosophy course develop, her experiences

and the events surrounding her begin to merge as life reflects philosophy and philosophy reflects life.

The book was originally written as an introduction to philosophy for young people and whilst it may work as such for some, others may find it a little abstract and hard going.

However its interest to youth workers and educationalists will not be to give it to young people, but to use it to contribute to their practice.

Philosophy has a bearing on youth work practice in a number of ways. Firstly we talk with young people about philosophy each and every day. The difference between right and wrong, the difference between rights, responsibilities and duties, are all people of equal worth, what is true, authority and so on. These are all philosophical questions, and all have a part in both youth work and the book.

As youth workers we seek to create circumstances where young people are able to explore these issues for themselves, we look for ways to reveal other truths to young people and we find ways of being critical of their assumptions and attitudes. Through this process we are effectively acting as applied philosophers, bringing the abstract of morality, conscience, loyalty, individuality or relationships to the reality of young peoples lives. If we are to do this, it may be that we will do it better if we understand the fundamental theories behind them.

Secondly philosophy has a bearing on youth work in that it may help us understand young people, their dilemmas and the world they are growing up in. Philosophers (*those who use reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge of reality (Concise Oxford Dictionary)*), are philosophical, (*...wise, serene; temperate...calm in adverse circumstances (Concise Oxford Dictionary)*), and these traits do not go amiss in youth work. However the greatest lesson to learn from philosophy is that of respect for the lives and views of others, a willingness to look critically at our own, and the ability to know that very often we don't know. All these contribute towards a genuinely liberatory approach to and understanding of informal education.

Lastly philosophy can bear upon youth work practice as a result of recent developments in the teaching of it. Sophie's World being one. One other notable programme is the Philosophy for Children project, in the USA (Whalley 1989). Matthew Lipman, its driving force was initially interested in the teaching of philosophy, pure and simply, but as he developed methods of doing so he became clearer about the fact that what he was really doing was teaching young people to think, and think critically at that. As his work developed he tried to track the impact of these programmes upon young people, and found sometimes spectacular improvements in their academic achievements.

In many ways his methods mirror much of the work of youth workers, discussion groups, dialogue and issue based work, but it possesses a clarity from which youth workers could gain much. Descriptions of the role of the teacher, the dilemmas they face, the questions explored and the educational theory behind it have an uncanny similarity to youth work.

So *Sophies World* may well be applicable to youth workers. For readers like myself who are not used to reading philosophy texts, it offers a relatively straightforward way into philosophy and offers a coherent account of its history. It may not be as gripping as a good thriller, so instantly applicable as a youth work text, but by the very nature of the fact that this book is about fundamentals and underlying issues it may have a greater bearing on our practice than we might think.

**Reference**

Whalley, T. (1989) in Coles and Robinson *Teaching and Thinking : A Survey of Programmes of Education*. Bristol : Bristol Press.

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*R. Bullock, M. Little, S. Millham & K. Mount*  
**'Child Protection : Messages from Research'**

HMSO 1995

ISBN 0 11 321781 1

pp 120

**STEVE ROGOWSKI**

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During the 1980s social work with children and families became dominated by crisis, reactive work concerning child abuse allegations, this in turn becoming known as child protection. Preventative social work was sadly neglected and it is gratifying, therefore, to read the above book which argues that the balance has to be redressed.

Following the happenings in, for example, Cleveland and Orkney there emerged a concern as to how child protection agencies were discharging their responsibilities. Were they being over zealous in their interventions into families lives and did they realise the traumatic effect their intervention could have on these families? As a result the Government commissioned research into this area and this book summarises the messages arising from twenty individual research studies. The studies themselves cover such areas as parental perspectives, child protection practice, child sexual abuse and inter-agency co-ordination. The book begins with an overview summarising the findings from the studies. The second section consists of summaries of each of the research projects, and the book ends with a series of exercises for managers and practitioners to see if the findings are 'true for us'.

The overview itself is of particular interest. It looks at the problems of defining child abuse, the child protection process, the effectiveness of the child protection process, and how can professionals best protect children. Thus, for example, child protection investigations are often used as a passport to services, this reflecting an imbalance between child protection and preventative/family support services. Also, heavy end cases are adequately dealt with (despite the media hysteria which arises when child abuse tragedies do occur - one cannot ever, of course, guarantee that all children

can be protected) but many minor cases are rigorously investigated meaning a large number of minnows are caught in the child protection net before being discarded, leading to alienated parents who face distress and hardship, this in turn making life difficult for the children whom agencies are seeking to help. Findings such as these lead to the conclusion that there should be a move from focussing on child protection *investigation* to an emphasis on *enquiries* to see if a child is in need and what service can be offered. The current 'stress upon child protection investigations and not enquires, and the failure to follow through interventions with much needed family support prevents professionals from meeting the needs of children and families'. This is very welcome.

As for the summaries of the individual research studies these are concise, very readable and the findings eminently sensible. For example, Gibbons et al found that families struggling with child rearing in difficult circumstances are prematurely defined as potential child protection cases rather than as families in which there are children in need. Incidentally, there is a valuable reference to North American research in which there is mention of 'societal neglect', meaning the state's failure to support the poor, meaning that children suffer abuse. This surely has echoes this side of the Atlantic although it is rarely referred to in child protection literature here (a notable exception is Parton's work - see below).

The exercises at the end are useful and should act as an antidote to those managers and practitioners who always seem to think that research is too remote and academic, having little to say about or to do with the day to day realities of child protection.

A criticism that occurs to me is the absence of the work of leading academics such as Parton<sup>1</sup> and Thorpe<sup>2</sup> in this book. Even if they were not commissioned to do some of the research surely their work should have been referred to in the bibliography. Perhaps it is because some of their work critically discusses the ideological changes of the last sixteen years, this in turn greatly influencing, and not for the better, social work practice (leading to problems which this book seeks to remedy). But perhaps I am being too cynical?

By and large, though, this is an important book which should be widely read by all those working or interested in the child protection field. Hopefully, it will encourage reading of the individual research studies themselves. Agencies involved in child protection should heed the messages of this research. They should move away from a preoccupation with protecting themselves from scenarios where things have gone wrong (i.e. child abuse tragedies) to ensuring that the real needs of children and families are addressed.

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John Stewart, David Smith and Gill Stewart with Cedric Fulwood

**Understanding Offending Behaviour**

Longman 1994

ISBN 0 582 23432 8

£15.99

pp 192

STEVE ROGOWSKI

Smith and his colleagues have been quite prolific in terms of the number of books they have recently written. There was 'Criminology for Social Work'<sup>1</sup> recently reviewed in this journal, then 'Effective Probation Practice'<sup>2</sup> and now we have the above volume. 'Understanding Offending Behaviour' is based on a survey of over 1300 young adult offenders in contact with the English probation service in January 1991. Questionnaires were completed by their probation officers in seven areas. This book presents and analyses the data concerning their offending behaviour and gives an insight into probation practice in the context of increasing poverty, drug use and community breakdown.

Chapter one looks at the policy context in which the probation officers in the study are working, that is it looks at criminal justice policy. However, it is pointed out that such policy is formed within the wider context of economic and social policy, this in turn largely determining the room for manoeuvre for probation officers, as well as having a profound impact on the lives of offenders. For example, the changes in social security during the 1980s has increased the poverty of young people. Also policy on housing, education and employment, among others, influences the lives of offenders limiting what probation officers can do to help. As for criminal justice policy itself, the 1980s saw a move away from the help and support to one of punishment in the community and resulting emphasis on the control of offenders.

Chapter two describes the typology of offending behaviour which structures the rest of the book. As such the offending behaviour of this sample falls into six categories. *Self-expression* refers to that offending which is response to, for example, frustration, resentment or the product of mental health problems; there is no predominant type of offence, and probation's response largely involves trying to improve self-esteem. *Social activity* is offending as a peer group activity, such as car theft, with probation focussing on the offending behaviour via groupwork. *Social norm* is offending which is sanctioned within a whole neighbourhood or community, usually consisting of more serious offences, and probation officers are usually pessimistic about changing individuals. *Coping offending* is a response to poverty and usually consists of theft with probation officers offering budgeting and welfare rights advice. *Life-style offending* is bound up with other aspects of an offender's life, such as drug or alcohol use, and probation's response focuses on the problems associated with this substance use. Finally, *professional offending* is seen as a means of earning a living, a form of work, such as more serious property offences but also prostitution, with probation officers roles here being rather unclear. It is noted that women's offending is usually self-express-

sion or coping, and as far as white and black people are concerned there is little difference in their offending in terms of the typology although black people are less likely to be described as life-style offenders but are more likely to be described as professionals.

Chapters three to eight look in more detail at each facet of the typology and there are vivid and sad accounts of the lives of the young people in the study - they have backgrounds of poverty, disrupted and unhappy early experience, substance dependency, stressed relationships, and all this within environments which offer plentiful opportunities and even encouragement for criminal involvement.

The final chapter, by the chief probation officer of Greater Manchester, looks at policy and management implications. As the vast majority of offenders have problems such as unemployment, housing and mental health it is these issues that probation officers must try and tackle (presumably less so than issues of control). This is surely the way forward even though it is acknowledged that if the probation service does prioritise its work in these terms it would expose the flaws of Government policies over the last sixteen years and there would be consequent dangers to the probation service itself. One has only to witness, for example, the current attempts to de-professionalise the service, hence a social work qualification being no longer required to be a probation officer.

If a criticism of this book is to be made then perhaps there could have been more consideration of criminological theory. Admittedly, the typology used is linked to control, labelling and subcultural theories but what about strain theories and, despite some readers thinking this is my hobby-horse(!) the 'new criminology'<sup>3</sup>?

To conclude, this is a useful book which, as the blurb says, should appeal to criminal justice practitioners and social work students alike. It should also interest all those who are concerned about offending and how to deal with it.

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*Alessandro Cavalli and Olivier Galland (editors)*  
**Youth in Europe: Social Change in Western Europe**  
 Pinter 1995  
 ISBN 1 85567 305 3 (hbk)  
 ISBN 1 85567 306 1 (pbk)  
 £35.00 (hbk)  
 £15.99 (pbk)  
 pp 160

KEITH POPPLE

In recent years there has been increasing interest in the way in which young Europeans are experiencing the major social changes that are taking place in their respective countries. There has also been an interest in comparing and contrasting these various experiences and in considering how Europe as a whole, and individual countries in particular, can best deal with the challenges facing its young people.

This edited book contains a range of useful, interesting and accessible articles by sociologists which address issues effecting young people in Britain, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

One of the most significant points made by the collection is the radical and relatively recent changes in the transition from adolescence to adulthood effecting young people in all the European countries studied. There are, however, differences between countries and regions, and differences between working-class and middle-class young people, as well as differences between males and females. The traditional model of transition from adolescence to adulthood has been typified by a relatively short time-span. What we note now though is an extension of the youth period with a larger number of both working-class and middle-class young people choosing to live alone before 'settling down'. Although as Lynne Chisholm reveals in her chapter, 'in those countries where- from the late 1960s- young people had begun to leave the parental home earlier to live in a variety of independent household forms, the 1980s saw, in most cases, a trend in the opposite direction'.

In the introductory chapter Olivier Galland identifies three major models to show the similarities and the differences in the transition period between the various regions of Europe. He classifies these as the Mediterranean model, the Northern European and French model and the British model.

One of the principal features of the Mediterranean model is at variance to the majority of Europe with young people living with their parents even when they secure stable employment. In this way family life is extended. Young people also tend to have a protracted period of educational study. A further feature is that young people marry soon after leaving the parental home, with few living alone or as unmarried couples.

A main feature of the Northern European model is the young person leaving home relatively early and commencing living with a partner and having a family relatively late. In between, the young person either has relatively short-lived relationships, or lives alone, or more probably experiences both. The French model is a mixture of both the Mediterranean model and the

Northern European model. Like the Mediterranean model there is a protraction of studies, while, as is typical of the Northern European model, there is an emphasis on youth being an intermediate stage. The aspect that sets the French model apart from the others is the prevalent trend of French young people to live alone for some part of their youth.

Young people in Britain are different than their counterparts in the rest of Europe with a higher proportion of them leaving their studies earlier, joining the labour market earlier, and living with a partner much earlier. British young people are, however, likely to experience an extended phase of living with a partner and delay having children.

Overall this is an important book. Most British people are only now beginning to grapple with the concept of being European and in many spheres we have a good deal of catching up to do. The present government's persistent 'Little Englander' approach to Europe has done few favours to our young people who need to know what is going on in the rest of Europe to be able to effectively play their part in its future. This book is a small but important contribution to our understanding of trends affecting young people in Europe and it is one I would recommend to a wide readership. On a parochial note the succinct chapter by Frank Coffield on the nature of protracted transitions in the UK is well worth a read for those unfamiliar with what is happening at home. My advice however is read the lot. Texts like this are rare!

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*Pam Carter and Tony Jeffs*

**A Very Private Affair: Sexual Exploitation in Higher Education**

Education Now Books 1995

ISBN 1 871526 20 5

£6.00 (pbk)

pp 60

**SHEELAGH STRAWBRIDGE**

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This book forms part of a collaborative project between the Social Welfare Research Unit of the University of Northumbria and the Education Now Publishing Co-operative. The project aims to counterbalance the managerial slant which has 'for too long' dominated the literature on Higher Education in the UK, by encouraging and publishing work which casts 'a radical, questioning and critical eye' on the world of Higher Education. The voices of students, teaching and other staff are sought on issues which have been 'marginalised and overlooked by either accident or design'. Focusing on consensual sexual relationships between teachers and students. A very Private Affair precisely fulfils the project's aims.

As the authors note in the opening chapter, such relationships are by no means new to university life and are recognised in the 'sexual intrigue'

which forms a staple ingredient in campus fiction of all kinds. Traditionally such relationships are treated with varying degrees of indulgence, after all universities are not schools, students are adults and sexual behaviour is a private matter, subject to individual moral standards but not institutional rules. So why the concern? 'Love on campus' provides the familiar romantic story which Carter and Jeffs expose, as a predominantly male sexual narrative which serves to conceal the exploitative, and frequently callous misuse of power largely by male teachers over female students. What the romantic story line conveniently omits is the huge power differential between teachers and students.

As one student officer put it 'the lecture hall and tutorial provide a stage. Men who would not attract a second glance anywhere else become the centre of attention. Some seem to believe the world revolves round them. It goes to their head and they exploit it like mad'. (pp 14-15)

The worst abusers are those whom the authors term 'serial exploiters', often deft operators who may even boast of their skill in picking out the most vulnerable and receptive students, 'within minutes of entering a room', or set about devising more systematic techniques of research.

Carter and Jeffs highlight the nature and extent of sexual exploitation in universities and they also look beyond the damage done to individual students and consider the impact on the wider university community, for example:

- secrecy and subterfuge are rife, 'when it finally came into the open, I was amazed...the room was full of women who had been victimised, and almost none of us had ever told anyone but a few close friends'; (p33)
- male camaraderie and collusion can make challenging even the worst perpetrators impossibly difficult and perpetuate a culture of exploitation, one tutor receiving a student's complaint was overheard 'jokingly telling his colleague that if he "didn't take more care his dick would get us all into trouble" and left the matter at that': (p17)
- students may feel and may be advantaged or disadvantaged in learning opportunities and assessment processes;
- departments acquire 'reputations' with external agencies; and so on.

The authors leave us in no doubt that the damage done to the wider community by this so called private behaviour is considerable.

All in all, *A Very Private Affair* is a timely and accessible book which should be essential reading for all students. I say students because, perhaps above all, the book highlights 'the cruel and cynical indifference of management to the exploitative behaviour of staff; and the long tradition of sweeping such behaviour under the carpet'. (p9) Serious exploiters can and do occupy positions of considerable authority, positions in which they might be expected to deal with the complaints of others or will be treated by more senior managers with indulgence because 'he is a leader in his field', someone the university can ill afford to lose. As one ex-lecturer commented:

*it was not a happy department. One man had an awful reputation, an endless string of relationships with students and a very unpleasant*

*attitude towards women who didn't respond. But given that the Professor had the nickname of 'Bonker', rightly so, you had little expectation that things would improve. (p 38)*

I wonder how many colleagues, men as well as women, will, like me, find themselves embarrassed by this book, recognising their complicity in the silence. Perhaps the most shocking thing about it is the extent to which it does not shock. It contains nothing which is not 'known', at some level, by the majority of teachers in Higher Education. I suppose what depresses rather than shocks me is the way in which this book just adds to the weight of evidence of the widespread exploitation of women by men in the so called 'helping professions', priests, therapists, doctors, psychologists, social workers, youth and community workers and the rest. Interestingly, teaching, unlike most professions, has no code of ethics and practice which proscribes sexual exploitation. However, although such codes make a public statement, recognise the power imbalance in all professional/client relationships and place the responsibility where it clearly belongs, with the professional, they do not deter as much as one might hope. In the end it seems the old maxim, caveat emptor 'let the buyer beware', prevails, at least for the time being. So, if this book serves to deepen awareness of students' need to protect themselves from predatory teachers then it will be worth the small extra burden it places on their over-stretched financial resources.

I wholeheartedly welcome this book and feel some reluctance to turn to the ways in which it disappoints me. However, relying as it does on evidence from first hand research, I should have liked a little more information of a technical kind relating to the research methods and the extent and type of data. Also, just as Carter and Jeffs place individual sexual behaviour in the broader context of the university community, I should have appreciated some locating of the issue of sexual exploitation in Higher Education within the broader context of professional power and gender relationships. The reader is left to do this for her or himself.

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Peter Alheit

**Taking The Knocks:**

**Youth Unemployment and Biography - A Qualitative Analysis**

Cassell Education 1994

ISBN 0 304 32968 1

pp 303

**TOM SCHULLER**

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I tend to be suspicious of academic analyses which rely heavily on nuanced interpretations of the texts of interviews. How much weight can really be put



on the words of an individual, spoken naturally (or as naturally as an interview will allow) and not as reflective autobiography? Often the 'results' seem to me to be a matter of opinion only. So although Peter Alheit is both a friend and a sociologist for whom I have great respect, I approached this book with some trepidation, knowing that it consisted of extensive treatments of a very small number of interviews with unemployed youth.

By about page 60, my worries had increased. After an honest introduction giving the background to the study, we were only a fifth of the way through the first transcription. I flipped ahead, and found that analysis of this single interview carried on for exactly a hundred pages. Half-gritting my teeth I carried on - to find myself eventually gaining access to a much wider understanding of the complexities of youth unemployment than I could have thought possible. It takes some courage to organise a full third of a book in this way, around the solo voice of a not particularly remarkable young person, but it pays off. Ann begins her story - for that is simply what she was asked to give, her life story - when she was two years old, and carries on through a childhood of unexceptional truancy, early pregnancy and single parenthood. The long interview is interrupted by her children returning from kindergarten; a following interview brings the story up to date, but without the same intensity of narrative, and is therefore summarized by the interviewer rather than analysed in detail.

What do we find at the end of this hundred pages? 'Strictly speaking', the author reports, 'her interview contained nothing of interest as far as the special questions we were seeking answers to were concerned. We learnt nothing about the special way in which she coped with unemployment'. (p133). So what on earth is going on? The answer is that the biography reveals a history, not untypical, of relationships which made 'normal' development such a struggle that the experience of youth unemployment almost *had* to take second place. The damage caused by the destruction of cultural traditions by political and economic events ('and not only by Fascist ideology') brings the researchers to deploy the term 'structural degeneration', not as a label for individuals but as an account of a state of affairs permeated by fatalism and social indifference.

Just one example of the process. Ann starts drinking in her early teens. She recalls a visit to a camp site in Luxemburg, where there were regular night out:

*and then once I - came back about - four o'clock in the morning -  
pissed out of my head as well -  
and this - warden - caught me. -  
And all he said was  
'just how old are you?' -  
but that was all -  
also said  
I wasn't allowed to  
and where would it all **end**.  
But - I (...laughed about it) -*

and he didn't say another thing. Did he?

Interviewer: Hm

(...)

Maybe that's why I was always getting **worse**

because I was **waiting**

for someone to say something.

(I dunno really). —

(143/9-45/8)

The passage is then analysed in detail (the format with its dashes and dots shows a meticulous approach to transcription, which there is no space to explain here), with the warden's behaviour interpreted as standing for a general lack of genuine adult concern: 'adults are so obviously uninterested in her that they even ignore her obvious rule-breaking behaviour. Their permissiveness and pseudo-liberality are nothing more in fact than symptoms of their indifference, their fear and cowardice with respect to real involvement with the problems of the children and young people entrusted to their care.' (p78). There is not sentimentality in the interpretation, but a willingness to explore in depth the social context of the unemployed person; and, crucially, the context includes their personal biography as well as the contemporary circumstances.

With their ideas, and initial hypotheses, turned inside out by the power of this individual biography, the researchers explore the other biographies, but still drawing in detail on only a handful. It shows a singular faith in the power of qualitative analysis to illuminate a social issue, and it succeeds. Some of the interpretations seem to me questionable, but the honesty of the approach - including drawing attention to parts of transcripts where they consider that the interviewer departed from the proper procedure of allowing a personal story to emerge unprompted - encourages a range of interpretation rather than attempting to enforce a particular line.

The analysis does not sink into a pseudo-psychoanalytic approach. Alheit insists on the power of the broad social context, notably the way in which the process of upward mobility has turned out to be a loop, duping many of a generation into believing that social space was opening up for them. He attacks the 'mock training' which exists in Germany as elsewhere, and explores how the length of the transition to adulthood has a double-edged effect, on the one hand allowing identities to develop over time, but on the other hand making young people all the more vulnerable when the process of integration fails. However the major challenge to our thinking is to see youth unemployment in a fuzzier light, where the fact of unemployment is only one of a whole set of circumstances; the fact that it may not be top of the list for the young people concerned makes 'life in the grey zone' hard to understand but not necessarily any easier to live.

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Andy Gibson and Gaynor Clarke  
**Project-Based Group Work Facilitator's Manual:  
 Young People, Youth Workers and Projects**  
 Jessica Kingsley Publishers 1995  
 ISBN 1 85302 169 5  
 £14.95 (pbk)  
 pp 164

MALCOLM PAYNE

I had been very much looking forward to reading this book. Youth workers interested in developing their understanding of working in and with groups have had to rely for far too long on inadequate sources: the standard social work literature, strong on the theoretical models of groups and group dynamics drawn from (mostly) American research in the 60s and 70s. (No, I hear you groan, not *Forming, Storming and Norming* again!) To this we can add a sparse community work literature: mostly practical stuff about running meetings, decision-making and conflict resolution; useful in its own right, but generally lacking in substance<sup>2</sup>. Then there are the brief and to-the-point: Gaie Houston's *The Red Book of Groups*<sup>3</sup> for its humour and insight; Michael Kindred's *Once upon a group*<sup>4</sup> as a substitute for reading. The highly practical: Dearling and Armstrong's *The New Youth Games Book*<sup>5</sup> for its eclecticism and ideas. Finally, no collection would be complete without Mullender and Ward's *Self-Directed Groupwork*<sup>6</sup> for its sustained explication of social action methods across youth, social and community work; Butler and Wintram's *Feminist Groupwork* - complex, demanding and strongly ideological<sup>7</sup>; plus a dozen or so key articles from the journals *Groupwork*<sup>8</sup> and *Social Work with Groups*<sup>9</sup>.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. I've missed one or two that are either awful or outdated. And, because group work cannot (should not) be separated entirely from the mainstream literature on youth work and informal education, there is a wide range of other relevant material with important but peripheral focuses. There is, nonetheless, a gap: a careful and critical understanding of the types and purposes of groups in the youth work domain; a reappraisal of the traditional research and the introduction of the more recent; an examination of power dynamics in the group context - between male and female, black and white, and other dimensions of stratified difference; an examination of youth work roles in groups which takes us beyond the tired jargon of leading, enabling, empowering and facilitating; the integration of pedagogic theory and group work theory. A well developed body of theory meaningful to youth (and community) workers would, amongst other things, deal with questions such as the rationale for and effectiveness of work in single sex or same race groups in comparison with mixed groups; the different dynamics of friendship (primary) groups compared with 'formed' groups; the effects of cultural difference; the various forms of communication in groups, and some of their meanings; and, centrally, it would place emphasis upon learning processes in group settings. But it is largely absent.

To what extent then does Gibson and Clarke's contribution fill the void? They offer us a 'facilitator's manual'. The book is 'intended to help youth workers to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to work successfully and creatively with groups of adolescents and young adults'. It contains eleven chapters, the first six of which examine a number of important dimensions of youth work practice with groups. The introduction explains that their intention is to provide 'landmarks' which show how the 'little things' can contribute towards the realisation of the 'big things'. That is, what plans and actions, taken together, can bring about useful outcomes for young people. They select, as the essential elements of practice, the 'core skills' needed by young people; values, beliefs and understandings and how, through dialogue, youth workers can assist in their development; the roles of groups in young people's lives and the key factors which affect them; power and trust in groups and in group work practice; evaluation; and, the working context within which work with groups takes place. The second half of the book entitled 'Putting it into Practice', is made up of five chapters which are intended to develop the themes of the first half and to provide guidelines, checklists and ideas: being the youth worker (role, style, context); developing skills (exercises and examples for assisting young people to acquire the core skills mentioned above); building dialogue (tools and techniques); working with a group (aims, ideas, motivation, roles, team work, meetings, contracts); and finally, planning and finishing off your project.

The style is essentially didactic: 'There are five things you need to know about values, beliefs and understanding... They are...' and then, 'In the last chapter we looked at the five things you need to know about...'. Checklists abound and a liberal sprinkling of (rather masculine) cartoons by Fiz mixes visual relief and visual aid. The book is also pragmatic: ideas and starter questions for discussion and dialogue; information about texts, resource packs, posters and games, including addresses from where they can be obtained. 'Manual' then, is an accurate description: it is about the essentials of what you need to know and how to go about it; it assumes very little knowledge and is written in simple language, relatively free of technical or academic terms. It is not intended, I think, to advance the state of human knowledge and understanding, but to gather useful experience and make it accessible. Not quite 'The One-Minute Groupworker' - but in that vein.

What then, of the messages conveyed? For Clarke and Gibson, youth work is about the development of skills, values, beliefs and understanding. The twelve 'core skills' offered in Chapter 1, and the values referred to in Chapter 2 - which together, provide the foundation for the book - deserve some examination. Assessing one's strengths and weaknesses, seeking information and advice, being able to make decisions, planning one's time and energy, and so on, are very reminiscent of Hopson and Scally's *Lifeskills*, circa 1981<sup>10</sup>. Some vital skills may be missing: managing one's sexuality perhaps, or how to express feelings. Values are not presented so forthrightly: 'awareness', 'sensitivity', 'assertiveness' are mentioned almost in passing, with the aim of youth work being 'to help young people to

build a coherent package'. Only in Chapter 9 does the agenda emerge from the activities and resources suggested.

To judge the book on its merits means to accept that it almost inevitably strips the youth work process down to some bare essentials. You may, like me, feel some regret that rather too much has been sacrificed upon the altar of simplicity.

#### Notes

- 1 Amongst these probably the best are  
Brown, A. (1992) *Groupwork* (3rd edition), Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing  
Douglas, T. (1991) *A Handbook of Common Groupwork Problems*, London, Routledge  
Douglas, T. (1993) *A Theory of Groupwork Practice*, London, Routledge  
Preston-Shoot (1987) *Effective Groupwork*, Basingstoke, Macmillan
- 2 These include:  
Pearse, M. and Smith, J. (1990) *Community Groups Handbook* (2nd edition), London, Journeyman  
Harris, V. (1994) *Community Work Skills Manual*, Association of Community Workers
- 3 Houston, G. (1990) *The Red Book of Groups*, London, The Rochester Foundation
- 4 Kindred, M. (1984) *Once upon a group*, Southwell, Notts. Michael Kindred
- 5 Dearling, A. and Armstrong, H. (1994) *The New Youth Games Book*, Lyme Regis, Russel House
- 6 Mullender, A. and Ward, D. (1991) *Self-Directed Groupwork*, London, Whiting and Birch
- 7 Butler, S. and Wintram, C. (1991) *Feminist Groupwork*, London, Sage
- 8 *Groupwork*, London, Whiting and Birch
- 9 *Social Work with Groups*, London, Haworth Press
- 10 Hopson, B. and Scally, M. (1981) *Lifeskills Teaching*, London, McGraw-Hill

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Sue Widdicombe & Robin Wooffitt

### **The Language of Youth Subcultures: Social Identity in Action**

Harvester Wheatsheaf 1995

ISBN 0 745 014 194

£12.95

pp 250

**DON BLACKBURN**

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This book consists of an investigation into the relationship between young people and their membership of 'subcultural' groups such as punks, goths and heavy metal fans. The work is based on an empirical study of young people's accounts of their membership of these groups, and is carried out as a piece of discourse analysis by the authors who are a social psychologist and sociologist. The research was designed to establish how the identities of young people were maintained through their everyday language use. This is in contrast to other studies which have attempted to link group identification with the construction and use of a particular and distinctive form of speech such as the use by Rastafarians of their own patois. This 'identity' that is the focus of the book

is not simply a 'realm of mental events which is separable from language' (p 72) but the work seeks to 'identify a range of discursive procedures through which individuals produce, negotiate, modify and use their social identities in social interaction.' (p 73)

Chapters one and two provide an overview of previous work on 'subcultural theory' and particularly the relationship between individuals and the social system. Chapter three reviews the debates about the nature and purpose of discourse analysis, a form of analysing social interactions where almost any kind of communicative event is treated as a form of 'text' and analysed as such. The authors distinguish between two general forms of discourse analysis, the first which treats conversations and speech as evidence of the speakers intentions, purposes and actions in a social context, rather than as evidence for the inner 'mental state' of the speakers. The second strand of discourse analysis they see as referring to an all embracing view of 'texts: objects, events or processes which are imbued with meaning and interpretation' (p59). The authors prefer the former kind of analysis to the latter which they see as making grander claims than can be sustained by the evidence, or argument.

In presenting their own position, the authors engage in a critical review of the work of two other discourse analysts, Parker and Burman (1993). Parker and Burman's position is that all communication is representative of a particular political ideology, and the task of discourse analysis is to unmask the ideological elements by treating all communication as a form of text which can be read in the same way a book may be interpreted. In other words the task of discourse analysis is to act solely as a form of political analysis. For Widdicombe and Wooffitt this creates significant difficulties, including the inability of discourse analysts of the other persuasion to distinguish between different forms of discourse in terms of their importance. To paraphrase their argument - is the discourse exemplified in a bus ticket similar to that in a death warrant?

It is not the place here to enter into a detailed examination of the competing claims in this arena, but to offer support for the attempts made by Widdicombe and Wooffitt to clarify the activity of academics and consider the justification for their own activities. Despite my sympathy for the view that politics permeates all aspects of our lives, I agree with Widdicombe and Wooffitt it is difficult to support the argument that the only form of academic activity which is permissible is one which treats everything as simply text which is representative of politics in action. It is also difficult to agree with the implicit view that social and political action constantly require interpretation by academics as a kind of priestly explanation of the world. It may be argued that not much of what passes for political activity is simply a form of discourse, neither is it clear that a textual analysis will always clarify what the real political issues are. For example it may be argued that much political activity relies on subterfuge and lies, which is not always exposed by attending to the textual nature of social activities. Equally among academics at work in this area, there sometimes appears to be an assumption that what counts as a text is itself a *coherent and consistent* set of meanings, whereas in reality it would seem that a more defensible



assumption is that there are always contradictory and conflicting elements within the same discourse, which may, and usually do lead to quite different interpretations being made of the same material. A significant movement in the analysis of communication has been away from the view that particular meanings reside in particular forms of interaction. It is the multiple interpretations which can be made of particular communications which may both give them their interest and also allow people of quite different persuasions to agree with a particular 'text'. If we take the word 'community' it is the range of meanings which can be attached to the word which allows people to believe that they agree with each other when the word is used in conversation. From the point of view of ideological representation, it may be this quality of multiple meaning which enables hegemony to occur, rather than the insistence or preference for one particular meaning. It may be that this discussion about the nature of effective discourse analysis is actually about the claims that discourse analysis itself can make. If it is engaged in an all embracing activity then it must surely also have a knowledge base shared by other disciplines like anthropology, sociology, linguistics and so forth, in which case it is hard to see how it can simply be the province of one academic discipline.

This discussion in the early part of the book has the merit of presenting an interesting discussion, if a little brief. However when we move to consider the rest of the book the first part stands in some contrast to the difficulty of presenting a coherent account of the empirical work. Remember the researchers were interested in the construction of identity through the identification of young people with various 'subcultures'.

Whilst there is little wrong with the intentions of integrity of the researchers in this task, unfortunately I found myself laughing out loud at the attempts of the writers to explain the answers given by young people in the interviews which are conducted. This part of the book made it easy to understand how some academic accounts of everyday life invite parody. For example, young people were asked if being a punk/goth/heavy metal fan was important to them. In the majority of cases they answered 'dunno' or some equally open and indeterminate answer. When they were asked about the advantages of the particular style they presented, young people were equally offhand, evasive or relatively non-committal. It certainly appeared from the analysis that the authors had decided young peoples' activities *must* be imbued with deep significance, and the authors would labour to clarify this for the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the tortuous explanations for the young people's apparent refusal to engage in this meaningful analysis merely made me laugh more strenuously.

At least the authors do come to argue that imposing a unitary meaning on the lifestyle of groups of young people is a problem (p. 187). However even this is delivered in a risibly pompous and self important way which gives the mistaken impression that they were the first to think up the idea. It is clear from their own analysis that the concept of a sub-culture is itself problematic, but they don't quite get to the point of abandoning it themselves.

I often get the impression when reading texts like this one that what is revealed is in fact a partial understanding by some academics that the

world is often not as it seems. But *neither* does it conform to theoretical categories which academics would like to use to describe and analyse it. This may be particularly true in the case of psychology which has always been more concerned to explore the 'inner life' than the material reality of everyday experience. The discipline has therefore had to fall back on fancy and imagination in an attempt to understand what is going on in the absence of verifiable data. Sociologists have equally been guilty of imposing awkward and unsustainable theories on unwilling or unprepossessing material. It may be this tendency has become more marked in recent years as a result of the search for new ways to mark ones own work off from others.

It may also be that these kinds of forms of analysis are an attempt by academics to raise the importance of talk, of culture, of rhetoric, of ideology because that is what our own work consists of, that is a form of intellectual labour. It is therefore important for us to believe these things have the most importance in society. This is not an anti-intellectual point, but one which emphasises the lop-sidedness of intellectual work which ignores, or under estimates the material reality of the lives of the majority of the population and for young people the real issues have more to do with their material activities and the consequences.

Overall the book has the merit of combining a useful initial discussion with an object lesson in well intentioned but fruitless endeavour.

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#### **Young people and crime**

Home Office research study 145 1995

ISBN 1 85893 551 2

ISSN 00726435

pp 142

**JUDITH COCKER**

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Young people and crime is based on a study commissioned by the Home Office of self reported offending among 14 - 25 year olds. The 1992 House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee identified public concern about the level and seriousness of juvenile crime and the criminal justice system's failure to do anything significant in combating it. Crime statistics gave the committee what appeared to be a skewed indi-

cator of the real level of juvenile offending and therefore inaccurate indicators on how to deal with it. The researchers were given the brief to consider:

- 1 how any improvements to overall juvenile crime statistics could be made which would enable more informed policy decisions to be taken;
- 2 how such research might influence criminal justice policy in preventing young people from becoming offenders and reduce criminality generally.

The result is a very good study of a relatively large group of 2500 offenders during 1992-1993. It is based on self reporting and is broken down by age, ethnic origin and gender. The study examines why young people offend and reasons for desistance. Unlike previous research it goes further than identifying the influences which induce young people growth out of crime (being employed, leaving school, forming meaningful and lasting relationships). This study reports on how to desist from offending in terms of influences, conditions and circumstances necessary to allow this transition to take place.

The study begins by outlining the positive use of self reporting and the likelihood of more accurate and informed results. There are numerous other studies which have highlighted the value of self reporting as a means of gathering reliable statistical data on offending among juveniles and the Home Office hardly needed to fund research into more reliably informed official statistics. In this sense the research says nothing new. Due to its size, however it does produce one of the largest pieces of research undertaken in England and Wales into self reported offending.

The study examines for the first time on such a scale the incidence of drug use among young offenders, and as such gives the reader long overdue evidence about the gravity of the problem. The study revealed that 13% of males and 19% of females had used controlled drugs once or twice each week during the period of the study. This rose with age and 50% of 18-21 year old males and 20% of females of the same age admitted regular use. The research reliably informs criminal justice policy makers and practitioners of the growing connection between drugs and offending. What it fails to do is examine the relationship in terms of one giving rise to the other. Do young people offend more to acquire drugs, or is drug taking becoming an increasing social norm among young offenders? The study does explode the myth of high incidence of drug taking among ethnic minority groups and gives well broken down data indicating high proportionate use among white young people.

The study supports previous research that 15 years is the most popular age to start offending. Problems at school and home are likely to manifest themselves a year earlier and drug taking a year later at 16 years. The results go on however to challenge the myth that young people grow out of crime in their late teens. Older adolescent males appeared to continue to offend into their twenties. The types of crimes which they committed were however less visible and less serious. Fraud and theft (which comparatively is more difficult to detect, and therefore less likely to form part of the official crime statistics) are common amongst males in this group. Similarly the study found no differential in social class and offending. It

does however challenge the myth about family structure as although there was a direct link between broken homes (one parent families and families including step parents), the family structure in itself was not found to be criminogenic. An inability of a parent to supervise and the breakdown of relationships within the family were found to be determinates of offending behaviour in the group. The key to preventing offending behaviour was found to be understanding more about family structure in terms of the way relationships exist within them. Equally important was the role of positive education and the avoidance of exclusion and expulsion. A large part of the sample who had experienced disaffection at school went on to begin their criminal careers.

Desistance from offending was found in the study to be based on three indices:

- 1 high frequency of adolescent offending;
- 2 maintained contact with delinquent peers;
- 3 high use of alcohol & controlled drugs.

The report concludes that crime prevention can only be tackled if drug prevention is placed high on policy makers agendas. Effective criminal justice policy must be focused on preventing young people from offending as early as possible. Not surprisingly the sample group were not deterred by fear of being caught or the subsequent punishments. Families, education and a general sense of worthiness were the largest determinates of beginning offending and continuing to do so into adulthood. 'Families, schools and neighbours constitute the most potent form of informal social control and to be effective and efficient the criminal justice system could be encouraged to do more to harness these more potent influences'. The authors give a useful example of practice in New Zealand. Criminal justice systems cannot it appears be effective in isolation.

I found two major gaps in the research:

- 1 young people in young offenders institutions and prisons were not included. As they form part of the relatively small group who commit a relatively large proportion of offences, then the results may be severely skewed;
- 2 no correlation was examined between sentencing outcomes and desistance, especially in terms of community versus incarceration policies.

The study is easy to read, well argued and researched. It provides food for thought for anyone involved in the criminal justice system. The study highlights the enormous value of self reporting and how and why young people become involved in offending behaviour and how they can desist from it in later life.

The shame about this study is that having been commissioned by the Home Office to demonstrate how Home Office policy can be influenced, the results have not been heeded. Criminal justice policy since 1979 has ignored all the lessons of this century, in that it sees the individual offender as a nuisance and a threat to society, who needs punishment and not understanding; control and not care. The increased use of custody among

juveniles and the alarmingly high incidence of reoffending upon release, added to the use of secure training orders, and proposals for boot camps are a smack in the face for this research. If you separate a young person from their home, school, peers and community then you effectively separate a young person from their chances of growing into a law abiding adult. Perhaps Michael Howard should sit down for half an hour and read the research which his own office commissioned. Home Office research which does not inform Home Office policy remains empty rhetoric.

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*Davis Smith, J., Rochester, C. and Hedley, R. (eds)*

**An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector,**

Routledge, 1995

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£13.99 (pbk)

pp 260

ANGELA EVERITT

To write about the voluntary sector always will present difficulties: the very term suggests that a sector can be delineated and analyzed as though there is something unitary and homogenous about the multiple activities that might be included. It is probably particularly difficult in the mid-1990s when voluntary organizations, projects and groups have been and continue to operate in rapidly changing policy, political and financial contexts. Is there one sector which can be called voluntary? What is the relationship between voluntary, statutory and independent? And between volunteering, activism, charitable work and paid work? In what ways are voluntary organizations similar to or different from other kinds of organizations? Are social movements voluntary organizations and in what ways and with what effects have new social movements influenced voluntary organizations? How, if at all, do processes of contracting, new public sector management and quality assurance shape voluntary organizations? These, and more, were the questions in my mind when I picked up this new book on the voluntary sector. Sadly, and frustratingly, while touching them, it sheds light on only a few.

The opening chapter by one of the editors, Davis Smith, is valuable, reminding us of the part historical analyses should play in informing our understandings. Here the prevalence of women in this sector is acknowledged even though their relative lack of involvement in this edited collection has to be questioned. A recurrent theme, since the 16th century concerns the relationship between charity, philanthropy, prosperity and poverty, and the place of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' people in our society within which inequalities are embedded. The place of the church reminded me to be alert to its

significance today for independent voluntary activity. The place of education in radical working-class movements surely needs to be made visible to inform current policy debates about further and higher education.

Deacon's chapter, picking up from where Davis Smith finishes in 1945, brings us up to the early 90s. He focuses on the changing relationship between statutory and voluntary sectors and on different political perspectives, across parties and within the Labour Party itself, on the extent to which the state alone should be responsible for the welfare of its citizens. Tools useful for analyzing today's sector emerge: eg differences between philanthropy and mutual aid; between citizenship and democratic process; between professionalism, paternalism and remoralisation; and Beveridge's motives of thrift and business 'the pursuit of a livelihood or gain for oneself in meeting the needs of one's fellow citizens' (p. 45). Reflections on the significants of the MSC Community Programme for the voluntary sector are fascinating particularly in view of possible post-election policy initiatives of a similar kind. Its 'public sector equivalents of ... sales figures' were obviously forerunners of targets and outputs as significant mechanisms designed to shape voluntary sector programmes. I welcomed attention being drawn to these and other 'enterprise' paraphernalia and to the influence of management education rather than social science upon the sector.

These two chapters take up almost a quarter of the book and they are worthy of the space they claim. In their chapter Kendall and Knapp present data on the size, structure, boundaries and functions of the sector. I know that this mapping of the voluntary sector does reflect current research priorities but I have to confess that I do find it rather dull. More analysis of the political significance of the research effort would be welcomed. Is it to demonstrate that there is a 'third sector' that could be developed even more, a sector in which people are even prepared to work for nothing in insecure and poorly funded organizations? These broad brush stroke approaches to defining the voluntary sector are adopted by Perri in his chapter on the sector in Europe. Using official statistics from different European countries and examining regulatory and legal structures that impact on the statutory/voluntary relationship, he anticipates that European policy-making will forge links between voluntary organizations across member state boundaries and affect the UK voluntary sector.

Other chapters cover issues such as management, accountability, funding and volunteering. In the collection, the editors could have been more assertive in drawing out themes and issues to ensure good coverage of those key to developing our understanding of the sector. The contents of some chapters could have been pruned and perhaps hard decisions made as to what to include and what not to. More trouble should have been taken to identify people who could have written about interesting and significant developments that are taking place within new social movements such as disability projects, grey power initiatives, and other democratizing ventures and in response to challenges such as HIV/AIDS. There are also obvious omissions regarding feminist and women's organizations, including those with and/or for disabled women and black women, and the emerging black



voluntary sector, now vibrant in some parts of the UK, Europe, the USA and the Third World. Only very brief references are made to the Third World; more attempt to generate learning across the experiences of voluntary sector and Third World social development activity would have been useful. And lastly, but most importantly, it really is not good enough in this day and age to merely regret that the edited collection does not 'do justice to the extent of voluntary action by black and ethnic voluntary communities' (p. 6).

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*Mukti Jain Campion*

**Who's fit to be a parent?**

London: Routledge 1995

ISBN 0 415 00683 2 (hbk)

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£13.99

pp 311

**HELEN BUCKLEY**

Changes in our perception of family life mean that children are no longer seen as an economic investment in their parents future, and nor is parenthood confined to the traditional married family. Social conventions now aspire to protect and value children for their own sake, but this is not without cost. Outside the generally accepted norm of procreation within a heterosexual, young, able-bodied, fertile, married family where the man is employed, those wishing to experience parenthood can be subjected to a 'fitness to parent' test, whose codes are unclear and full of ambiguities. This inquiry is commonly applied by society in the shape of professionals who themselves embody the most conservative aspirations. This is the theme of Mukti Jain Campion's book 'Who's fit to be a parent?' in which she attempts to explore the 'job description'.

Though Ireland lacks the ethnic diversity of British society, at whom the work is aimed, and the voice of minority groups here is not present to the same extent, the themes will be familiar. Campion aims to expose the split between 'ideal' and realistically achievable parenting. She cleverly reinforces her conjecture at the end of each chapter by contrasting the societally defined goals of parenthood in relation to the particular group she has discussed, with the reality when the underlying concepts have been de-constructed.

In the first part of the book Campion examines the standards of assessment used by social workers in child protection and adoption, lawyers and court welfare officers in custody cases, and doctors deciding who is deserving of fertility treatment. A basic tenet of the work is her unease with the degree of subjective or moral judgement exercised by these investigators, whom, she says 'have unwittingly created closed systems largely impenetrable to

an outsider not versed in their professional rules'. The systems, she claims, are underpinned by conventional notions and steeped in biases about appearance and social class which compete with political correctness. She is very critical of the adversarial nature of the investigative process, and suggests that any assessment of parenting ability should be systemic, educative and empowering, rather than a 'win or lose process' focusing on weakness and vulnerability.

The second half of the book concentrates on groups whose aspirations towards parenthood are heavily scrutinised and who endure prejudices which she exposes as extraordinary and inconsistent. These groups include the mentally and physically disabled, addicts, lone parents of either gender, older mothers, working mothers, and black parents. To illuminate her point that they are subject to unreasonable discrimination, she virtually unpicks prevailing negative notions about their ability to care for children, and reframes them in a wider context. She demonstrates how many of their perceived 'deficits' are similar to those of non marginalised groups, and relate more to their social circumstances than the particular attributes of their unique situation; e.g. if single mothers tend to be overrepresented in the child protection system it may have more to do with poverty than with inadequate parenting, because more single mothers are poor.

Unfortunately, some aspects of the work lacked credibility. Though Campion's search of the literature was impressive, her use of theory was inconsistent. She was occasionally critical of research which she considered methodologically unsound, and which by coincidence didn't support her own hypothesis. Yet she felt justified in making vague and unsubstantiated claims such as 'some pieces of research have suggested that working mothers actually make better parents'. She interviewed a number of parents and children herself, but gave no indication of her sampling criteria. Given the strength of the *status quo* that she was challenging, that weakened some of her arguments, and gave the impression that she was protesting her case too much at times.

However Campion certainly succeeds in highlighting the ambiguous attitudes to parenting that prevail in society and are manifested through official channels, and she made a very good case for the appreciation of difference. She also identified a debilitating factor which is common to parents who have difficulty in caring for their children. It has little to do with the elements of their situation which pejoratively labels them as unfit because they are disabled, black, older, addicted or single, but had a lot to do with a lack of community support which she identifies as pivotal.

This is an accessible book with a lot of appeal for the general public. It represents a good attempt to expose the intractabilities and contradictions inherent in parenting which is appropriate in the context of unprecedented public expectations of what is possible to achieve for children. It would be unfortunate if its readership was confined to students or practitioners of professions concerned with the family, because its treatment of judgmentalism has a lot to teach those who reinforce the marginalisation of those whom Campion describes as 'parents on the edge'.

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Sarah Irwin

**Rights of Passage:**

**Social Change and the Transition from Youth to Adulthood**

UCL Press 1996

ISBN 1 85728 430 5

pp 244

PHIL MIZEN

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The long-standing enthusiasm for conceptualising 'youth as transition' has re-emerged in recent years as an increasingly influential starting point for the analysis of young people's contemporary social lives. Underpinned by the idea of the 'life-course', whereby individual biographies are given historical and social meaning according to age-related institutional arrangements, the most recent version of 'youth as transition' seeks to capture the movement into adulthood as a socially constructed process of adjustment and change. More specifically, through the progressive erosion of the relations of dependency characteristic of childhood, 'youth as transition' has come to depict that phase of the life-course through which young people obtain the economic, cultural and political resources necessary for a certain level of adult independence.

Much of the appeal of this approach stems from its apparent ability to capture the peculiar impact of economic and social restructuring on the lives of the young. It stresses that, as little as 20 years ago, the twin pillars generally regarded as marking the end of adolescence were relatively unproblematic events. Jobs were plentiful and the age of marriage and parenthood was in long-term and steady decline. Yet within the space of little more than 20 years the situation altered radically as jobs for school leavers either disappeared or changed out of all recognition, and benefits were withdrawn or severely restricted. Alongside this, young people displayed less ability to leave home, marriage appeared to become a less attractive way of developing long-term relationships, families became less nuclear and parenting took place both later and with fewer children. Not only did the experience of these new youthful transitions seem a long way from those of earlier generations, but they appeared both longer and more problematic to complete.

This lengthening of youthful transitions and the consequent deferral of adult independence provides the focus of Sarah Irwin's book, although she retains a degree of critical distance from a literature which is often too readily endorsed. More specifically, Irwin begins by placing centre-stage the little acknowledged reductionist implications of the 'youth as transition' approach. Simply put, the successful completion of youthful transition is seen to depend upon the availability of waged labour. With the onset of unemployment and economic retrenchment, employment opportunities for young adults have disappeared with the consequence that marriage and independent families are no longer affordable. In contrast, Irwin's own thesis suggests that emphasis on production needs to be re-integrated with an appreciation of the importance of reproduction, via the family, in structuring

youthful transitions. For Irwin, the family provides both a resource and a set of obligations essential to understanding youth. For youthful dependence to be feasible, the family must be sufficiently resourced to support a non-productive member, yet before a young person can achieve a family of their own they must generate a sufficient level of resource before the cycle of parenting, with its own obligations, can begin again. An appreciation of the changing organisation of family structures and the different modes of contributions and obligation this entails, is therefore essential to any understanding of the changing nature and experience of youth.

To support this claim, Irwin embarks upon a detailed empirical investigation of long-term trends in youthful transitions, particularly through the formation of new families. This includes an interesting review of the changing demography of adolescence and family formation over the past century and an informative analysis of the more recent changes to the structure of young people's pay. Her contention is that during the early 1970s (and before the austerity of the 1980s set in) the reversal of the long-term trend towards earlier marriage and parenthood coincided with significant changes in the gender and age-related structure of earnings. In particular, the earnings of young women relative to young men improved, while the earnings of young men relative to adult men declined. Her claim is that, in the context of the family's increasing ability to support dependents for longer-periods across the 20th century, the deferral of household formation and parenting over the past 25 years has been the result of the increasing importance of young women's wages in providing the standard of living that new families anticipate. This is further elaborated through an investigation of the significance of 'lifestyles' on orientations and occupational choice, although the relevance of the chapter on age-related distributive justice to her argument is far less clear.

Irwin's book should therefore be of interest to a specialist readership, although its wider interest remains less certain. The clarity of argument does suffer at times from an arid presentation and overly-dense prose. This is a pity because the demographic and wage data is particularly interesting, despite resting a little incongruously alongside the use of her own interview data to illustrate some of the more general points. A more significant reservation, however, is whether Irwin succeeds in freeing the youth as transition thesis from its economism. Even taking into consideration her emphasis on the family as a structure of resources and obligations, the reader is still left with the feeling that, whether mediated by the family or not, the idea of youth as transition is still basically economic.

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Ross A Thompson

**Preventing Child Maltreatment Through Social Support:  
A Critical Analysis**

Sage 1995

ISBN 0 8039 5595 2

£16.50 (pbk)

pp 224

Linda Winkley

**Emotional Problems in Children and Young People**

Cassell 1996

ISBN 0 304 32569 4

pp 328

JOHN HORNCastle

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Chalk and cheese. These two volumes could hardly portray better the disparity of approaches to understanding and helping children and young people exhibiting behaviour difficulties or in danger of abuse.

The academic 'chalk' is provided by Thompson, an American psychologist with a surprisingly wide ecological view. He suggests that families are affected by the stresses of unemployment, poverty, life in criminogenic surroundings, poor housing and education, and examines in particular the evidence that lack of social support and isolation are contributory to incidents of child abuse.

Arguments for the provision of social support - defined principally by Thompson as support from neighbours, friends and kin - are strong: it is an uncontroversial method of approach, financially undemanding, informal, part of the local community, and requiring little training. The attraction is even clearer when juxtaposed with the questionable, expensive, formal, alien professionalism of social work agencies. Research studies are also quoted which indicate that social support enhances social and psychological health, whereas isolation tends towards a breakdown in these areas of functioning.

However, Thompson is not afraid to write on his board some of the difficulties and contradictions in his approach. Since other research (e.g. Parton, 1985) suggests that child abuse is strongly related to class, inequality and poverty, both in terms of prevalence and severity, the social milieu in which prospective abusers live may be one in which social networks are weak and may be difficult to improve. There may typically be a shifting population; a large amount of rented housing and a general lack of social provision in the area. The same neighbours who could potentially assist may themselves be stressed, or a cause of stress and may be dependent on illegally-obtained drugs. Additionally, the assumption that kinship links are helpful is not necessarily true, and rejection or apathy from other family members may be more hurtful than if it came from a neighbour.

Despite his ecological perspective, Thompson admits that personal characteristics are an important element in the equation. For example, not all

parents in deprived areas abuse their children, even though they may all be subjected to similar stressors. He also quotes research by Polansky indicating that neglectful mothers viewed their neighbourhood as unsupportive, while other mothers living in the same area saw it much more positively. Furthermore, some individuals- e.g. child sexual abusers - may not be accepted by a community, while some other individuals may not appear to welcome friendships.

Although not underlined in the book, issues around discrimination emerge - for example it appears that, compared to married parents, single mothers have smaller networks, characterised by more frequent turnover, and with other members of the network living with multiple stresses.

Thompson suggest a variety of methods for improving social support provision, and in chapter six examines two in detail. Somewhat oddly in view of his main thesis, these are relatively formal and individual rather than informal and global. He details the apparent success of home 'visitation' schemes by (mainly) health personnel, and the more uncertain results of intensive therapeutic and educational family programmes.

This is a thoughtful, searching and provocative book where questions inevitably seem better formulated than answers, and a thread of pessimism prevails. The latter is hardly surprising in view of the broad difficulties described, and the problems in effecting structural change. The author's conclusion is that a multi-strategy approach is required, but he appears to shy away from suggesting the more dramatic economic restructuring which the ecological approach logically requires.

In contrast, Winkley's slab appears to be confident and assured. An English psychiatrist, she writes for an audience of teachers, and her base is psychodynamic. The book is highly structured, plainly written, and begins with a description of the healthy child development process from infancy to teenage. Later chapters include sections on a large number of common and uncommon problem behaviours. These travel from aggression through eating disorders to autism and obsessions; there is a chapter on substance misuse with an extremely useful list of common drugs and their effects (including crack and ecstasy). A section discussing bereavement helpfully considers the teacher's role when a child in class has experienced a death, while a further examination of bullying complements the current occupation with the topic, and the Department of Education's initiatives in the area.

Each chapter concludes with an extensive booklist, and relevant legislation is included as an Appendix. This is a book which can be used consistently as a reference, and the inclusion of around forty case examples (chiefly successful) gives some impression of the types of intervention available.

Nevertheless, despite the many virtues of this book, omissions and lack of balance make it less palatable. For example, there is no mention whatever of social workers in education (except in the Appendix), despite dis-



cussion of such topics as school refusal, bullying and abuse - in all of which situations they would routinely become involved. This appears to be an unfortunate omission, in view of the importance of inter-disciplinary working.

Additionally, some would question the inferences drawn from the case examples in respect of gender roles: although there is occasional reference to the importance of a father, wherever therapy is offered to someone other than the child it is always the mother. Whether or not this implies responsibility for a child's disorder, it may appear to place an unfair burden for improvement on one parent alone.

However, one of the most significant features of the book, and a striking contrast to Thompson, is the lack of importance devoted to sociological factors - for example environmental pressures of parents or cultural influences on children - in considering the aetiology of problem behaviour. More frequently difficulties are ascribed to mothers being emotionally unavailable or having limited emotional resources.

Likewise, there appears to be an understandable but perhaps limiting concentration on psychodynamic individual therapy as preferred intervention for both methods and children. While there are no doubt situations where this is appropriate, there are various alternatives - e.g. specialist groups for women and men - attendance at which might obviate the need to wait for individual therapy and would offer an alternative focus and style of intervention.

Both books have considerable merit - one as an examination of the meaning and validity of social support, and the other as a behavioural compendium. The fact that they can both be accepted as valid contributions to the literature of helping professionals, despite their different analyses of similar situations, illustrates the confusions and tensions inherent in social work practice. Gordon (1989), from her historical research into child protection agency records, writes the only fitting conclusion:

*The most helpful social workers were those who understood family-violence problems to be simultaneously social/structural and personal in origin, and who therefore offered to help in both directions.*

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Gordon, L. (1989) *Heroes of their own Lives: The politics and History of Family Violence*. London, Virago.

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Michael Rutter and David J. Smith (eds)

**Psychological Disorders in Young People. Time Trends and Their Causes**

John Wiley and Son 1995

ISBN 0 471 95054 8

£49.95 (hbk)

pp 860

MARK K. SMITH

At 860 pages this is not a book to read from cover to cover. It is, nevertheless, a treasure trove. Rutter and Smith have brought together contributions from 12 key North American and European academics to review the scientific evidence with regard to whether psychological disorders in young people have become, more, or less, frequent over the last 50 years. In addition, they have sought to 'determine how causal explanations for any changes may be tested; to elaborate possible causal explanations and review them in the light of the evidence currently available; and to establish priorities for future research' (p1). Two of the distinctive features of this work are the focus on trends over time and that the material is cross-national. The review attempts to bring into consideration a wide range of social and economic changes - and makes some preliminary assessment of the relationships between these and trends in psychological disorders.

The book is divided into four parts. The first consists of contributions from Michael Rutter, David Smith and Gian Vittorio Caprara. They provide an introduction to the leading themes in the book, and a discussion of objectives and methods. The focus on disorders (as against 'normal' development) is justified on the grounds that definitional and data problems, while still strong, are significantly less than those associated with vague notions such as 'well-being'. The age range covered is 12-26 years.

Part two of the book is concerned with changing conditions and individual development. It begins with a useful review of patterns of development during adolescence by Nancy Leffert and Anne C. Peterson. They conclude that it is still possible to talk of adolescence and early adult life as a reasonably distinctive phase involving some key transitions, and where educational influences are particularly important. They also argue that the experience of this period has altered over the last 50 years; and that there has been an increase in some forms of 'negative life experiences'. At this point, one of the problems of the focus on disorders becomes apparent. There really isn't any significant discussion of possible countervailing forces i.e. whether there has been an increase in some 'positive life experiences' for significant groups of young people.

Other chapters in this section deal with changing family patterns (Laura E. Hess); living conditions (David J. Smith); media and problem behaviours in young people (Ellen Wartella); and values, constraints and norms of European youth (David Halpern). Each of these is a substantive review of around 60-90 pages with detailed referencing and some care taken when dealing with data. For example, Smith's piece examines demographic trends; the rapid, but uneven growth of Western economies;

changes in standards of living (including housing, health, consumption and education); and trends around inequality.

After reading the material in this section, detailed as it is, one is left with questions concerning the shaping and emphases. In particular, given what has already been said about the significance of education and peers for the target age range, I did wonder why these were not made a more overt focus for exploration. If changing family patterns merited a chapter, why not changing educational patterns? What too, of work: changing productive technologies, post-Fordism, time-space compression and globalization. I can see the editors' dilemma. To take this route would necessitate cutting back on detail and running the risk of over-generalization.

In the third part of this massive tome the focus shifts to the 'target' disorders - those that tend to 'peak' during the teenage years. These are youth crime and conduct disorders (David J. Smith); secular trends in substance use (Rainer K. Silbereisen, Lee Robins and Michael Rutter); depressive disorders (Eric Fombonne) and suicide (Rene F. W. Diekstra, C. W. M. Kienhorst and E. J. Wilde). Again, each of these chapters is around 60 pages - and provide a sound review of the research and literature around the 'disorder'. Eric Fombonne in his chapter, for example, seeks to establish whether there has been an increase in the incidence of depressive conditions - and to consider possible explanations. His chapter examines issues around definition and measurement; time trends in depressive disorders; the nature of depression and individual development in the adolescent phase; and examines some of the key risk factors. The conclusion he draws is that rates of depressive conditions in adolescents and young adults have probably increased in the recent decades, and the rise may be greater in males than females (p.598). Such conclusions highlight a problem with a review such as this. The careful sifting through of evidence does lead to highly qualified conclusions - no problem in itself - but such a European focus tends to gloss over local differences. If we were to focus on suicide in the UK then we can actually see a dramatic increase since the 1960s. This is largely based upon a 160 per cent rise among young men aged between 15-24 in the 20 years up to 1990 (as against 14 per cent among young women). To gain a full appreciation of such questions I think more attention needed to be paid to material generated from more ethnographic and textured research such as Kate Hill's excellent study of young people and suicide - *The Long Sleep* (1995 Virago).

The final part of the book comprises two chapters by the editors that explore the significance of time trends in psychological disorders of youth, and sketch out some possible causal explanations. The conclusion runs something like this. Although social disadvantage is associated with many psychological disorders, worsening living conditions do not account for the rising level of disorder; neither does rising affluence. Unemployment does create psychological risks and dispositions, but also cannot account for the overall increase in disorder. As physical health has improved, so psychological disorder has grown. Increased levels of family disruption and break-up may have played a part, but there is considerable uncertainty around this. The lengthening period of adolescence

cannot account in itself for the rise in disorder; nor can the adverse effects of the media. The development of distinctive youth cultures and changing values may be significant.

The great merit of all this is that it encourages us to treat those peddling simplistic ideas such as the impact of the 'decline of family life' with some scorn. The separate chapters also provide us with sound guides to the particular literature and the research. What is more, the editors are certainly right in claiming that the study is distinctive: the diverse range of disorders covered and the possible ways they may be interrelated; and the interdisciplinary and international nature of the review are to be commended. However, I am left with a question concerning scale. Would a more local focus have allowed the writers to situate their discussions and more fully to bring out cultural considerations?

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*Doug Nicholls*

**Employment Practice and Policies in Youth and Community Work.**

Russell House Publishing 1995.

ISBN 1 898924 20 1

£14.95 (pbk)

pp 248

**SUE MORGAN**

Years of union casework have given Doug Nicholls sound experience of the policy framework necessary to underpin good youth and community work practice. As General Secretary of the Community and Youth Workers Union he has been involved in negotiations with Youth and Community Service managers and workers throughout the country about employment issues, and has been able to identify the most likely aspects where conflict might occur. The policy and practice guidelines in this book seek to avoid those aspects, and provide a comprehensive set of parameters with which to support full time and part time workers in the delivery of the service.

Chapter one deals with part time workers. Nicholls argues that although the Youth Services widely proclaim to strive for equal opportunities, they are dependent upon workers who are treated unfairly. He writes

*At the heart of youth and community work lies inequality, injustice and disadvantage. Part time youth and community workers, who are mainly women, are treated as casual labour and lack the protection and employer support really necessary to maintain a quality education service.*

Part time workers have usually been the first to lose their jobs and have their pay and conditions adversely affected in local government reviews

and reorganisations of the Youth and Community Services. Many workers are on temporary contracts, some as short as three months. Nicholls expresses the opinion that the casual treatment of these workers places the whole service in jeopardy.

The early part of the book concentrates on employment procedures aimed at rectifying the poor treatment of part time workers. It presents a model agreement between the Local Authority and the CYWU which is a statement of the affirmation of rights and a description of the framework within which they will be employed. This is followed with details of how to assess parity of part time posts with the JNC scales for full time workers, backed up by an explanation of training and qualifications and practice guidelines. A model contract which spells out workers rights, and a model job description which supports progressive practice and prepares for the wrangles that can happen in youth and community work are provided alongside a statement on supervision and a workers code of conduct. Here is valuable expert advice, based on massive experience of dealing with conflict. It predicts possible pitfalls and seeks to avoid them. If at times it's rather wordy, one can almost sense the struggle involved, the search for the words that give workers broadest space and maximum support for those aspects of the work which are most often misunderstood.

Chapter two explains the Joint Negotiating Committee Report, The Pink Book that states the pay and conditions for Youth and Community Workers and its application to particular posts. It considers Health and Safety issues such as how poor working practices contribute to cause stress, the implications of lone working and what constitutes a safe working environment. The risks involved in minibus driving and a safety checklist devised to minimise them are detailed. Further chapters deal with Finance, Equal Opportunities, Employment Law, Being Managed, Legal Responsibilities and Redundancy, Reorganisation and Redeployment.

A long and particularly useful chapter unravels the dynamics of disagreement. Nicholls recommends the widespread implementation of four particular sets of guidelines, the absence of which has been the cause of much unnecessary casework. These address the issues of sex education, acceptable behaviour, the misuse of prohibited substances and alcohol abuse by young people. He writes

*Moral and professional ethical dilemmas abound in this area, and perhaps the safest advice is to say again that through clear line management and induction, the parameters of the work should be abundantly clear. In my experience though, this is not enough, and the disciplinary measures that management are forced to take against staff in the climate of moral panic that often exists, result from strict lack of guideline.*

The ensuing policy and procedure first defines the legal positions and then takes into account the contexts in which youth and community workers encounter illegal issues. These guidelines familiarise workers with appropriate methods of action and formalise use of their own discre-

tion and judgement. Also particularly welcome are the sound guidelines for dealing with allegations of abuse and serious professional misconduct, the lack of which in the past has caused much unnecessary strife.

When I saw the contents of this book, I considered it a stroke of good luck to be asked to review it. It was very timely, appearing when I needed to negotiate new job descriptions, contracts and policies within the large Youth and Community Centre where I work. Already I have used it widely; Nicholls recommended policy, with small adaptations which take into account local circumstances, has been implemented, and I've been saved a lot of time. Of course we could have devised our own, but the great value of this book lies in the knowledge that, because Nicholls has written it, you can be confident that it is based upon a commitment to the rights of part time workers and the rights of young people and communities to a progressive service which addresses their needs. The book has provoked a positive response from part time and full time workers and management alike. Lots of people have asked to borrow it but now that I have this book I do not want to be without it. It is a kind of basic tool, and useful even if you consider your organisation has all its necessary procedural structures in place, it's probably worth the comparison with those contained here. It could prevent costly mistakes.

*Sue Morgan is a youth worker in North Yorkshire.*



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*Thus, for a book:*

Hutson, S., and Jenkins, R. (1989) *Taking the Strain: Families, Unemployment and the Transition to Adulthood*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

*For an article:*

Willis, P. (1984) 'Youth Unemployment: Thinking the Unthinkable', in *Youth and Policy*, vol.2, no.4, pp. 17-24.

*And for a report:*

*The Thompson Report* (1982) Experience and Participation, cmdn 8686, London, HMSO.

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