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THE YOUTH ACTION SCHEME
AND THE FUTURE OF YOUTH WORK

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Since the early 1990s there has been a growing awareness that statutory youth work is going through a period of change. Three major developments have been taking place that are raising questions about what future youth work may have in working with young people. Firstly, there has been substantial evidence to suggest that the funding base of mainstream statutory youth work, at local authority level, has been eroded (NYA, 1995). For example, in 1992 a national survey conducted by the National Youth Agency showed that over 40% of Youth Services were to receive funding cuts with another 43% having a stand still budget (NYA, 1992a). Such findings are a clear example of long term trends in which funding for local authority based youth work has been at the forefront of cost cutting exercises. Recent reports by the NYA suggest that this trend has continued. Figures from the Standard Spending Assessment show that the amount of money available in 1997 for the funding of local authority based youth work is being reduced (NYA, 1996). This process, it seems, is leading to the continual erosion of the infrastructure of locally based Services (France and Wiles, 1996; Maychell, Pathak, and Cato, 1995; NYA, 1995)[1]. Secondly, while statutory funding may be in decline, *youth work* is gaining acceptance and prominence in a number of other contexts. Evidence indicates that youth work is fragmenting and is being used in other state and voluntary agencies as a means of working with young people (France and Wiles, 1996; Maychell, Pathak and Cato, 1995; Tucker, 1997). Classic examples of this development can be seen in Health Promotion programmes (especially around HIV/AIDS education) and crime prevention developments such as Safer City and Single Regeneration initiatives (France, 1996). The impact of this is unclear although it may well be affecting how youth workers can respond to the 'holistic' needs of young people. Thirdly, there is uncertainty about the role and meaning of youth work. As British society shifts from modernity to 'late' modernity confusion exists about how youth work should respond to the new demands being imposed - both from economic and social changes (France and Wiles, 1997). Of course, the role and purpose of youth work has always lacked clarity. At one level this arises because of its chequered history and many influences. As Bradford has argued, the purpose of youth work can be located within both 'liberal' and 'radical' traditions which has historically created ambiguity and confusion over its purpose (Bradford, 1997, p 248). But as we move into 'new' times questions are being asked about what role youth work will play in tackling either the 'problem of young people or young people's problems' (France and Wiles, 1997). In the early 1990s three Ministerial Core Curriculum Conferences attempted to address this issue by getting representatives of local authority Youth Services and the voluntary sector to identify main priorities and objectives. How successful this has been is unknown in that while a statement of purpose was produced, uncertainty remains over its usefulness for, and its acceptance by, youth workers.

As others writing in this area have identified, youth work seems to be at a 'significant cross-roads' where decisions about its future are under review (Tucker, 1994). This has led to a number of debates taking place concerning what the future of youth work may be. Banks (1996) and Tucker (1994), for example, have raised a number of questions about whether youth work could or should be a profession and if so what its key role should be. Others have raised concerns about the content of the curriculum and how youth work is moving, as a result of government intervention, towards a paradigm of control (Jeffs, 1994; and Newburn, 1996). Questions such as whether workers should be involved in this type of work or not have become central to the discourse on the future of youth work. These debates on professional identity and the curriculum are also having an influence on discussions about the future role of training. If youth work is at a 'significant cross-roads' then training needs to be responsive to change. This has led to a number of debates about what should be at the core of the curriculum for youth work training (Bloxham and Heathfield, 1995) and how training should be provided. For example, issues concerning the value or relevance of NVQs for youth work have been much discussed (Davies and Norton, 1996; McRoberts and Leitch, 1995).

The introduction of Youth Action
In this time of uncertainty central government has continually claimed that youth work should take the central responsibility for defining its own future role and purpose (NYA, 1992b). This has led to a non-interventionist approach being developed by the Department of Education and Employment in which local authority Youth Services develop their own focus and priorities based upon local needs. This is not to say that central government departments have not had a part to play in influencing the direction youth work should go. One key intervention was the setting up and funding of the Youth Action GEST[2] initiative.

In 1993 the then Department for Education set up a GEST programme for the Youth Service - The Youth Action Scheme[3]. The Scheme had a number of goals but its primary aim was to explore whether local authority youth workers could work with young people in such a way as to reduce the risk of them becoming involved in crime[4]. While concerns may have been raised about the role youth work should play in crime reduction, the input of £10 million was a welcome boost for all the Youth Services taking part (France and Wiles, 1996). The Youth Action Scheme, therefore, was a welcome opportunity for local authorities to bid for new resources but it also raised very starkly the issues of whether youth workers ought to be involved in crime work and whether they were able to adapt youth work methods to the contemporary social world.

The Scheme was an example of programme funding - that is, the provision of short, fixed-term resources for the development of specifically targeted work in pursuit of a national government policy - which has become a common way for government to influence directly service delivery on the ground. Although local authority run Youth Services have only experienced a limited use of such funding (France and Wiles, 1996), the growth of Safer Cities and the Single Regeneration

Budget will mean that it will probably become an increasingly common approach for youth workers - although whether most of that work will be done by the statutory or voluntary sector remains an open question.

The Youth Action Scheme, therefore, offered local authority Youth Services an opportunity to experiment not only with crime work, but also with more targeted and focused working methods - exactly the kind of work on which the future of youth work is likely to depend. The Scheme required youth workers to develop different ways of working and to undertake relatively new tasks; such as targeting particular young people within a time limited framework; working within a problem focused approach; having monitoring, evaluation and exit strategies; and working with other agencies. The ability of local authorities to deliver successful Youth Action Scheme projects was, therefore, a good measure of their ability to adapt to the kind of demands which are being created by a changing world.

Twenty eight local authorities in England and Wales successfully gained Youth Action Scheme funding. How these authorities used the money varied: some used all the money for one project, whilst others divided it between a number of different projects, with the result that fifty nine separate projects were set up.

In the first year of the Scheme, projects reported that 4,322 young people participated. Of these 67% were male and 33% female. The majority were white, with ethnic minorities accounting for 20% of young men and 16% of young women. In terms of age, all projects managed to work with young people aged between 13 and 17, although many had a wider age range. The numbers of young people worked with by each project during the first year varied enormously, from 12 to 3,000 with a median of 150. Even though the projects varied in size, the first of these figures does not seem very cost-effective and the second hardly credible, and clearly the intensity of project relationships with young people varied.

In 1993 we were contracted by the Department for Education (now the Department for Education and employment) to evaluate the success of the Youth Action Scheme in achieving its goals. We were asked to focus on both outputs and outcomes. Outputs were defined as programme implementation. The DfEE required a national audit of the projects, identifying how the monies had been spent by the different local authorities and if projects had successfully achieved full implementation. Outcomes were defined as what the work by projects had achieved. For example, as a key focus of Youth Action was to reduce young people's risk of drifting into crime, we were asked to evaluate the success of projects in achieving this.

In the discussion that follows we intend to draw upon our research to raise a number of issues about the future of youth work. To undertake this we will firstly outline our key findings with regard to questions of targeting; methods of work; monitoring and evaluation; and inter-agency work in order to examine how fit youth workers are to respond to future demands. From these discussions we will conclude by outlining, what we believe are the main lessons for youth work and how our findings may help Youth Services deal with the changing world in which they find themselves.

The idea of targeting

Historically, youth workers have resisted working with agencies that are linked to issues of crime. For example, in the early 1980s youth workers had the opportunity to become central partners in the development of Intermediate Treatment under Local Authority Circular 3 (LAC3) 1983. This was rejected (except in Scotland) partly because such work was seen to compromise the values and principles of youth work (Adams, 1988). Similar arguments have underpinned youth workers unwillingness to become involved with agencies such as the police (Markham and Smith, 1988). It has been claimed that such work threatens youth worker's relationships with young people and indicates to young people, and other agencies, that youth work has a social control function which would undermine its advocacy and empowerment role. Targeting 'troublesome youth' is also seen as problematic because it seemingly undermines the ideal of 'universal access for all' to Youth Services, and raises issues about the possible stigmatising effects of targeting. Recent debates suggest that such beliefs have not been rejected by many within youth work. For example, Bradford (1997) suggests the outcome of the Core Curriculum conference indicates 'universalism' rather than 'targeted' provision.

These concerns had an impact on the willingness of Youth Services and workers to be involved in the Youth Action Scheme. In the majority of Youth Services which were successful in winning GEST monies this led to internal debates about whether youth workers should be involved in crime work. Where such debates were not successfully concluded their Youth Action Scheme projects were generally unsuccessful (France and Wiles, 1996).

The Youth Action Scheme was meant to target young people 'at risk' of becoming involved in crime. Projects had difficulties with operationalising this notion of young people being 'at risk' for a number of reasons, yet what was most surprising was the limited attention given to a wider notion of crime and its consequences. For example, if we explore what we know about young people and crime it becomes evident that work around crime issues needs to recognise three key facts. First, and most frequently commented on, young people commit more crimes than adults pro rata (Graham and Bowling, 1995) Secondly, and less frequently commented on, young people have much higher victimisation rates than adults: indeed, they suffer personal crime rates that adults would probably find quite intolerable[5]. Thirdly, and rarely discussed, young people almost certainly have higher rates of fear of crime than any but elderly adults[6]. These three facts frequently co-exist because much of youth crime is committed in youth group situations with only a minority of crime targeted at adult victims. Young people are the main victims of youth crime and their fear of crime is therefore well-grounded. However, it does not follow that young people can be simply divided into those who are criminals and those who are fearful victims although both of these types (especially the later for females) do exist. Most young people are likely to be both offenders and victims and fear of how easy the transition from one to the other can be is very obvious when talking to groups of young people about the routines of their daily lives. Although, therefore, it is sensible to be concerned

about the possible damaging effects of identifying young people as offenders one also needs to be concerned for their victimisation and fear. For youth workers not to work with young people around the problems for them of crime is to ignore one of the major facets of their lives.

Essentially all projects ignored this issue and operationalised the concept of 'at risk' around young people's involvement in criminal activity. To identify participants workers used two main methods: either targeting areas or using referrals from other agencies. Areas were targeted by using local and national information to identify areas which suffered multiple social problems, such as unemployment, high recorded crime rates, large proportions of single parents, low income and housing benefit take up rates. Over 71% of projects then used such indicators to suggest that young people were 'at risk' of offending. This justified targeting, not only the area, but also *all* young people who lived in the area. Such an approach overcame some of the youth workers reservations about the Youth Action Scheme. It allowed projects to continue to provide a universal and open access service and deal with concerns over either stigmatising young people as social problems, or being perceived by local communities as rewarding 'bad boys'.

The problem with area targeting was that projects did not necessarily end up working with those young people who were most at risk. The better projects recognised that even in such areas some young people were more 'at risk' than others and that because resources were limited universalism was likely to mean that those young people who were least at risk would be the main participants. As area based projects became aware of such difficulties many attempted to address the problems by devising alternative approaches. One such alternative relied upon close community relationships to identify young people who were causing problems. Detached workers then responded by trying to make contact. Such an approach, however, had its own problems since community networks may not always be reliable sources of information and communities may expect youth workers to take a more controlling role than is compatible with their voluntary relationship with young people.

An alternative approach to area targeting was based on working with young people who were referred by other agencies. This approach was used by 22% of Youth Action Scheme projects and relied upon two broad methods of referral. One method was for projects to inform other agencies of their existence and encourage them to refer young people whom they believed to be at risk of becoming future offenders. The meaning of 'at risk' was (either intentionally or not) undefined, leaving the referring agency to explain why they thought the young person was at risk. Such an approach entailed the possibility of a project becoming a dumping ground for difficult young people.

A second method, which avoided this problem, was to define what was meant by 'at risk' and then circulate this as an 'at risk statement'. This approach had a number of advantages. First, it required discussion and debate amongst all parties about what was meant by 'at risk'. This gave workers some ownership of the definition

they had to work with. Secondly, it helped projects clarify and define their main objectives. Thirdly, it created a clear self-image which had implications for the status of youth work and how others perceived what it was able to achieve. Difficulties did still exist, especially around definition and some projects defined 'at risk' so broadly that it had no real value because it could apply to any young person.

As a general observation, referral based projects tended to be more focused, better structured and organised and clearer about what they were trying to achieve. They also usually worked with smaller numbers of young people in a more intense manner.

A general point about the targeting used by the Youth Action Scheme projects was that very few of those involved in running the projects had a clear understanding of the existing research evidence on what kind of factors are known to be associated with the onset of offending by young people. Indeed, the predominance of area targeting was partly because most workers' knowledge in this area was rarely more precise than a general belief that deprivation factors were associated with crime. This may be broadly correct but not necessarily true (and certainly not necessarily true at the individual level) and in any case is not precise enough to be the basis for efficient targeting by projects. The DfEE simply assumed that such knowledge would be part of the professional competence of youth workers, but in fact the majority of project managers told us that their training had not provided them with such skills. In retrospect the DfEE ought to have provided clear guidance about what is known about risk factors in relation to offending for the Youth Action Scheme projects, but for the future it raises serious issues about the content of youth work training and the structure of the post-qualification professional development of youth workers. Such guidance had already been published in 1992 by Crime Concern (see Graham and Smith 1992). A more up to date version of this guidance could easily have been prepared at the start of the Youth Action Scheme. However, the real issue is that the youth workers need such guidance notes on a range of issues on a regular basis.

In spite of these difficulties it is clear from the national evaluation of the work of the Youth Action Scheme (see France and Wiles, 1996) that the projects did manage to target young people whose lives, compared to a nationally representative sample of young people (Graham and Bowling, 1995), involved a number of aspects which were likely to place them at greater risk of becoming involved in crime. For example, project participants were slightly less likely to get on well with their parents; they were more likely to run away from home; they were more likely to dislike school and to play truant; they were more likely to engage in leisure pursuits with increased risks; and a significant proportion had high consumption levels of cannabis and alcohol. What this does mean is that the Youth Action Scheme projects were very successful in targeting 'at risk' young people. Furthermore, Youth Action Scheme members were very significantly more 'at risk' than the national average. Whilst targeting was a problem, the projects nevertheless did work with young people who were clearly at risk. However, they were mainly working with young

people who had higher than average risk factors and were already involved in significant criminality. What the projects, therefore, failed to do was separately to identify those who were at risk of becoming involved in serious levels of criminality, from those who already were so involved. This distinction is important because we know that those factors associated with onset of significant criminality are different from those factors which may be involved in desistance from criminality. In other words, we need different ways of working with young people in relation to preventing onset than we do to achieve desistance. Whilst there is reasonably established British evidence of factors associated with onset, the evidence is much less clear in relation to desistance, especially for males (see Graham and Bowling, 1995).

Working with young people

Traditionally, youth work is seen as a method of 'social' or 'informal education'. While such terms have always been controversial (Butters and Newall, 1978; Davies, 1986; Smith, 1988) it is now seen as central to professional practice (Smith, 1988; Banks, 1996). Informal education is seen as being an extension of the child centred schooling tradition which encouraged self determination. Smith suggests that 'social education is a particular type of learning process which attempts to achieve internal change of consciousness such as the achievement of maturity' (Smith, 1988, p. 91). This approach differs from character building in that it is a shift away from 'personal adjustment to person-centredness'. Smith argues that informal education has seven major characteristics that separate it from formal education: it takes place in a variety of physical and social settings; it is incremental in its application; it does not take place at structured times; it involves participants choosing to take part; it is built around dialogue between educator and participant; it takes place in familiar cultural and social settings; and it is experimental (Smith, 1988, p 126-130). How far this approach is central to practice remains unclear. For example, Love and Hendry's work on 'two perspectives of youth work' showed that neither youth workers nor young people prioritised 'informal education' while Tucker's (1994) research showed that most workers remained unclear about what they were trying to do.

Such confusion dominated our findings. Youth workers claimed to be working with young people in a variety of ways. Terms such as 'community development', 'social education', 'social intervention', 'empowerment', 'informal education', 'group work', or an 'holistic approach' were widely used. However, when asked to explain these terms in more depth responses revealed that different things could be meant by the same term. This is not surprising and is a common feature of occupational jargon when new practices are being developed, and the more so in a occupation, like youth work, which has produced relatively little theoretical reflection. More particularly, however, some Youth Action Scheme projects used such terms as general synonyms for doing youth work with no attempt to think through how particular methods of working with young people were intended to achieve their project's goals. Inevitably such projects had problems with evaluation since they had not worked out implementation logic to evaluate.

Most projects had, at least implicitly, a theory of how their working methods would reduce young people being at risk of criminality: for example, that community development work would integrate young people into their communities and so reduce the risk of their deviance or being perceived by the community as a social problem; or that social education would empower young people to make informed and non-criminal choices; or that social intervention would challenge young people's behaviour and so help them open up new opportunities and avoid future conflict. The problem was that many projects used a great mixture of terms to describe their working methods and implicitly invoked different, and sometimes contradictory theories of how these linked to criminality reduction. This created problems for their own evaluation because they did not have a clear and parsimonious logic against which their work could be judged. Successful evaluation came from those projects which had clear aims and clear methods for achieving them.

More broadly what all this revealed was that youth workers often had difficulty identifying which working methods were likely to be successful in relation to particular goals (in this case criminality reduction). There are two different problems here for the future of youth work. First, working methods are often so poorly defined that it is all too easy for project plans to be so vague as to amount to little more than an assertion that 'youth work' is good for people and so must reduce criminality. Such a lack of precision hides bad practice and will be an impediment to the future professional development of youth work practice. Secondly, such vagueness is the antithesis of the kind of project planning which is likely to be so important for the future of the Youth Service.

Monitoring and evaluation

The importance of monitoring and evaluation to many of our statutory welfare services has been a dominant theme of recent government policy (Everitt and Hardiker, 1996) yet little attention has been given to youth work. Discussion at the Ministerial Conferences recognised the importance of developing methods that reflected the complexity of youth work and the social nature and importance of relationship work (NYA, 1992b). This led to the conference recommending that youth work develop methods of evaluation that were not only quantitative but also qualitative (NYA, 1992b).

In trying to develop such methods Youth Action Scheme projects had a number of difficulties. This resulted in over 73% of them failing to implement methods that produced data which could demonstrate their outcomes to the satisfaction of an outsider. Even of those which did, only 3% were able to show the impact their work was having on young people's involvement in crime.

All Youth Action Scheme projects were required by the DfEE to monitor and evaluate their work. By 'monitoring' the DfEE meant the measuring of project implementation. In other words how far projects had implemented *their* plans: for example, had they worked with the number of young people they had planned to, or had they run the number of group work sessions they had planned. Monitoring is essential so that

project staff can judge how successfully they are following their own plans (often by comparing what they have achieved with 'performance indicators' or 'outputs' identified in the original project plan) and so their managers can judge how far project implementation has been achieved. By 'evaluation' the DfEE meant the measurement of how far projects had succeeded in achieving *their* goals: for example, reducing the criminality of project participants, or their rate of school truancy. In this approach, evaluation involves identifying goal 'outcomes' which can be measured: for example, reducing criminality may be measured by using police arrest data[7] or self-reported behaviour schedules. Two points need to be stressed. First, both monitoring and evaluation have to be against the outputs and outcomes identified in a project's *own plans*. Secondly, 'measuring' outputs and outcomes does not necessarily mean that everything has to be reduced to some crude measure, or can not be included unless it is. All that is meant is that there needs to be some external evidence which can be used to decide whether outputs and outcomes are being achieved. However, the choice of what will be used as evidence is important in persuading those outside a project team (whether Youth Service managers, politicians or the public) of what has been achieved. Measures, such as project members' 'judgment' of whether outputs and outcomes are being achieved, are less likely to be persuasive because of the obvious danger of bias. All that this monitoring and evaluation framework amounted to was the kind of systematic management structure necessary for running any project and the collection and analysis of evidence which is essential if the Youth Service is to develop a clear knowledge base of what kind of working methods are successful in relation to differing goals - a prerequisite for any professional practice. However, such formal monitoring and evaluation turned out not to be generally well established within Youth Services and many Youth Action Scheme workers had little experience or understanding of how to monitor and evaluate their work.

As far as monitoring was concerned, the majority of projects concentrated on constructing methods of recording their work and developing structures for discussing action to be taken. The main method of recording work was through either diary keeping or the use of sessional logs and these were used by 68% of projects. What was recorded in these records varied. In some cases projects had designed sessional sheets that required workers to record information, such as the number of young people involved in the session or the type of work undertaken and action to be taken. Not all projects were this systematic and some allowed workers to keep their own notes in any way that suited them. The central forum for monitoring most projects was the team meeting, but the large proportion of part-time workers meant that full attendance could be difficult to achieve. Priorities were set at meetings and decisions about future development were made. Recordings were sometimes used in this process but generally workers relied upon their memory of events to inform discussions. At its best such an approach was perfectly adequate but there was a danger that decisions were not always based on a systematic examination of the data or that the data was not systematically recorded for future professional development.

Evaluating the impact of projects on the behaviour of young people relied upon three main sources of information: youth worker's observations, young people's self assessment and perceptions of other agencies. 68% of projects relied upon youth worker assessment and observation as a central method of evaluation. Many workers believed that whilst measuring change in young people was near impossible, youth workers were in the unique position of having a long-term and close relationship with young people and therefore could observe such change. Demonstrating this in a systematic way, however, was missing from the majority of projects, although good workers tried to develop individual case study examples to show how a young person had changed. Youth worker assessment was rarely well thought through and had limited value in demonstrating to outsiders what was being achieved. 46% of the projects claimed to involve young people in the process of evaluation, mainly by young people engaging in reviews at the beginning and end of a piece of work, or the end of a session. This approach focused on asking young people what they had got out of the session/project and if they had enjoyed their participation. In the majority of cases this was not well developed and relied upon how young people felt about their experience, giving limited attention to possible learning outcomes, and behavioural or attitudinal changes. The good projects attempted to develop methods that recorded the attitudes or behaviour of young people prior to their involvement with the project and then got them to reflect at the end if they had changed. Methods of recording were generally rather unsystematic, although a number of interesting methods were developed: for example, questionnaires and attitude surveys that showed the extent of change.

Other external agencies and groups were used by 22% of projects in evaluating success. How this was done varied between projects. Referral projects were more likely to use this method in a more structured way by returning to the referring agency to discover if they had identified changes in the young person while on the project. In some cases detached projects also used community responses as a method of evaluation by approaching agencies, local community groups, or community representatives and asking if they could identify any changes in the behaviour of local young people. This method was not constructed systematically which meant that the recording of impact was very limited and sometimes was little more than an attempt to gain generalised support for a project's work.

All the Youth Action Scheme projects were required to report regularly to the DfEE. However, how reports were structured and what issues they discussed varied as no guidelines were provided. This resulted in wide variation in both size and quality of the reports and they tended to be concerned with accountability for the use of resources rather than evaluating outcomes. Unfortunately, the DfEE report requirement allowed some projects to regard the whole business of monitoring and evaluation as a purely external demand and not as part of their own practice development. In an ideal world national monitoring of this kind ought to consist of auditing the quality of a project's own monitoring and evaluation and should involve only a limited number of performance indicators agreed at the start of a project.

Almost half of Youth Action Scheme projects employed an external consultant to evaluate their success. The role of these external evaluators varied, although because the majority of youth workers had limited experience or understanding of evaluation methods this often included a training and development role. The use of consultants could be beneficial in aiding the development of projects and helping them collect useful data. Consultants could also provide a more objective perspective on the work and help projects keep a tight focus on their overall aims. Consultants, however, can be problematic if projects are unable to assess their skills and credibility. Employing external evaluators can also undermine the learning process for project workers. By passing responsibility over to outsiders, youth workers may become passive actors in the process of evaluation.

At the finish of the Youth Action Scheme we sent a brief questionnaire to the line managers of each project and asked whether they thought that their project had been successful *in achieving the central aim* of reducing the risk of young people becoming involved in criminality? Just over a third thought that all their projects had been successful. Their rating of broader project success (beyond that of reducing the risk of criminality) followed a similar pattern with 30% judging them 'very successful' and 61% claiming that 'some success' had been achieved. We went on to explore the basis for these judgements by asking what evidence could be offered to support them. The evidence most often pointed to by managers (79% of them) was that young people on the projects themselves reported change in their behaviour. This was followed by police and other third party reports of a decline in problems (33% and 36%). However, we have already seen how limited the data were on these issues collected by the projects and it is worrying that managers reported so uncritically on the evaluation data.

Inter-agency work

The importance of inter- agency work to the provision of welfare services has been a major aspect of government policy since the middle of the 1980s. This development has also dominated the work of agencies working around crime related issues. For example, the Morgan report on Safer Communities (1991) argued that the major failure of agencies to create 'safer communities' was their lack of attention to working in a co-ordinated and co-operative framework. From this position Morgan argued that all work in this area should include inter-agency work. It was therefore not surprising that the DfEE insisted that projects funded under the GEST programme should have to develop an inter-agency framework. Working with other agencies is not alien to youth workers although taking the lead in creating these structures (especially formal) remained unusual. In setting up the projects many workers found themselves unsure about good practice and how they should go about the task. Part of this arose because workers did not have a knowledge base to draw upon about what worked (unlike other professions such as social and probation workers) but problems also arose because they had no experience of 'leading from the front'.

All projects fulfilled the GEST requirement of working with other agencies and whilst the methods used varied, two main approaches dominated. First, almost all projects developed informal links with workers from other agencies. These relationships were unstructured and relied upon personal interest and commitment for their continuation. A large proportion of projects developed contacts with the police, and Youth Justice workers, but many also had strong contacts with local schools and Education Welfare Officers and 64% of projects had informal contacts with individuals and voluntary groups active in their project area. All projects found these informal links useful as a method of sharing information either about local young people or developments in communities. They also provided a way of understanding the workings of other agencies and what services were available for young people. Youth Action Scheme workers found the links useful for helping young people who needed specialised support since in many cases they recognised that they were not necessarily the best people to deal with a young person's concerns or problems.

Secondly, 80% of projects had either created or become involved in some form of regular meeting that aimed to help and support the development of the Youth Action Scheme project. The membership of these committees mirrored the informal relationships that had been developed by projects. In a number of cases projects linked into an existing inter-agency group. This had the advantage of reducing the effort needed to set up a group and speeded up the establishment of relationships with other agencies. However, the relevance of these links for the development of a project was not always clear, since Youth Action Scheme needs were not always high on the agenda of pre-existing groups. The structure of the committee and its purposes could change during the life of a project and the best practice was where this was positively encouraged. Many projects found that in the initial stages having such a formal committee to provide advice and support was very useful in getting started but once the project was up and running such a structure became problematic because it seemed not to have a purpose or offer anything of value to the work. The better projects recognised that inter-agency structures needed to be flexible and that once the project had become established, then the role and purpose of the group needed to change.

One of the clear advantages of this work was the status youth work gained from not just being involved in inter-agency work, but taking a lead role. Not only did youth work learn more about other agencies but the reverse is also true. In other words the relationship helped others understand what youth work can contribute to crime reduction and also what youth work could contribute in other areas of work.

Conclusion

What then are the lessons for youth work? Clearly, Youth Action had many benefits for the local authorities and youth workers that took part (France and Wiles, 1996), but our results highlight three main issues that, we believe, need to be incorporated into youth work thinking.

Firstly, while our research was inconclusive about whether youth workers were able to construct projects that reduced young people being 'at risk' of drifting into crime,

we believe that workers need to engage with the 'crime agenda'. As we discussed above, crime is a major aspect of young people's lives and a denial of this is ignoring the real needs of many young people. While the position of Jeffs and Smith (1994) may reflect the genuine concerns of many youth workers, it does not necessarily follow that working with 'crime related issues' will automatically lead to increased forms of social control. In fact, many of the projects that embraced this work positively discovered that not only were they able to work with young people in creative ways, but also that their own standing as professionals were enhanced (France and Wiles, 1996).

Not only did youth workers show that they should not be over anxious about doing crime related work, they also showed that they were capable of developing methods of targeting those most 'at risk'. If youth workers accepted they should be involved in this work then there is evidence that they are able to target accordingly. Where youth workers need to improve their practice is in the management of time limited projects with defined goals that require them to monitor and evaluate their outputs and outcomes. As we have suggested, this approach is likely to be a key feature of future youth work funding, therefore it is important that workers recognise the necessity of being able to show, to others, what youth work can achieve. Resistance to this work will not help youth work carve out a future. Regardless of who is in power, questions of value for money, effectiveness and efficiency are here to stay (Hanbury, 1994). Instead of seeing this as a negative development, youth workers should see this as a 'window of opportunity' to create a clear role for themselves in future initiatives.

Secondly, as an aid to this process youth work needs to develop a more coherent professional framework. Project management, monitoring and evaluation will only improve if they are seen by youth workers as a part of the ongoing development of knowledge and practice which they collectively need as a professional body that sets and monitors its own standards of service quality. Youth work lacks such a coherent, self-governing professional organisation and as a result there is a desperate lack of leadership which can develop the new skills and thinking which the service urgently requires. As Banks (1996) suggests the creation of a profession is fraught with difficulties. The definition of 'professionalism' is clearly problematic but it also has the potential of being an exclusive term which reinforces power differences. Such difficulties raise genuine concerns about the value of professionalism for youth work, yet as we discussed above certain practical aspects of 'professionalism' need, at the very least, to be developed within youth work if workers are going to develop the skills and knowledge required to deal with the changing world. For example, as Banks (1996) highlights, professional associations are also about professional development. In the case of our findings such a role is clearly needed within youth work. At a number of stages within the development of the Youth Action projects having access to knowledge and information while engaging in critical reflection would have aided workers chances of being successful. Without them, much of the learning was repeated across the different projects. Youth workers therefore were 're-inventing the wheel' instead of developing new forms of practice. Youth Action clearly showed up the need for some form of association or organisation that could undertake, at the very least, this role.

The third and final issue of concern relates to youth work training. While our research did not focus directly on the quality of training being provided or the curriculum content of different institutions, our results raised a number of points that related to training. One issue, was the lack of basic skills. Part of this arose because of the nature of the workforce. Over 75% of workers were employed on part time contracts and only 49% of these held a locally recognised qualification in youth work. Therefore it is not surprising that workers struggled with many of the 'new' aspects of the work. But more worrying was the fact that when we questioned full time managers about the relevance of their training for doing this type of work many stated they felt it had not prepared them. For example, 36% said that their training had prepared them either 'badly' or 'not at all' to run a short term project; 62% said it did not prepare them to manage a project financially and 40% claimed it did not provide them with the necessary skills to do street work. Out of these questioned, 35% were recently qualified (between 1990-3) while the rest had received their initial training either between 1985-9 (30%) or before (35%).These replies suggest that an alarming lack of effective skills training exists within full-time youth work training, and post qualifying or in service training. Such a finding clearly showed up in the difficulties workers had in constructing, implementing and managing many of the Youth Action projects.

This problem raises a number of questions about both part-time and full-time training. Much of the recent debates about training part-timers have focused on the relevance of NVQs and core competencies. McRoberts and Leitch (1995) argue that such a development enhances the quality of training to part-timers. Others, such as Blackman and Evans (1994), and Davies and Norton (1996) reject such claims suggesting that NVQs and the notions of competence-based training break down tasks into decontextualised elements which fail to capture the concept of the whole practitioner. While we would not want to argue in favour of one method over another we do feel that our research raises key issues about part-time training that need to be addressed by whichever approach is chosen. As our research showed much of the 'face to face' work of youth work is conducted by part-time staff (France and Wiles, 1996) but the lack of basic skills (around evaluation and targeting and short term working, for example) to do this work within a project framework was missing. This continually undermined the possibility of success. If youth work is to undertake project work in the future then it clearly needs to develop a more effective way of training its part time staff.

Similar issues need addressing for full-timers. It is a sad reflection on youth work that many of its senior workers felt unprepared for the demands of project work. It may be the case that many initial or post qualifying courses are starting to address some of the issues we have raised in our discussion. If not, then trainers need to be introducing full-timers to skills in areas such as; project and financial management; how to monitor and evaluate practice; how to do targeted street work; and how different methods of work may be effective in achieving certain goals. Even more worrying, though, was that these deficiencies were rarely identified or corrected by

Youth Service managers. There is, it would seem, also a skills and management gap in the profession which needs to be urgently corrected.

Unless these issues discussed here are addressed then youth work will have neither the competence nor the systematic evidence to convince the public that its work should be expanded and its budget enhanced. The alternative will be either to grant the Service an enhanced statutory status but as a device for government to impose rigorous new standards, training and curricula (as is happening in teaching), or an expanded use of the voluntary youth work sector where short-term contract conditions can be used by government to achieve improved service delivery targets and standards.

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Notes

1 The DfEE argues, however, that cuts in local funding have been matched by new funding from elsewhere, i.e. the Youth Action Scheme and other GEST initiatives.

2 Grants for Education and Support and Training (GEST) is a pump-priming scheme for innovative projects.

3 For a full national evaluation of the work of the Youth Action Scheme see France and Wiles 1996.

4 At the time the former Home Office Minister, John Patten, had recently become Secretary of State for Education and, given his previous interests in crime prevention, it was hardly surprising that such a programme for the Youth Service should have received support.

5 This fact was until recently often hidden because the main victim surveys in Britain (The British Crime Survey and The Scottish Crime Survey) did not initially include respondents under 18 years old. The fact emerged with victim surveys aimed at young people (for one of the earliest see Anderson *et al*, 1994).

6 Again, this was hidden until recently because the main studies of fear of crime did not include young people.

7 Although in fact this is likely to be a very unreliable measure in practice. Youth Action Scheme workers tended to over-estimate the use of police crime data in general for evaluating the outcomes of targeted projects.

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RELUCTANT HEROES

Youth Workers and Crime Prevention

DAVID SMITH and IAN PAYLOR

Introduction

We are concerned in this article to draw together three distinct but interrelated issues which are relevant to current debates about young people 'at risk' and the nature of the services which could be provided for them. These are the recently rekindled enthusiasm about the possibility that something might 'work' in the sense of reducing offending (for example, McGuire, 1995); the future of youth work and the youth service (an ongoing debate which has been put into sharp relief by the recent restructuring of the service (Davies, 1996)); and the need for the youth service to demonstrate its effectiveness in delivering quality work (Huskins, 1996). We argue that the service should welcome opportunities to become involved more explicitly in preventing youth crime, that there is encouraging evidence that it can do so successfully, that work in this field can helpfully inform the future direction of the service, and that if it grasps the nettle of evaluation the service can demonstrate its effectiveness as it has never tried to do, or had to do, before.

The article is based on an evaluation of the projects funded in Lancashire by the Department for Education under the GEST (Grants for Education Support and Training) Youth Action Scheme (YAS) programme from April 1993 to March 1996. Its aim was to enable the youth service to develop its work with 13-17 year-olds 'at risk' of offending or already involved in it, in the hope that this targeting of resources would help to divert young people from crime and the risk of developing criminal careers (Department of Education, 1993). It was conceived as a three-year scheme, but an annual report was required from all authorities receiving funding which had to include details of work undertaken by the various projects and costed plans for the next year's work, as well as a statement of the Scheme's overall aims and its success to date in meeting them, and there was no guarantee of continued support. In Lancashire the Youth Action Scheme supported five local projects and the County's Mobile Activity Centres (MACs) for the full three year period. The local projects were in Blackburn, Burnley, Preston, Rossendale and Skelmersdale, so that all the main urban areas of the county were covered with the exception of Lancaster and the Fylde.

The projects employed a variety of methods to identify the relevant target group, from treating all young people on the streets of particular estates as 'at risk' to liaising with schools and youth justice teams to get information on the most vulnerable young people of the neighbourhood. They also used a range of techniques and approaches in their actual work with the young people, but all contained an element of detached work, and in general this predominated over the traditional club-based approach. In line with the specification from the Department for Education, the projects all began their work in well defined localities, usually public housing

estates or distinguishable parts of them. The Blackburn, Burnley and Skelmersdale projects each worked on two sites, and in Preston there were two project teams which usually worked independently of each other. In the final year of the Scheme, some projects began to extend their work into new areas which their work had identified as presenting similar problems to the estates chosen for intervention at the start.

The Department for Education guidelines for the Youth Action Scheme stressed the importance of monitoring and evaluation of projects. Monitoring was to obtain information on process questions (how schemes worked, what the content of programmes was), while evaluation was concerned with outcomes, both 'soft' measures such as attitude change and supposedly 'harder' measures such as police figures on reported juvenile crime and rates of school attendance. It was also emphasised that projects should be able to show that any positive changes could be attributed to their intervention and not to some other factor in the local environment.

The Scheme thus presented the youth service with a number of challenges. Most obviously, it was being asked to adopt crime reduction as a specific aim of its work in projects supported by the Scheme, which meant a move towards a more overtly controlling role than the service had traditionally wished to play. Perhaps as importantly, the stress on monitoring and evaluation challenged the service to develop less intuitive ways of justifying its work than it had used in the past; measures of success should not simply be those which supported what the service had been doing anyway.

The Department for Education commissioned a national evaluation of the Scheme, and encouraged external local evaluations to supplement the projects' own monitoring. We were commissioned by the Lancashire service on a year-by-year basis to provide this view from outside. The methods we adopted during the course of the evaluation were attendance at relevant meetings, interviews with project workers and other staff, site visits, analysis of data collected by or for the projects, and examination of internal policy statements, records and evaluations.

Crime prevention as an aim of the youth service
Youth service staff were generally cautious about claiming that the Youth Action Scheme projects actually had the effect of reducing local crime rates; the agency most likely to make this claim, on behalf of the youth service as it were, was the police. The explanation of this apparent paradox seems to be that the police necessarily and properly see crime reduction as central to their aims and purposes (Gilling, 1996), and are keen to highlight anything that looks like a successful result (Loveday, 1996); the youth service, on the other hand, has long been ambivalent about counting crime reduction among its aims, and has tended to be sceptical of, and resistant to, the idea that its effectiveness can be measured by anything so obvious and concrete as changes in locally reported crime (Jeffs and Smith, 1992). There are of course problems in using reported crime figures as the measure of success of a crime prevention initiative (the rate of reporting may have declined, rather than the rate of crime, or some other factor may be responsible for a reduced crime rate

(Maguire, 1994; Bottomley and Pease, 1986)), but the contrast between the reactions of the police and the youth service to an apparent success is still striking. Reluctance to be identified as primarily or even marginally concerned with reducing delinquency goes back deep into the history of the youth service (it was the source of tension between the Ministry of Education and the Home Office in the mid-1950s, at the time of the influential Albemarle Committee (Smith 1995)), and it is not surprising that it should surface in the Lancashire Youth Action projects. It is, however, difficult to see what would justify the existence of the youth service in the eyes of the government (and probably of past governments too) if it totally disclaimed any ability to influence young people's propensity to offend (cf. Davies 1986); and the Youth Action Scheme may have provided an opportunity to re-think the traditional line on this, which has eschewed social control in favour of social education and social development - concepts whose meaning is probably little understood outside the youth service itself (Huskins, 1996).

Project workers varied in the level of unease they felt about the requirement of the Youth Action Scheme that work should 'target' young people at risk. For some workers, discomfort never completely evaporated, and this was true even of a project whose work was hailed by the police as having reduced local juvenile crime and nuisance. Apart from ideological purism, the main reason for continued unease about the crime prevention role was local tension with the police. In one project particularly, the workers were more at home with the view that they were one line of defence available to young people against the police, whose attitude and approach to young people on the streets was thought, with some reason, to be heavy-handed and insensitive. This suspicion was reinforced when plain-clothes police officers on mountain bikes were deployed in the town centre and were initially taken for youth workers by the young people; their mission was intelligence-gathering, not to help in the development of more constructive leisure pursuits. Although anti-police sentiment can easily become ingrained and automatic, it is also a fact that policing practices which are clumsy at best and at worst oppressive can mean that the feeling is justified (Reiner and Spencer, 1993).

Generally, however, projects did move during the life of the Scheme towards greater specificity in their target groups. Some workers seemed from the start to have few problems with the idea, and used links with schools, social services department youth justice teams and the police to identify particular young people with whom it would be appropriate to work. Even the projects which relied on traditional detached work to find the relevant groups of young people tended over time to work with smaller groups consisting of the indisputably 'at risk', which probably makes good sense in terms of a crime reduction aim, since a high proportion of known crime is committed by a small proportion of known offenders (Hagell and Newburn 1994). The demands of the initial bidding process encouraged projects to set their target numbers high, perhaps unrealistically so given that they were also expected to explain and justify how they picked their target groups, and how they knew they were 'at risk'. In the first year, one project described the 'at risk' categories in a scale

moving from specificity to generality - from 'young people who have received [at least] a caution' to 'young people who live in an area perceived as a trouble spot'. Over the life of the Scheme, projects tended to move, in at least one case with management enouragement, towards the specificity end of this continuum, in some cases working productively with quite heavily convicted young people.

We want now to give some examples of the kind of work the projects did with young people which seem to us relevant to the aims of the Youth Action Scheme and illustrate something of the particular contribution the youth service can make to work with young people at risk. In giving examples of good or successful practice we do not mean to imply that everything which the projects tried worked well; this is of course impossible, and sometimes the right thing to do was to abandon a particular line of action - in one case, a car project which ran into such persistent material and organisational difficulties that it came to nothing. We give a number of brief examples and then a more extended description of one project's work with a particularly difficult group. In our view, the examples show how the projects allowed the youth service to achieve some of its traditional aims within a new context which required more attention to relations with other agencies, and to the systems in which young people at risk are enmeshed, than has been usual in youth work.

There were many examples where the project workers acted as mediators or brokers between the young people with whom they were working and others, individuals or organisations (for various perspectives on mediation see Pepinsky and Quinney (1991)). The others might be victims of the young people's offending, as when workers were able to persuade a young person to return some money he had stolen from a friend's mother. They might be other interest groups in the locality, as when workers negotiated for young people to have access to a community centre from which they had been banned, or organised an 'Islam awareness evening' with the aim of reducing misunderstanding between young white and Asian people. They might be organisations, from the university to which workers helped one young man gain access after he was initially rejected on the basis of his criminal record, to the football club which for the first time translated good intentions into effective action and opened up its resources to young Asian men. They might be members of agencies within the criminal justice system, such as the police officers whom workers were able to persuade to drop a charge against a young person for whom they could provide an alibi, or the probation officer who incorporated into his pre-sentence report (relating to an offence committed before the start of the project) information about a young person's positive response to the opportunities provided by the project to change his attitudes to offending (see Smith and Paylor (1994) for a fuller discussion of the inter-agency aspects of the Youth Action Scheme projects).

There were numerous examples where the projects gave young people access to resources and activities which could open out new opportunities, provide a sense of achievement, and perhaps contribute to longer-term changes in behaviour. These included the MAC Rides facility, which was used very successfully when the

physical and organisational problems of finding a suitable site at a suitable time could be overcome, a circus skills project which seemed to provide particular opportunities for young women, sailing trips on boats of various sizes and other watersports, and an Anglo-Irish exchange visit to Dublin - as well as more modest outings like a visit to the cinema. Such activities have of course become politically contentious as 'holidays for hooligans' and the like; but, given the association of serious delinquency with socio-economic deprivation and limited opportunities, effective intervention inevitably entails some differential treatment, if the relative position of the most deprived young people is to be improved (Farrington, 1990). In other cases, project workers were able to make valued contributions to universally available educational work, such as their participation, in partnership with a specialist agency, in a school-based drugs awareness programme.

The sort of practical help and support which project workers could offer is illustrated by one project's experience of keeping in touch with a young person who had been thrown out of the family home and began to sleep rough, moving from place to place to stay out of the hands of the police. His friends were worried about his health (he was only fifteen), and the project workers were able to retain enough contact with him and his family for it to be feasible for him to return home after almost a month. As the workers pointed out, no other supportive agency was prepared to become involved; the local social services team were unwilling to act because of the likelihood that they would have to spend time looking for him. Other workers also contrasted the quantity and quality of the time they spent with young people attending the project with their experience of social services, in this case their own previous work in residential care and with a youth justice team:

I have the fortune or misfortune of having worked for social services and I have a long relation with young people who are in care because they have no choice and they resent that, therefore they take it out on the staff...Here it's...different...to want a relationship and build a relationship based on mutual trust...that facilitates the learning process for both people...I'd almost do it for free.

...because we're doing something with these Blank Street boys [the very difficult group mentioned above and discussed below] we're going on the estate now and other kids are coming up to us...They want us to do something with them and you get a little bit of the Pied Piper complex, people are actually seeking you out...The other most important thing is that working for...social services you only tend to do a little bit and your patch can get lost in the great scheme of things, whereas...it may sound big-headed, but I actually feel that I make a difference down there...

The Blank Street group had previously 'crashed' a residential in the Lake District, organised by a previous staff group, by spectacularly anti-social and potentially dangerous behaviour. 'They were a threatening group', but the new staff decided to try to work with them, first on a fishing trip and then, when the opportunity arose after a cancellation, on a sailing ship used for training in coastal waters:

I mean we were saying it was a real risk, shall we take a risk and take the Blank Street kids on this?...I've got my hands on the report from A, and these lads were really...the report made them out to be dangerous hooligans, you know, sort of...knives in the back job, totally beyond any sort of control and...likely to bottle you if you tell them not to smoke a joint...I've never done this before and I was thinking it's going to be purgatory with you lot.

In the event,

It was the best residential I'd ever been on and I've been working in this game for twenty years...These kids from day one were brilliant, they took to it, they did everything that was asked of them, there was no drink or drugs...and they were with us all the time, we'd have known if any of them had smoked a joint...The project was really important because we got them excited about it...the captain of the ship at the end said they were the best group they'd had out this year.

The workers tried to find out, after the trip, what had made these young men behave so differently from their previous fearsome reputation. The answer from the young people was that the workers had delivered what they had promised, 'and I think they held that fairly high'. Every other agency 'had written them off'; they had all been excluded from school, and were at odds with the police and with the respectable adult world as a whole. (With the non-respectable adult world they had some affinity, since some were following in their fathers' footsteps in becoming known as members of an established gang.) The capacity of an experience like the sailing trip to bring about change, and the precarious nature of this change, its vulnerability to the social pressures which create 'gangs' of hard and anti-social young men in the first place, emerge from the workers' account of the young people's behaviour on board the ship and as they returned home:

...they were down in the galley, been cooking a meal, a group of them - they'd got things together, they were playing instruments, they were playing Bob Marley songs and miming to them...and they were basically little boys which is what they really were, and they dropped the big hard macho...image, and just reverted to - they were just spontaneous little boys having fun. I mean we're talking about sixteen or seventeen year-olds, and...on the ship they didn't need to have that big protective armour against the world...it was a great leap in their self-esteem.

...the swearing went down to next to nothing...they stopped the usual male banter of you have to put everybody down all the time...For me clearly it brought home the whole business about how young men's image of themselves as males and masculinity is such a root cause of...nasty aggressive behaviour...

Environment has something to do with it as well, being away from the usual life and in an environment where they can prove themselves without kicking shit out of somebody...You could actually see that, as we drove

back, this sounds really silly...as we were still miles away...we were listening to music, listening to Bob Dylan, Doors, Pink Floyd, all hippy music, not by our choice, by the way, they wanted this stuff on. As we got closer...it went to the acid, the rap stuff, gang rap...You could see them, they were physically pumping themselves up, and it got more boisterous - we're back, the Blank Street boys are back, and it was like animals going back into their territory, and pumping themselves up ready to be back to the hard men again.

The stress in this account on masculinity and territoriality accurately identifies a major challenge for long-term crime prevention efforts (Newburn and Stanko, 1994; Braithwaite and Daly, 1994), but there were signs from this project that even the quite modest resources of the Youth Action Scheme might make a lasting difference, perhaps by helping these young men through a crucial phase of the maturation process. When they returned from the sailing trip, the workers were afraid that the young people might be so 'hyper' that they could land in immediate trouble. This did not happen, and the project was able to continue its work with the group, through lower-key sailing activities on a local reservoir and other attempts to build on the positive experience which the group had shared. These included preparing an exhibition, including a video of the sailing trip, which was presented to local councillors and representatives of various agencies in the Town Hall. The agency representatives included workers from a neighbourhood centre from which the young people had previously been banned. There was much favourable comment on the improvement in their behaviour and attitudes, not least from parents, who remarked on their enthusiasm for the activities to which they had been newly introduced. The chief superintendent of police reported a 50% decrease in juvenile nuisance in the area in which the gang had been such a threatening presence, a figure later repeated in the local press, which also quoted the vice-chair of the local tenants' association as saying what a difference the project had made: instead of being 'intimidating, frightening, staring at everybody', they were 'actually quite helpful now, actually quite pleasant'.

One way in which the workers hoped they might be helpful was in working with younger people in the area into which the project hoped to expand its work towards the end of the Scheme. As to the costs of the project, one worker, referring to a residential weekend in Bowness which had cost £600, suggested that a reasonable comparison would be with the costs of 'two appropriate adults and three emergency duty team workers trying to place kids who've been in cells on a Saturday night'. To this might be added the cost of residential care once a place has been found. Although comparisons of costs and cost-effectiveness estimates in the field of crime prevention are notoriously difficult to make convincingly, there seems little doubt that a successful project such as this would emerge with credit from a cost-benefit analysis which made some reasonable assumptions about what the alternatives might have been. This is another answer to the critics of holidays for hooligans.

We have spent some time describing the work of this project because it shows vividly how the Youth Action Scheme could encourage new and imaginative ways

of working and professionally informed risk-taking with a group which undoubtedly met the criteria for targeting under the Scheme (which was, indeed, at the 'heavy' end of the at risk continuum). It was also among those which took seriously the need to evaluate their work in a self-critical way which could be convincing to outsiders, the issue to which we now turn.

Evaluation and monitoring

'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer
(Francis Bacon)

The extent to which youth workers shared Pilate's cynicism about the possibility of knowledge of the truth was perhaps the biggest surprise we met in the course of the evaluation. In saying this, we do not mean to deny the real difficulties associated with measuring the success of crime prevention efforts, which are extensively discussed in the specialist literature (e.g. Berry and Carter, 1992; Honess et al., 1993; Tilley, 1995). Essentially, the problem is that, in the words of one youth service manager, 'There are too many moving parts - you can say *ceteris paribus* [other things equal], but they never are.' But the fact that something is difficult does not make it impossible, nor does it mean that there is no point in trying to overcome the difficulty. Our surprise at the resistance to the idea of systematic monitoring and evaluation, and the denial that it was either possible or desirable, which we found among some (not all) project workers, was all the greater because of our awareness of how preoccupied other social agencies have become, as a result of pressure from central government, with measures of performance, performance indicators, targets, key output areas and associated objectives, and the like (Clarke *et al.*, 1994). Somehow, it seems, the youth service has remained - or at least had remained until the Youth Action Scheme - largely immune to such pressures. In arguing that it is now time for the service to take monitoring and evaluation more seriously we are not suggesting for a moment that it should become obsessed by these at the expense of service delivery, as some agencies have tended to become (Nellis, 1995; Vanstone, 1995). It is possible, in the name of alleged efficiency, to make an unhelpful fetish of performance mea-surement, and the youth service stands a better chance of avoiding this risk if it is able to develop and build into routine practice its own externally convincing ways of assessing its work than if it waits for measures to be imposed from outside (Millar, 1995; McRoberts and Leitch, 1995; Davies and Norton, 1996).

Some of the genuine problems in measuring the effectiveness of a crime prevention project seem to have been recognised by the team of inspectors who reported on the Youth Action Scheme's first year (Department for Education, 1994). In specifying what they expected of projects, they emphasised recording and monitoring of activities (process questions) rather than evaluation (outcome questions), thus placing themselves alongside many others in preferring what have been called 'virtual outputs' (in effect, inputs) to outputs or outcomes as usually understood (Humphrey and Pease 1992). Even so some of what the inspectors wanted, such as 'hard evidence' of 'personal, social and educational development', seemed likely to be beyond the capacity of individual projects, especially given their reliance on sessional workers,

unless they were given some support from outside. It was with this in mind that, at the invitation of the Scheme's managers, we became involved in something akin to action research, in devising and proposing to project workers a simple means of 'profiling' young people's progress during the course of their participation in a project. The idea of profiling, derived from education, seemed to us likely to be acceptable to youth workers, as it is really only a means of doing more systematically what they have always claimed to be doing anyway, in developmental group work; and we took care to make the profiling instrument as user-friendly as possible (Broadfoot, 1986; Garforth and Macintosh, 1986; Hitchcock, 1986; Law, 1984).

Here we should stress again that some project workers had no difficulty with the idea of profiling, used it as we had hoped, and seemed to find it helpful. Others, however, remained unconvinced and suspicious until the end of the Scheme. The idea of trying systematically to record changes in young people's attitudes and behaviour seemed associated in their minds with an undesirable interest in regulation and control; it was said to be stigmatising and objectifying, a denial of individual uniqueness, an unacceptable attempt to reduce the complex processes of personal development to a series of dehumanising numbers. This was not in fact what we were proposing, but repeated assurances of this were unpersuasive; we thought, at one of the project workers' quarterly meetings, that agreement had been reached that they all should at least try out the proposed profiling form, only to be told at the next meeting that this was not so, that everything was still up for discussion, and that some workers would go their own way come what might. They were perfectly used to some forms of monitoring (such as of attendance rates and expenditure), but continued, apparently, to see profiling as an alien imposition which, for hard-to-pin-down reasons, was inherently at odds with youth service values and practices. Alternatively, it was said to be totally subjective (and therefore totally invalid, as if professional judgement should count for nothing) or totally impossible, because of the transitory nature of young people's contact with projects, or the pressures of other work.

While we do not deny the reality of practical difficulties, it is also the case that all the projects worked with at least some young people on a regular basis, and therefore could feasibly have tried to record change over their period of attendance in some reasonably systematic way. Our view is that resistance to profiling was closely associated with resistance to the aspects of the Youth Action Scheme which brought the youth service closer to an overtly controlling role. Whether or not this is an inevitable development over the next few years (and the increasing incorporation of youth work into inter-agency initiatives suggests that it may be), it still seems essential that the service should begin to find ways of justifying its existence which rely on something more susceptible to external validation than the intuitive ('it just feels right') hunches of workers. This need not entail an unhealthy preoccupation with Key Performance Indicators and the like; it does not even entail believing that everything can be measured. The national evaluation team, struck by the same phenomenon of resistance to the idea of measuring effectiveness, concluded that the only reason that the youth service had so far escaped the pressures experienced

by other agencies was that it was so small that it had hitherto not been noticed (personal communication). This happy obscurity is unlikely to persist - and certainly will not persist if the service becomes more involved in higher-profile inter-agency initiatives.

In addition to selective individual profiling and thorough recording of the development of groups, projects were asked to give careful accounts of the context in which they were working, so that important influences from the local environment could be identified (for example, the ready access young people in one area had to cheap beer imported from France was highly relevant to their receptiveness to what the project had to offer). They were also asked to use external sources of evidence from other agencies' figures and impressions, steering groups, and the young people themselves, and it was stressed that 'soft' evidence could be as valid as the apparently harder data of, for example, crime and nuisance reports. From the reports we have seen, projects had no problems with the latter two types of evidence, and in most cases were able to produce positive accounts from the police and other agencies of the effects of their work (or at least of changes which could reasonably be claimed as effects). They were not, therefore, opposed in all circumstances to all forms of evaluation.

Despite the problems we have described, it was the view of service managers towards the end of the Scheme that the interest in monitoring and evaluation which the Youth Action Scheme had prompted in Lancashire counted among the permanent gains from the projects. Managers were fully aware that the service was likely to face increasing demands to demonstrate effectiveness, in the context of stringent restrictions on local authority spending and the absence of the kind of automatic support at central government level for youth work as an unquestionably good thing which it had once been possible to take for granted (Smith, 1995). The fact that the Youth Action Scheme projects were required to be more focused in their work than the service has traditionally been allowed for the specification of tighter objectives, and therefore for more accurate assessment of the extent to which they were achieved. Some projects at least were able to adapt their recording and monitoring so that they were relevant to the particular aims of the Scheme, and to use their links with other agencies to produce useful data on outcomes. In these cases, the expectation of closer self-monitoring ceased to feel like an imposition from an unsympathetic external authority; instead it enabled workers to under-stand their own practice better, to identify what it was in their work which had made a difference, and to begin to feel a new confidence about what they could achieve. All these new skills and interests should be generalisable to other fields of youth work practice, if it is right that in future much of this is likely to be problem-centred and focused rather than generic.

Conclusions

Despite a feeling at the end of the third year of funding (and well before the end of it in some cases) that the Youth Action Scheme was losing impetus, that other priorities were displacing risk of offending, and that the service's reorganisation had left the projects marginal to the main thrust of youth service activity, we believe that the best

work of the Lancashire projects showed that youth workers could engage successfully with difficult and demanding groups of young people and demonstrate positive results in terms of crime reduction. Even although the end of funding, combined with the other pressures the service was experiencing, seems to have meant that 'exit strategies' amounted to little more than, at best, finding ways of retaining some contact with the young people the projects had targeted, or more accurately with their successors, we also believe, with the service's managers, that these achievements can and should have an impact on the development of youth work. The potentially long-term gains ('potentially', because whether they turn out to be so depends on dissemination of ideas and skills) include skills in making inter-agency co-operation work, greater understanding of the youth service by other agencies, greater understanding of other agencies by the youth service, increased mutual respect, experience of working successfully with young people whom it would be easy to regard as beyond anything the service could offer, skills in managing budgets, and a new sensitivity to the importance of monitoring and evaluation. Less tangibly, at least some workers acquired a new confidence in their ability to help even the least promising of young people make changes in their lives, and to articulate to others what the youth service has to offer which other agencies cannot. It will become more, not less, important to retain this distinctive contribution if, as is likely, the service is increasingly involved in joint initiatives with other agencies. The service need not fear incorporation into the agenda of others so long as it retains its unique identity, commitment and skills; after all, the whole point of inter-agency work is that each participant brings something different to the process. It should not mean that youth workers become police officers (or vice versa).

We want to conclude with the words of one of the workers on the project which dared to take the Blank Street gang sailing, as he tried to convey what the Youth Action Scheme had made possible, and what he thought its long-term benefits might be, not only for the young people themselves but for the wider community:

> *Without the Youth Action money we could never have even thought about starting this type of work, absolutely...no possibility. We could perhaps have put in one or two sessions of youth work a week maybe, worked out on one residential, which...would have done nothing. So we've had £18,000 for the year, we've actually used a lot of residential work out of that...because we've found it one of the most effective ways of working with them. Increasingly challenging activities and then this other phase of it is trying to move them back...I don't know if rehabilitation with the community is the right word, it probably is that, acceptance, to build those bridges between those young people and the community they are a part of. They actually feel people start to feel all right about them and they all right about the community. Now...when the money is pulled, the plug is pulled, I don't know what, but...it is a small amount of money, and if it could be demonstrated that what it is saving in terms of actually diverting those young people from crime...it is money incredibly well spent.*

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YOUTH WORK

Time for Another Government Review?

JOHN HOLMES

Introduction

The General Election in 1997 is raising both hopes and fears about the future of youth work in Britain. At the time of writing the result of the election is not clear but the position of young people is a major policy issue and those of us committed to youth work and the Youth Service are arguing for an increased role. Certainly campaigns to promote youth work are needed for in some parts of Britain Youth Services are so reduced they are hardly recognisable as Youth Services. The 'Agenda for a Generation' document and following campaign from the UK Youth Work Alliance has had a considerable impact in the period leading up to the election but this article will argue that it is necessary to build on this by pushing for another government review of youth work following the election. The case for this will be made by reference to the period at the end of the 1950s which led up to both the 1959 General Election and the publication of 'The Youth Service in England and Wales' in 1960 (commonly known as the Albemarle Report after the Chairperson, Lady Albemarle). The Albemarle Report has arguably had more impact than any other document in the twentieth century in promoting youth work, through the Youth Service, and by reference to additional historical archives from the Community and Youth Workers Union it is possible to understand why it was so influential. This article argues we need to learn from this period in how to promote youth work.

The Albemarle Report and Political Influence

One measure of political influence is to look at the extent to which writing and other forms of lobbying leads to inclusion in party manifestos at the time of General Elections. It will be instructive to study the manifestos in 1997, when published, to see if youth work and Youth Service get clear commitments but I doubt if they will compare favourably to the commitments in 1959. Short 4 page documents about all aspects of party policy included the following statements and pledges.

> *Two out of three families in the country now own TV, one in three has a car or motor-cycle, twice as many are taking holidays away from home - those are welcome signs of the increasing enjoyment of leisure. They are the fruits of our policies. But at the same time all this represents a challenge to make the growth of leisure more purposeful and creative, especially for young people.*

> *Our policy of opportunity will therefore be extended. In particular we propose to re-organise and expand the Youth Service. Measures will be taken to improve Youth Leadership and the provision of attractive youth clubs, more playing field and better facilities for sports... (from 'The next five years,' Conservative Party Manifesto, 1959).*

The 'You've Never had it so good' tone of the Conservative Manifesto was not sur-
prisingly replaced by a more critical tone in the Labour manifesto (after 8 years of
Conservative rule).

> *The Youth Service, which should provide recreation for boys and girls leaving
> school, has, year after year, been starved of funds. Many youth club
> premises are dingy and unattractive, trained leaders are too few, and facilities
> for sports and games are quite inadequate.*
>
> *Over the next five years we have got to cater for a million more teenagers
> leaving school. Our new Sports Council will go some way to meet their
> needs. But we shall also require*
>
> *1 A sustained drive to re-equip the whole service.*
> *2 A rapid increase of apprenticeship and other forms of training.*
> *3 Economic expansion sufficient to provide a million new jobs.*
>
> *We are also convinced that the affairs of the community will benefit from
> more active participation by young people. Among the many proposals
> which Labour will consider is the lowering of the voting age.... (from
> 'Britain belongs to you', Labour Party Manifesto, 1959)*

Although the differences in emphasis are interesting, more important is the clear
commitment in both parties to growth. How did this come about and what can we
learn for to-day about how to influence government policy?

These manifestos were mainly influenced by the work of the Albemarle Committee
set up in November, 1958 but which did not report to Parliament until February
1960 after the General Election (and Conservative victory). However although the
timing of the Review was fortuitous in terms of influencing political policy it is
clear from looking at the archives of the period how much other activity was going on
at the time which preceded Albemarle. This activity went alongside and combined
with the Review, and built up into pressure from a range of sources for change and
development of a moribund Youth Service. The achievement of getting this com-
mitment from reluctant politicians and civil servants resulted from the work of
many people, from young people, from part-time and full-time workers and officers,
from trainers, from local authority and voluntary sector services, the support of
academics and journalists, and politicians from a wide range of political views.

Just in the period 1959-60 immediately preceding and running alongside the
Albemarle Committee deliberations the CYWU archives include 25 documents all
promoting the work and trying to influence policy (CYWU archives). These are
mainly from the professional bodies which preceded the union. The National
Association of Youth Leaders and Organisers (NAYLO) appears to have been the
most active producing 16 documents in the form of policy statements, presidential
addresses, annual reports, press releases. The alternative body, the National
Association of Local Education Authority Youth Leaders, which emerged out of the
small local authority service (and eventually merged with NAYLO to form the

Community and Youth Service Association) was also active as were Youth Service Officers. What is striking is how these groupings managed to influence and work alongside journalists (like Ray Gosling) and academics (such as Leslie Button, McAllister Brew and a young Bernard Davies) to produce detailed and well-researched policy proposals which fed into the Albemarle Committee. Examples of these were Lesley Button's analysis of the shortage of full-time youth leaders, (and how their training could relate to both social work and schoolteaching) and NAYSO and NAYLEAL proposals for the establishment of proper pay and conditions, which influenced the setting up of the JNC following the Albemarle Report.

As well as the detailed nature of the proposals what is also clear is the diversity of views and how those involved managed to come together, overcome their differences at least for the time, and speak with a united voice and were listened to. This led to the greatest change and addition of resources to the Youth Service occurring in the early 1960s.

Political Influence since Albemarle
Could this also happen in the late 1990s? Probably the most significant development recently has been the 'Agenda for a Generation' document which at the invitation of the NYA managed to get agreement from both workers and employers, in the voluntary and statutory sector, and in all 4 nations (called the UK Youth Work Alliance) for a 14 page statement on 'building effective youth work'. This document draws on and builds on 2 other important statements - 'Youth Work and Community Work into the 21st Century', published by CYWU in 1992, and the 'Planning for a Sufficient Youth Service' published in 1994. 'Agenda for a Generation' was launched at Westminster and then promoted at the TUC and party political conferences in September and October 1996 with the clear aim to influence the political agenda towards youth work. Despite the achievement in getting agreement from the diversity of organisations in the Youth Service this article will argue that this campaign needs to build on this achievement, that on its own it is unlikely to be sufficient. What is needed now is a push for another government - backed review. The call is not for Lady Albemarle to come out of her retirement but for a major review along the model provided by the Albemarle Report.

But first what are the blocks for youth and community workers promoting their work on their own, and why is such self-promotion likely to be insufficient on its own? The work of self-promotion, of united voices in collective action should not be under-estimated as any good youth and community worker knows. The evidence from the archives preceding the Albemarle report is that it was only the pressure resulting from a considerable amount of thinking and campaigning that led to the review being set up in the first place, and that this work largely set the agenda for the review.

Despite the success of these Youth and Community Workers groups in this work it cannot be said from the perspective of the late 1990s that self-promotion and collective activity have been successful despite the fact that influencing policy is part and parcel

of the job. In recent years it has been more a question of minimising cuts. One reason for this is that it is easier for youth and community workers, as with other professionals, to enable client groups to express their voices and demands than it is to express their own demands. It is a fine line between say, working with a group of women to argue for a residential event and arguing directly with an employer not to cut the part-time hours budget. The two could be directly linked in that without the part-time hours the residential could not run, but advocating for and with the people you are working with and arguing directly for more resources is the fine line between serving others and self-interest. There is evidence that youth and community workers find it difficult to act in their self-interest, particularly when it comes to promoting their careers (Holmes,1980). This would suggest a government review with the perspective of external scrutiny has the advantage of others outside the service arguing for the work and so avoids the potential criticism of self-interest.

However, the major reason why youth and community workers have not been more effective in resisting cuts despite considerable work over the last 30 years must be down to the fact that those in power have not wanted to listen, neither to the internal demands of the Service nor to the government reviews that have been set up. Since Albemarle the reviews that have occurred have not had the same impact. The Milson-Fairbairn report (Youth and Community Work in the 1970s) was not accepted by the Heath Government of 1970-4 but did have some influence on bringing a community dimension to youth work. The Thompson Report of 1982 (Experience and Participation) took the Service back to a youth work perspective but again resulted in little more than new concepts as resource issues were largely ignored. Since Thompson there have been 15 years without a review, when at one time people expected a review about every 10 years. The only major government influence has been the Ministerial conferences of the early 1990s but the 'Towards a Core Curriculum' initiative is now looked back on as more damaging than helpful. The attempt to agree a core curriculum in the Youth Service following the National Curriculum developments in schooling was resisted by many and exposed the differences in the service.

Why has the Youth Service been left by successive governments to decline in importance? It would be easy to answer that the block to progress has been Margaret Thatcher or Thatcherism. Certainly the omens were not good when as Secretary of State for Education in the Heath Government of 1970-4 she refused to accept the recommendations of the Milson-Fairbairn report, and clearly any attempt to simply argue for more resources in local authority youth services in the 1980s has been blocked when one of the main points in the government agenda has been to cut back on the local state, in particular those left-wing authorities most likely to support Youth Service initiatives (eg. the former Inner London and Sheffield Local Education Authorities).

But it is too simplistic to blame Thatcherism for the generally moribund state of affairs. Other areas of government sponsored activity have undergone review after review, often wishing they could be left alone! The result has often not been to the

liking of professionals in schools, the health service, social work, local government generally, but at least being in the spotlight has emphasised the importance of their sphere of activity. Young people have remained important to the government and the media, if often for reasons of concerns about 'threatening or troublesome youth' and the dilemma of what to do with successive generations of young people wanting to enter the job market. Clearly the Youth Service does not fit easily with these agendas and so it was that reviews and policy were developed on youth employment, youth training, youth crime but the Youth Service has been increasingly marginalised.

But it has to be recognised that these agendas have always been there in government policy and whereas at some times the Youth Service has found a path through the minefields of the social control agenda to argue for youth work outcomes this has not occurred to the same extent in the Thatcher/Major era. The key question is how best to influence policy in a new government which is likely to be keen to keep strict limits on public spending and is likely to have a strong social control agenda for young people.

Government Review or not?

It could be argued that whatever the advantages of the more rigorous external scrutiny of government reviews that to successfully argue for another review would result in more rhetoric than reality, or worse still would result in shooting the Service in the foot and lead to more cutbacks. Clearly a review is a risk because it opens up the debate about the importance of the Service with no guarantee of either more resources or answers to key issues that are the ones wanted by the Service. For those in the work fighting to maintain quality in the face of cutbacks year after year it is clear that the major issue is resources and so it is not surprising that the 'adequacy' or 'sufficiency' debate gathered momentum in the mid 1990s until partially blocked by the government. This debate about what is sufficient has been renewed in the 'Agenda for a Generation' document now that it seems the NYA can speak more openly about the problem of resources (since ceasing to be a quango). However the question still remains for politicians and others: 'sufficient to do what?' Demands for growth always beg the question of 'in which direction?' This is particularly so for the late 1990s.

The 'Agenda for a Generation' document cannot answer this question of direction. There is mention of a range of current issues (unemployment, lack of housing, poverty, crime) but cannot in a short statement analyse how youth work needs to change to respond effectively to these issues which face young people. What is missing is any analysis of the changing position of young people as we approach the millennium. The strength of a review like Albemarle is that it started from the position that young people were going to be different in the 1960s and so the Youth Service had to adapt to those changes.

To summarise the advantages of a government backed review are that it provides the credibility that derives from rigorous external scrutiny, and would in being an

extensive review allow for analysis of the current historical situation of young people. It clearly is important that a steer is given as to the direction of youth work. In so doing the dilemmas facing the work will have to be laid open to critical analysis and risk differences in emphasis leading to open conflict between different interests in the field of youth and community work. However if the field really believes in the benefits of the youth work approach then surely the risks of open scrutiny are less than the risks of trying to hide differences, and in the process risk being unconvincing about the potential of youth work. What does seem important is that, as with Albemarle, the field provides the parameters for the discussion, even if any recommendations will depend on the research and analysis of others.

Issues for Government Reviews
To try to define the key issues facing youth work to-day that could be analysed in more detail in a review inevitably means revisiting some of the key issues of the past. It is reassuring to realise that issues about defining the boundaries of youth work, about partners with other occupations or professions, about the relationship between the statutory and voluntary sectors, about the role of training, about the extent to which youth work is leisure or education based, about the voluntarism of young people in being involved - all these have been central to the debates in previous government reviews, in particular the Albemarle Report. The dry style of government reports tends to hide the passionate debate that led to the few paragraphs about an issue in the final report. The archive documents reveal the strength of feeling, and how at times there were fundamental differences which were resolved, often in a compromise, before or in the government review.

All that can be done here is to point to what seem to be some of the key issues, that have been written about much more extensively elsewhere. The aim is to show how there are links and parallels in the Albemarle period, and to remember that then it was possible to resolve differences in a way that diverse interest groups felt that genuine progress had been made.

The Statutory/Voluntary 'Partnership'
It might seem that the current tensions in the 'partnership' between the statutory and voluntary sectors in the Youth Service are particularly strong with the voluntary sector able to argue that they should have a stronger voice with the reduction in local authority Youth Services, and that too much of present thinking in the NYA and elsewhere is geared to the relatively small statutory sector. From reading the archive documents from the 1950s the tension was as strong then with the voluntary sector making a strong bid through the King George V Jubilee Trusts study of 'Citizens of Tomorrow' (1955) to argue for their 'Youth Affairs' model. There was considerable concern about the dangers to young people of wholly commercial provision and the risks of juvenile delinquency with the proposed ending of National Service for 18 year olds. The tone of social rescue and of resisting the secularisation of a Christian society runs through this report, and was a powerful establishment argument for the development of the Youth Service. Despite the Conservative Government, and much support from back bench Conservative MPs

and from the House of Lords this argument did not result in more resources following its publication in 1955. However this report was an important influence leading up to the Albemarle Review. An uneasy alliance was formed with the newer, and still relatively weak local authority youth services which took a more secular and more educationally based argument for youth work. At this time there were still close links to the schools service which resulted in considerable concern with parity of esteem and professional issues such as training, pay and conditions, and a qualified full-time workforce.

Now that the recommendations about training, pay and conditions, and qualifications from Albemarle have been put into effect, and refined over the years, the specific issues are somewhat different. There remain concerns however about the priority given to full-time, part-time and volunteer workers over training and a clear difference of emphasis between the voluntary sector preferring a NVQ model with, it is hoped, national credibility and the local authority sector wanting to try to maintain a professional led and delivered training for all workers. This is clearly an issue that could benefit from external scrutiny and a steer from a government review.

Youth Work and Youth Service

Beneath the specific issue of youth work NVQs lie issues about professionalisation (Banks.1996 p.23) and the fragmentation of youth work. The fundamental one is what is meant by youth work and how does it relate to Youth Service? In the 1950s the 'Citizens of Tomorrow' report in taking a Youth Affairs approach took a wide definition and discussed schooling, employment and many forms of leisure provision. They could not however convince the Government that the development of the Youth Service was critical until Albemarle took a narrower, education-based view of the work. This debate seems just as critical to-day. The effects of reduced funding for mainstream Youth Services (both local authority and voluntary sectors), and the shift to competitive funding for short-term, usually issue-focused projects, has already resulted in the decimation of the Youth Service in many parts of the country. On the other hand there has been a growth of work with young people in 'charities' such as the YMCA, Rank Foundation, Barnardos, Childrens Society, National Childrens Homes, Save the Children and also in a wide range of more locally based projects. The term 'youth worker' rarely appears in their job titles and it is even more problematic whether they would see themselves as part of the 'Youth Service'. This work with young people is focused around issues such as health, housing/homelessness, crime, unemployment, environment, arts or is targeted at specific groups of young people such as black people, young women, or disabled young people. The jobs are often short-term (and sometimes part-time) and the frequent lack of proper pay and conditions reflects the insecure sources (charities, lottery, SRB etc.)

The advantages of this form of 'youth work' would seem to lie in the potential to meet, and show it can meet, clear targets about the problems in the transition to adulthood. Such targets are set by those who want to challenge the discrimination and barriers faced by young people but also by those who want young people to

conform to an adult society which is resisting adapting to the challenge faced by a new generation. Clearly the levels of youth unemployment, homelessness, drugs/alcohol misuse, alienation from school, youth crime need to be addressed as do the levels of discrimination faced by young people (through racism, sexism, homophobia, and mainly as a result of the effects of inequality, poverty and simply being young). This demands that youth workers decide if the targets are appropriate to the principles of the work. (Jeffs & Smith, 1994, p.29). The potential is also for politicians and funders to secure their outcomes. However there are real questions to ask about whether the form of funding of such diverse projects is the most effective way to meet these outcomes. Short-term funding of projects staffed by workers who come together from diverse backgrounds, with different types and levels of training, and different agendas would seem to be a risky venture. On the other hand, many in generic, open youth work are starved of funds, struggling in run-down centres. These workers have both the time and much greater common background in terms of training about what youth work is about, but not the funds to carry out their agendas.

If the question was directly addressed of where to target limited resources, and what made the most effective use of those resources then this would have to be related to the purpose of youth work. Should the Youth Service principles of open provision for all young people based on educational aims, with young people defining their needs, be paramount? Or should particular groups who are defined as 'at risk' or 'disadvantaged' be targeted and a variety of 'contracts' be made to ensure a specific curriculum is delivered (e.g. according to Health of the Nation, or crime reduction targets)? Answers to these questions will affect the extent of the commitment to the principles of a voluntary relationship (Smith, 1994, p23) and of the purpose or identity of youth workers. From the perspective of the training agencies it is becoming increasingly difficult to prepare people for 'youth work' posts when the range of posts are so different and the field is becoming increasingly fragmented.

Young People and Policy in the 1950s and Today
This debate must be put into the context of the current situation of young people. A similar debate occurred at the time of Albemarle with the rise of youth culture and commercial provision being targeted at young people. Then there was the question of trying to compete with commercial provision, and whether to try to attract all young people or primarily those who were less affluent, more disadvantaged and potentially more threatening. The Albemarle Review answered in favour of youth work for all young people but the majority of the investment went into new youth centres on the new local authority housing estates being built at that time which were mainly for working-class people. With greater inequality today, and with many more young people marginalised by lack of jobs and money, maybe there should be a different answer.

The social context of the Albemarle Report is interesting to compare to that of today. Then there was concern about the significant increase in the number of young

people, as a result of 'the bulge' in the birth rate after the second world war. It could be argued that the biggest difference compared to today was the low unemployment rate for young people and the opportunities available for young people to develop their own life-styles with their new higher levels of disposable income. But this was seen by many adults as a threat and likely to lead to youth activity which emphasised the 'generation gap', and even promoted youth crime and vandalism. Taken together with the ending of National Service there was a 'moral panic' about the threat of young people which is not that different from today.

The major difference in social policy terms was the consensus then regardless of party, about the value of the growing Welfare State which today has fragmented into party policy differences about where and how it is best to intervene to back up the market economy and the family. The policy steer which could come from a government review would rightly be influenced by the policy of that government. The difficulty that the Youth Service faces in this can be illustrated by looking at current Labour Party policy. Conference statements that the priorities must be 'Education, education and education' would seem to suggest that the Youth Service should emphasise its long-standing educational credentials. However closer inspection reveals that schooling in particular primary schooling, is the priority with more resources to be committed to nursery provision. The position of older young people is also a priority but it would seem that this is mainly about improved vocational training. It is not clear how the Youth Service would fit with this, nor with the harder edges of new Labour about faster, tougher responses to persistent young offenders.

It is in this harsher context that the Youth Service must argue for and be seen by others to have viable, effective alternatives to challenging social exclusion arising from unemployment, low educational attainment and youth crime. The case must be made that informal educational approaches are more effective (and cheaper) than methods which confirm social exclusion.

The 'Agenda for a Generation' document makes these points but it is almost as if the potential of youth work is so great in terms of developing the capacities of young people that the Youth Service is in danger of promising so much that it is bound to fail with the limited resources at its disposal. What would seem to be needed is clear evidence of in what areas youth work approaches are most effective and target resources into those areas, unless there can be enough resources injected across the board to ensure 'sufficiency' for all young people. Maybe one answer to this dilemma is that it should be openly acknowledged that it is the voluntary sector who have both the major role and greater success in open, generic youth work; and that the more professionalised local authority services should use their specialist skills to achieve targeted outcomes for particular groups of young people. This would require new forms of 'partnership'.

Youth Service and Partnerships
The extent of the influence of youth work to make a clear case also can be influenced by the ability to work in partnership with related occupations. Within local

authorities the youth services often complain of being the Cinderella service, and this often means being overshadowed by larger, more powerful departments. This has often meant the schools service, and sometimes this has led to arguments to have Youth Service located in Leisure departments, or departments where youth work would have a higher profile, even if in a smaller department. Whether in education departments or not youth work has often been linked up with related occupations such as community work, community education, playwork, and adult education. The extent to which this is an advantage or a disadvantage to youth work has varied according to the local authority. On the one hand, to have links to services working in similar ways with different target groups can give a higher profile to informal or community education approaches in comparison to other larger departments. On the other hand, these occupations are competing with each other for strictly limited resources.

At the local authority level there have been different outcomes to where youth work is located, and alongside which other occupations. However at the national level in England, both in terms of the voluntary sector and in terms of the National Youth Agency there is a commitment to keep youth work distinct, and move towards a youth affairs approach. In Scotland, on the other hand, there is a clear commitment to a community education approach which inter-relates youth work, community work and adult education. The extent to which youth work should build partnerships depends on one's view of the nature and future of youth work. There are no easy answers, and the local experience of partnerships will inevitably influence the answers reached. The Albemarle Report argued for a distinct youth Service, working within LEAs whereas Milson-Fairbairn argued for youth work and community development to work together. It would seem appropriate this issue is addressed again in the new contexts of the late 1990s.

Conclusions
This article can only start the process of suggesting an agenda for a government review of youth work. Others will have different agendas and it is right that the field of youth work should largely influence the agenda even if they cannot determine the outcomes. Compared to the Albemarle period it would seem that workers in this field will need to be more active since the decline of the Conservative establishment who support a one nation approach and backed youth services as one way of achieving this.

It is to be hoped that the role of in-depth scrutiny and research is not now seen as less relevant than in the past. In the 1950s the names of Leslie Button, McAllister Brew and a young Bernard Davies gave an academic credibility to the moves to promote youth work, by their research evidence. This was before the development of a national network of professional qualifying youth work courses within higher education. To-day considerable thinking, although not enough, has occurred in books, and in the pages of Youth and Policy about the direction of youth work (some examples are included in the references). The perspectives of academics, researchers and trainers are diverse, but important precisely because in analysing

developments and in preparing people to take their place within youth work academics and trainers are able to combine knowledge with critical analysis, if not from the outside, at least from the margins.

It is to be hoped that these perspectives will be listened to, and provide some external scrutiny about youth work. However the most effective way forward is through a Government review, along the lines of Albemarle, which includes both insiders and outsiders to youth work and can look afresh at the real dilemmas faced in the way forward.

The alternative would seem to rely, to use current jargon, on 'spinning' youth work into a new government's agenda. All the hard work and well constructed arguments depend on getting the right exposure at the right time. It is surely too risky a business to rely on hoping fringe meetings do not clash, or that there will not be another issue which downgrades youth work from the fickle perspective of the media.

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Acknowledgement

The CYWU archives, particularly for the 1950s period proceding and during the Albemarle Review, have been a valuable source for considering how government policy is influenced. A history of the period which draws on these and other archive material remains to be written.

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YOUTH WORK

No Time for Another Government Review!

TOM WYLIE

A response to John Holmes

John Holmes' article 'Youth Work - Time for Another Government Review?' is a timely reminder of the need to build political support for youth work. Where we differ is that I see little benefit in another Government Review. I want to argue that 'Agenda for a Generation' (1996) has already pointed the direction for travel and won much support. 'Agenda for a Generation' is a unique document, the product of a remarkable consensus in youth-serving bodies across the entire United Kingdom and embracing local authorities, the voluntary sector and professional associations. It has won the formal support of the Local Authority Associations and has influenced policy in Labour and Liberal Democrats. It states the case for:

- an unequivocal statutory basis for youth work placing a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient youth services within their areas in partnership with voluntary organisations;

- consistent public funding for youth work, based on need and on development plans;

- a recognised distinctive place for youth work in delivering national programmes, for example in community service, health and training for employment;

- new machinery to co-ordinate national government's responsibilities for youth policy;

- improved arrangements for quality assurance, including a strengthening of Her Majesty's Inspectorate;

- a coherent framework of training and qualification for youth workers, whether full or part-time or volunteers; and

- a vibrant national infrastructure to support effective local youth work and to give a voice for young people themselves.

This set of actions, local and national, will ensure more responsive youth work and a better deal for our young people. Although *'Agenda for a Generation'* urges a more secure statutory basis for youth services, its authors see this as a necessary but not sufficient condition for improvement. Effective youth work also needs well-considered developmental planning, adequate resourcing, a coherent framework for training.

Life after Albemarle

As John Holmes indicates, the Albemarle Report (1960) did much to establish the basic infrastructure for a Youth Service - a building programme, professional training, a recognition of the need for different forms of practice, including detached work. Subsequent reports never matched this. Milson/Fairbairn (1969) was a sticking together of two separate enquiries and was woefully misinterpreted to create an obfuscating hybrid 'youth-and-community work' from which effective youth work,

in a range of contexts, is still struggling to escape. Thompson (1982) was chaired by a former Deputy Secretary of the (then) Department for Education and Science, with a DES secretariat and a hand-picked review group. Despite this impeccable official provenance its main recommendations were rejected by government. The National Advisory Council for Youth Service, spawned by Thompson and established in 1985, was bundled into touch by short-sighted DES officials just when it was getting into its stride. The Ministerial conferences (1989 - 1992) were expensive talking shops, diverting youth work into arcane discussions on a so-called 'core curriculum' and bequeathing a 'statement of purpose' shot through with reckless utopianism - 'the purpose of youth work is to redress all forms of inequality'.

In the light of this history of official reviewing over the last three decades it is hard to believe that John Holmes is urging us down the same road: the only one which has 'worked' is Albemarle and that was forty years ago, in profoundly different social circumstances.

Universality versus targeting

This is not to say that no form of review is necessary. There could well be a case for the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment examining the DfEE's stewardship of the Youth Service - a narrower task than reviewing the whole of youth policy or youth work. John Holmes rightly points to a number of areas where more detailed study and consensus-building would be useful: training would certainly be one of these, the balance between universal and targeted provision another.

No-one would wish to deny the benefits of good youth work to any young person who wants them. The Youth Service aspires to be open to all and certainly it can only proceed on the basis that young people are choosing to take part. There is a danger also that services which are designed only for the poor become poor services. But, in face of severely constrained resources, should there not be a greater measure of targeting on those young people most in need of experiences which promote their personal and social development? Such groups may include those growing up in areas of social and economic disadvantage, in rural isolation, or individuals who have faced disjunctures in their lives, for example by unemployment or by exclusion from school. This is not an argument for a youth policy based on pathology; rather it is making the case for greater equality and social justice. One of the consequences of the understandable commitment to universality has been the retention of rather rundown and ill-equipped buildings which have lost their attraction to youngsters even if they give adults the illusion that some facility still exists 'to keep them off the streets'. But they often tie up scarce resources for poor quality outcomes.

Youth policy

There is much to do to create an effective policy towards the young. For too many young people these last decades are the years which the locusts have eaten. 'If you require a monument look around you'. Look at the underinvestment in our education fabric; at how the public is being short-changed by a quango culture and the

Criminal Justice Act (which bears especially on the young). We have an overstretched prison system, incarcerating even more of our people; unemployment is regarded as a 'price worth paying'; we lack a coherent policy for the development of our young people. The heavens weep at this debasement of our culture; at the downgrading of our young; at the sheer scale of social exclusion. As recent reports indicate, the overall balance sheet for young people suggests that the 'terms of trade' have moved sharply against them over the past 20 years. In terms of direct and indirect transfers between generations there have been reductions in psychosocial security, wages, benefits, grants and allowances. Many of the services that provide directly for the young have not increased their share of resources. Responsive services, such as youth provision have, at best, had broadly level funding amid rising needs, alongside a growth in provision often designed to control and contain the young. Young people's positive achievements (more qualifications, longer time in education and training) are often taken for granted, while the media tend to focus on young people's negativity and politicians on their pathology. The young have borne too much the cost of structural change in both the economy and social norms about home stability and caring. Their transitions to adult life have become extended and problematic. All this is common ground and has, in the past year alone, been documented in a range of studies including those commissioned by the St George's House Working Group (1997), by the Carnegie Foundation (1997), by a variety of specialist groups, for example, on homelessness or crime. These offer 'the description of the historical situation' which John Holmes seeks: we don't need any more. They give the basis for advance on a whole set of youth policy issues and on their co-ordination.

Improving Youth Work
There is much to do also in youth work itself. Some features of youth work practice are not good enough. What is offered can lack breadth, a sense of progression and a responsiveness to differing needs. Too often it lacks relevance to the changing concerns and interests of young people. Youth work is often seen as rather low-level recreational provision or therapeutic conversations carried out around the pool table in careworn, shabby premises. Too much of it is not addressing directly enough the important educational agenda for personal and social development, nor encouraging young people to be both critical and creative in response to their experience and to the world around them. We need a good deal more arts work, video and music-making and desk-top publishing, to offer better opportunities for self-expression, group work and social education....

So, youth work needs to improve its practice, to sharpen its responsiveness towards those who will benefit most and to establish better partnerships. Youth services have always been a partnership between voluntary organisations and the state. John Holmes is right to argue that the roles and boundaries could be clarified. Local authorities still provide directly for young people, but no less important roles lie in the setting of standards, innovative project work, evaluation, co-ordination and setting up partnerships - taking the strategic view to ensure that needs are met.

This role is especially crucial post-16 where we have seen a marked atomisation of education and training provision. A number of local authorities are now engaged in reviewing their youth strategy. It is timely to do so. Beyond the structures and disputes about departmental location, urgent attention and greater intensity are needed in curriculum and staff development if quality in youth work is to be improved.

Youth work, undeniably, needs to win greater public commitment for its endeavours. To accomplish this requires those involved to be more articulate in describing youth work's distinctive goals and methods without resorting to a defensive preciousness or too much beguiling rhetoric. The headlines of 'Agenda for a Generation' need to be filled out, widened and deepened. What is most needed is the political will to move forward. 'Agenda for a Generation' has secured the backing of the Local Authority Associations as well as the broad youth field itself. Spare us any more official reviews - 'taking minutes and wasting years'. We cannot wait for action.

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'YOU LEARN IT FROM YOUR MATES, DON'T YOU?'

Young people's conversations about sex as a basis for informal peer education

BARBARA M WALKER

Introduction

Young people state that they learn much about sex from talking to each other. This paper reports on a qualitative research project undertaken in order to discover more about these conversations. The intention was to reflect types of interaction so that future peer education programmes could build on pre-existing patterns of informal information exchange. The paper gives a definition of 'peer education' in this instance. It considers what young people talk about during a conversation about sex, and what they omit; concluding that gender has a marked effect on the content of talk around sex. Possible matches between peer education and informal conversations are discussed, and limits to peer education suggested. The paper concludes with some policy implications.

Background

In recent years a number of factors have reinforced the need for effective sex education - primarily the growing concern about AIDS and teenage pregnancies, and an awareness of the failure of traditional methods of sex education (Reinish, 1991; RGOC, 1991). There is now evidence which suggests that sex education does not promote earlier or increased sexual activity but may, in fact, lead to an increased uptake of safer sex practices (Baldo et al, 1993; Ingham, 1997).

However, good practice in sex education can be difficult to deliver. There is widespread agreement that parents do not talk openly about sexual matters with their children (Frankham, 1992; HEA, 1994), but the current British political climate can appear to make effective sex education of the young by adults in other contexts a difficult business. Teachers can find the subject embarrassing (Thomson & Scott, 1992) and feel the need for further training (HEA, 1989). In addition, the demands of the National Curriculum have constrained the time available.

In surveys of sex education throughout this century, young people often cite their friends as being the most usual and most useful source of information on sex and sexuality (e.g. Exner, 1915; Ramsay, 1943; Schofield, 1965; Gagnon & Simon, 1974; Farrell, 1978; Allen, 1987; Reinish, 1991; Balding, 1994). However, little is known about the ways in which young people communicate with each other about sex, nor how educative these communications might be.

Nevertheless, these surveys are leading to a rapid growth in the number of peer education schemes in Britain (Frankham, 1994). These are programmes whereby young people are trained to inform their friends and fellow-students on the facts of safer sex and contraception; both formally in workshop formats and informally in

conversation. Peer education is seen as an economical and effective way of overcoming the inherent difficulties in the traditional teacher/pupil relationship (Finn, 1981), especially when tackling such problematic areas as behavioural change. Thus young people have come to be seen as a resource to educate others, rather than merely passive recipients of adult instruction (HEA, 1993). It is generally felt that these young people would be able to build on the pre-existing information networks, using commonly-accepted language and putting ideas across in commonly-used forms, thereby making sex education more relevant and accessible.

This study

The purpose of the qualitative research described in this paper (Walker, 1994) was to generate data on the content and manner of the conversations young people have about sex; to attempt to establish what is and what is not talked about, and to discover who is included in these conversations and who is not. It was hoped that the data thus generated would provide a research basis for the review and further development of peer education programmes.

The study was carried out in and around a small town in East Anglia. It involved a total of 61 young people between the ages of 13 and 23, of whom nine were trained peer educators.[1] Age, gender and social class were evenly represented in the sample. All the respondents were volunteers and none identified as gay.

The data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews which were audio-taped and transcribed. Although there was a check-list of subjects to be covered, this format allowed the young people to define what a conversation about sex meant to them and to describe in detail aspects that they considered important. Interviewees were asked to talk about their experience of sex education at school, from families etc., as well as their conversations with friends. This allowed a more complete picture of young people's sex education to be built up. Biographical case studies allowed the interviews to be understood in the context of the young people's lives as a whole.

The data were analysed using a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in which recurring themes were identified as they appeared in the data, using progressive focussing during the period of the study but also leaving space for new topics and ideas as they occurred. It is not suggested that the results of such a small, geographically-bounded study are directly transferable to all young people everywhere. The main intention of the study was not to test the 'truth' of statements in terms of how they accorded with others' experience, but to discover, through the medium of their own language, what these young persons considered a conversation about sex to be, and how useful they found such conversations in working through their uncertainties and feelings about sex.

What is a conversation about sex?

This study suggested that conversations about sex mean different things to different people. For some of the young people they were about relationships and feelings; only a few exchanged details of physical activity. Some said they had never talked about it at all with anyone.

There were also many different types of conversation. They could be supportive or undermining, informative or misleading. And of course the term 'conversations about sex' is too narrow. There are all sorts of verbal exchanges including jokes, insults, boasts, teasing and half-understood overhearings. It is also difficult to pin down the non-verbal messages and hints which all add to the information gathering process.

Such conversations among young people can be entered into for a wide variety of reasons. These reasons include reputation maintenance, attempts to gain status, friendly support, establishment of individuality (Heath, 1982), having a laugh, and gossip, in addition to information gathering. What no verbal exchange seems to be able to do is to bridge the gap between theoretical and experiential knowledge. In the end it seems sex is something you do, not something you talk about.

Yet this gap between theory and practice is the one young people are trying to fill, both before and after they become sexually active. Inexperienced youngsters have anxieties about performance - they don't want to look stupid, and they don't know how they're going to feel (Hirst, 1994). It seems that these anxieties persist in a slightly altered form after the young people become sexually active. Am I doing it right? Am I doing it often enough? Am I getting a 'reputation' for doing it too often? Am I (is my girlfriend) going to get pregnant? Have I got AIDS?

All these anxieties exist against a background of highly volatile personal change (Coleman & Hendry, 1990). The nature of conversations changes over time as youngsters become more mature and more confident; and the conversations one individual may have can alter depending upon the circumstances. For instance, exchanges with a close friend are different from those with a wider group of acquaintances. Conversational styles popular with one group of friends can be nothing like those of another group, since individual teenagers are sensitive to, and keen to fit in with, whatever rules of engagement seem to be operating in any situation.

Despite this variety, none of the young people interviewed had difficulty in defining what constituted, for them, a conversation about sex. Yet what they described seemed to be a conversation *around* sex, rather than a conversation *about* it. Talk would centre around who fancied whom, imagined future scenarios, or gossip concerning other people. Personal physical details were rarely exchanged (the exception being amongst small groups of sexually active girls who knew each other well - see below). And the sexually active tended not to pass on information to those as yet sexually inactive. Girls who attempted this were dismissed as sluts. Boys' stories were taken to be empty boasts and simply disbelieved. Even sexual partners rarely discussed their mutual sex lives - either through general embarrassment, or for fear of appearing to know too much or too little. In the end, the majority of the interviewees were unable to recall a single fact concerning sexual behaviour that they had gained from conversation with anyone.

There is a paradox here. Young people say they talk about sex 'all the time', yet at the same time these conversations were not informative and tended to be treated

with scepticism. As one 14 year old girl said when referring to talk between friends, 'we don't completely trust what they're saying 'cos no-one actually knows anything'.

What doesn't get talked about?

Topics rarely mentioned included: AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (few interviewees had heard of any of the latter), homosexuality (except that calling someone 'gay', 'queer' or 'poof' was an almost ubiquitous insult), or body changes at puberty (girls could exhibit mutual sympathy about menstruation, and boys competed about penile length - but often both boys and girls considered their bodies to be inadequate in some way and felt disinclined to talk about them).

It is worth noting here that the lack of a pre-existing conversational matrix could make the adoption of peer education for these important subjects problematic.

The effect of gender on conversations

This study found that differences in social class appeared to have a minimal effect on young people's information gathering experiences. Differences of gender, however, were paramount.

For the girls, a best friend was of supreme importance. Best friends could be believed and trusted: someone with whom to share intimate hopes and fears. Boys did not tend to have 'best friends' in the girls' sense. Their friendship groups seemed to be larger and much more fluid. On the whole these male youngsters did not have intimate discussions. They either found a girl who would listen to them, or remained in confused silence.

Young people of both genders were aware of having a group of close friends and also a circle of wider acquaintances, and seemed to be clear about the differences between the two - though the phrase 'close friends' could be widely interpreted. For one boy of fifteen, close friends were the two people he spoke to at all - the others were people he nodded to as they passed in the street. The boys in this study often had several different groups of friends, perhaps connected with interests such as sports or music, school friends, or people who met in clubs or pubs on certain nights. The girls, perhaps because their friendships tended to be more intimate, would typically have one 'best friend' and a small group of 'close' friends within a wider circle of acquaintances. In general, girls' friendship groups tended to be concentric, whereas those of boys looked more like the Olympic symbol of overlapping circles. Girls saw their friendship groups as supportive, whereas boys' culture appeared to be mainly competitive.

Friends of the opposite sex were valued. Despite mixed sex schooling, these young people were aware that each gender had its own culture and the other side's point of view was always of interest. Perhaps because the boys tended to confide in them, girls felt that they understood the boys. By contrast, a group of boys were obviously mystified by girls and referred to them as 'a different species.' One of these young men went on to say:

My girlfriend said once, 'Sex is more of a man's thing.' For some reason. Couldn't work it out but she said that to me.... I dunno... what sort of point of view they have on sex. I don't know. Really. Girls are funny creatures...

Of course, at some stages there could be significant differences in the apparent maturity of girls and boys. The years between 13 and 16 seemed to be particularly difficult. A 14 year old girl said:

Last year (...), and the year before, all the girls who I knew were extremely annoyed with the boys 'cos that's when they emotionally jumped ahead and the boys were just so far behind. It was just annoying! They were so immature and stupid all the time. But I think now they're really catching up at the moment.

A young man remembered that at the age of 15 and 16 his female classmates were sleeping with boys of 19 and 20. That, he said, didn't even cross his mind, 'I was still playing footy at break and drinking Ribena and things.'

The attainment of a boyfriend or girlfriend necessarily shifted friendship patterns. Finding a girlfriend liberated many boys from their isolation. At last there was someone who would listen to them without 'taking the piss'. The common expectation that a girl will see less of her girl friends and become absorbed into her boyfriend's social circle was partly borne out by this data, especially for girls who were no longer in education.

It does seem to be possible, though, for groups of close girl friends, who are all sexually active and remain in education (and therefore see each other on a daily basis) to share details of their sexual exploits. They said that they didn't talk about sex before in this way because they had no details to share. But this 'cross-over point' of general sexual activity is where previously boastful young men became silent. It was suggested that this might be because they felt a gallant loyalty to their partners, or possibly that they did not want details of their actual sexual prowess to be compared.

The only other situation where sexual details could be exchanged appeared to be for those young people who left home to attend university or college. Here friends needed to be made quickly, and the sharing of sexual biographies seemed to be one way of doing this, though there were differences in style between the men's stories and the women's.

It seems that the differences between the female culture, which is on the whole supportive, and the macho, competitive male culture cannot be over-emphasised - and these differences are at their most acute when it comes to talking about sex.

Fisher (1991, p.xiii) states that 'the trouble with being a teenage boy is that no one listens to you and no one talks to you. It's a bit like living in a vacuum'. What talk there was amongst boys appeared to be limited to attempting to create a desired image of themselves. Sexual 'success' was claimed: ignorance and problems must never be admitted to.

Peer Pressure

In most cases it might be more accurate to think of this as 'peer influence'; (Davies, 1995). It seemed that these young people rarely felt pressured to partake of alcohol, drugs or sexual activity. What did happen was that they saw their friends apparently enjoying certain activities, and felt inclined to give it a try.

The exception to this was the pressure boys felt they are under to begin sexual activity. This pressure was acknowledged to be the cause of the empty boasting boys were believed to indulge in. One boy recalled, 'People tend to say, "Have you lost your virginity yet?" And you'd feel an idiot if you said no.'

How can peer education fit into natural networks?

- Girls usually have a 'best friend' in whom they confide. If one half of this partnership becomes a peer educator, then it seems possible that the other would learn almost as much. However, given the closeness of these friendships, it seems probable that if one friend were to volunteer for training as a peer educator, the other would too.

- Girls also have a circle of close female friends with whom many sex-related things are discussed although, even here, some subjects are aired very little. When the cross-over point is reached and all the girls in the group become sexually active, details of the activity may be shared (although this is the point at which the boys go quiet). If one group member amongst the girls were to be a peer educator, informal peer education could function well in this scenario.

- Boys' competitive culture allows less scope for informal peer education. Often boys and young men are only able to have serious discussions about any aspect of sexuality with a girlfriend or a girl friend. Some never do, with anyone. Even though male peer educators might have a harder job, it is important that they exist. They are taking vital steps towards breaking the cycle of male isolation.

- Peer educators report that they find it easy to explode myths, but advice-giving can be more problematic.

- If young people confirm their identity by repeated story-telling (Erikson, 1968; Breakwell, 1986; McRobbie, 1991; Noller & Callan, 1991), it would seem possible for peer education to become embedded in the process.

- Those young people who go away to college or university report a sense of freedom that they have not felt before to have conversations about sex. These circumstances appear to be the most fruitful for informal peer education.

In general, although most young people say that they have learned most about sex from their friends, they find it very difficult to recall any facts they have learned in this way. It seems as if friends are used more as sounding boards for ideas and snippets of information. These are then assimilated into the picture or rejected, depending on their 'fit' with an individual's picture of the world and their place in it (von Glasersfeld, 1991). But because young people say that they learn about sex

from friends, it has been assumed that all young people talk to each other freely and easily about sex. This appears to be far from the case. And if girls consider their learnings about sexuality to be inadequate, the plight of boys is even more acute.

Peer education, though, does seem to be a tactic worth pursuing. It is possible that, in the end, the informal education that trained peer educators can undertake is as beneficial, or even more so, than formal workshops. Informal peer education in small groups or 1:1 is nearer to pre-existing information networks and may be more easily embedded in young people's culture.

Clearly, peer education's greatest success is its effect on the peer educators themselves who report feeling better informed and better able to talk about sex than their untrained peers.

Possible limitations to peer education
This study shed light on some of the limitations of young people's pre-existing information networks and it seems reasonable to suppose that these same limitations might affect the success of formal and informal peer education. They include:

- No amount of theoretical information can bridge the gap between theory and practice.

- The scepticism with which such conversations are treated. This applies even more strongly if the information contained within them is not felt to be first-hand. Information is only really trusted when it comes 'from the horse's mouth'. It seems possible that people who have undergone peer education can become a 'horse', but not those they have educated. Hence the 'cascade' effect of peer education seems likely to be limited to one tier.

- The innate 'tribalism' of adolescent society. Members of one social group may never speak to members of another.

- The perceived maturation gap between boys and girls.

- The almost total lack of such conversations between boys, apart from competitive boasting.

- The embarrassment which stops young people from admitting ignorance or asking questions. They don't want to 'look stupid' in front of their peers.

- Absolute confidentiality and non-judgmental empathy is necessary for any form of intimate discussion, and this is very hard to achieve. Young people tend to trust the friends they know best and have known longest.

Problems trained AIDS peer educators encountered as they tried to pass on the 'safer sex message' in informal situations included:

- Being accused of being gay or HIV positive themselves.

- Finding the right place and time for serious conversation. 'You can't just go up to someone and say, "I hear you've got this rash"'.

- Fear of causing offence. 'If someone's got this new boyfriend or girlfriend and they're completely in love with them and you start saying, "Well, make sure you us a condom because they might he HIV positive," they feel really insulted.'

- A suspicion that people outside their usual social circle wouldn't want to be seen talking to a peer educator as it would be assumed they had a problem.

- An unwillingness to appear 'know-alls'.

- Difficulties talking to other age groups. Older students do not want to listen to them. Giving safer sex/contraception advice to under 16s can be problematic under current British law.

- Peer educators can find the role difficult to handle within friendships. They fear that the role of educator can eclipse the role of friend, and thus friends may be lost.

- Difficulties crossing from their own social group to others.

- Frustration. 'They just say, "Well if I get it I get it"(...) there's nothing I could say to them to make them change their minds.'

How does this study fit with other research?

The survey findings that young people *say* they learn most about sex from their friends was, in part, borne out by this research. However, the interviewees found it difficult to say *what* they had learned from their friends. It appears that to say most is learned from friends reflects more upon the paucity of information gained elsewhere than upon the quantity and quality of information exchanged by friends.

Russell (1991), Hirstwood (1991) and Waldock (1991) have suggested that young people are able to put across information to their peers in commonly-accepted language. This claim appears to be partially correct, in that the language used by friends is more likely to be understood than the scientific language used by teachers. However there seems to be no universally accepted, comfortable language in which to discuss sex.

Although the young people in this study were not strongly in favour of single-sex groups for sex education, Lees' (1993) suggestion that this would be preferable is worthy of consideration. Small single-sex groups would appear to be a way of dissipating much of the embarrassment and jocularity (noted by Thomson and Scott (1991) and borne out by this data) incurred by school sex education. However, if this approach were to be adopted it is important that the lessons should cover similar topics for both sexes. Young people feel a great need to learn as much as possible about the opposite sex.

The suggestion made by Askey and Ross (1988), Holland et al (1993), Lee (1993), Phillips (1993) and Hite (1994) that young men find the construction of an adult sexuality especially difficult was supported by this research, and Tannen's (1992) conclusions about the different conversational styles of men and women were paralleled in this younger age group.

Lees' (1993) implication that girls with steady boyfriends saw less of their girl friends was in part countered by evidence in this study. It seems possible for girls, particularly those still at school, to maintain pre-existing friendships. Another of Lees' (op cit) suggestions, that girls talk about sex less than boys because they lack a suitable vocabulary was not borne out by this research. The girls in this study appear to talk more about sex than boys do, although some girls found the lexical limitations irritating.

Quite a number of those interviewed agreed with MacFadyean's (1986) contention that teenage sex is too embarrassing for partners to discuss. Some, however, did discuss it with their partners. This applied particularly to young people who had undergone peer education training.

Conclusions

- Young people are startlingly ignorant about sex and sexuality and feel trapped in their ignorance.

- The move from sexual ignorance to sexual knowledge is typically through experience.

- It is difficult for young people to admit ignorance about sex or to share knowledge. Asking is almost impossible. Sharing is high risk.

- Many young people find no-one in whom to confide, yet they are suspicious or ignorant of agencies offering confidentiality such as doctors and Family Planning Clinics.

- Young people learn very little about sex from school, the media (and this in spite of periodic concern about the amount of sex in films and on television), their families, doctors, the clergy, their work mates, and - despite suggestions to the contrary - their friends. Learning about sex is a solitary, fraught and haphazard pursuit.

- Different groups of friends have varying ways of talking *around* sex. They rarely, if ever, talk *about* it.

- Sexually active young people rarely give details to others. The consequent gap between theoretical and experiential knowledge causes inexperienced youngsters much anxiety.

- In terms of the process of building an adult sexuality, differences of gender are paramount. With respect to sexual experimentation girls have more to lose. Perhaps because of this girls talk more around sex with a predominant future orientation in mind. Gender differences encourage girls to share doubts and problems, yet at the same time they isolate boys.

- Since second-hand information is not trusted, the 'cascade' or 'knock-on' effect of peer education is limited.

- Trained peer educators find talking about sex easier than their peers. If a key to safer sex is enabling young people to negotiate with their partners, then peer education has a part to play.

- Peer education works in that it educates the peer educators *themselves*. Against a background of almost universal failure, giving young people the role of agent, and training them to undertake this agency, seems to be the most successful tactic yet devised for sex education. Yet the assumption that 'correct' information would automatically spread could be seen to be somewhat optimistic.

Policy/Practice Implications

In order to maximise the contribution that peer education can make in the field of informal sex education we need to:

1 recognise the strengths of the peer communication structures that exist (particularly amongst girls) and build on these;

2 acknowledge gender differences in patterns of communication, endorsing the work that girls do in support of each other and their male friends, and helping boys to help each other;

3 understand that there are limitations to the range of 'natural' conversations, assisting peer educators to extend these limitations whilst reassuring them that they are not expected to do everything, all the time.

Despite the limitations mentioned in this paper, there is scope for informal (i.e. conversational rather than workshop) peer education. Hence it would be beneficial to spend time assisting peer educators to find more conversational, less didactic, ways of putting information across. Strategies should be flexible enough to encompass local variations and the differing circumstances individual peer educators might meet. Limitations to peer education should be acknowledged, and the morale of these altruistic young people might be strengthened by discussions designed to help them deal with any rejections they might encounter. Finally, gender differences should be borne in mind: educational interventions might be more acceptable if boys and girls are are targetted separately.

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Acknowledgments

Note

1 Two of these peer educators were teenage mothers who had been trained to conduct school and youth club sessions on contraception and the realities of parenthood. The remaining seven consisted of Sixth Formers from a comprehensive and a private school who had been trained to conduct HIV/AIDS awareness sessions with younger students. Since the object of this study was to investigate informal conversations, details of their training and formal peer education sessions were not elicited. Their responses concerning peer group talk, however, are reflected throughout this paper.

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WORKING SPACE

YOUNG PEOPLE AND TELEVISION

PETER PHILLIPS & RICHARD BARBER

Introduction

In October '96 Channel 4 and the British Film Institute organised a conference at the National Film Theatre in London entitled *Children on Screen*. It was part of the 100 year celebration of cinema and coincided with 50 years of Children's TV Also, it fell between the first World Summit on Children and Television, held in March 1995, and the second World Summit due to take place in London in March 1998. This is a personal account of one young person's experience of attending the conference and being a member of a group of young people who made a presentation to the conference audience. It was written by the young person (Peter) who attended and a youth worker (Richard) who accompanied him. The writing process was much like an interview and sought to evaluate and reflect on the experience of participating in the conference.

Although conferences and events on the subject of children's TV have been staged frequently enough, this was the first time that children would have made a direct contribution to the programme of such a gathering. Potentially the young people's input could make a powerful contribution in terms of influencing debate, particularly when one takes into account that, as the conference report points out, 'children consume a wider range and quantity of television programmes and films than ever before' and that 'the profundity of the influence of the moving image in children's social cultural and education formation' is deep seated (John Richmond, in the foreword to the Conference Report). However, this 'Working Space' cannot make judgements about the effectiveness or actual influence the conference has had. It is a personal reflection.

Regarding the broader issue of children and young people's participation and for those wanting to contribute to creating opportunities for young people's voices to be heard on some form of 'representational' basis, this was quite an expensive project, budgeted at about £4,500. Although some costs may have been able to be reduced (for example hotel bills, see below!), it is unlikely this would be too dramatic if geography remains an important factor in getting a cross sample of young people. Reflecting on the experience of the process, which on the whole was extremely positive but which, inevitably, some things could have been improved. The quality of things like accommodation, transport (we flew from Newcastle), expenses being met and so on was well resourced and hence enjoyed. However, what would have aided the process considerably would have been a more free flowing set of written information and preparation. If 'agendas' had been circulated before the meetings young people could have thought more about their contributions and, after their discussion, have something to reflect upon. This would have created a much better environment for young people to come together informed and prepared to discuss the material before them.

Bearing in mind the 'bad press' many young people are burdened with because of the actions of a minority of their peers (for example school expulsions) this was a high profile event which promoted children's rights to participate in a very important arena in their lives. TV may profoundly influence us but it is very difficult for us to influence it! To this end Channel 4 resourced, hosted and facilitated a 'Children's Council' whose aim was to give a 'state of the nation' report on children's and schools television.

The Context; Creating the 'Children's Council'

In all, fifteen children and young people aged between 11 and 16 years met together as the 'Council'. They met for a total of five days over a four week period, beginning at the end of September and culminating in the conference presentation which was chaired by John Snow (of Channel 4 news fame).

In preparation for the conference the group met together several times, once in Nottingham at Carlton TV studios and twice in London at the Channel 4 studios. This was important as the fifteen young people had never met before. The Council aimed to be as representative as possible, young people being carefully chosen to represent a multiplicity of experiences, including where young people lived and issues of race, gender, class and physical ability. Young people are not a homogenous group and the Council reflected this - although it may not have been perfect and could attract a variety of criticism, this method of creating a 'representative' Council was as good as any.

Preparation for the Conference:

Although parents/guardians accompanied the young people to and from venues they took no part in the discussions or preparation for the event itself. Two producers of children's programmes facilitated discussion and provided the framework within which to prepare the conference presentation.

The initial session was something of an introduction, a 'get to know you' day and explanation of the event followed by an overview of the format of the presentation and the expectations of the Council's contribution to the conference. The framework for presentation was set out and basically meant that children's TV programmes were placed into categories, five in all, which covered

- Factual
- Light entertainment
- Drama
- Animated
- Schools

After some discussion of terminology the fifteen young people were invited to choose a topic and split into groups of three in order to discuss their specific area.

In addition, participants were given some video compilations to take home and view, to show friends and canvass opinion and so on.

The next time the group met was in London, over a weekend. Acquaintances were refreshed, as was the purpose. Young people were then invited to sign up to one of the five categories and asked to see this commitment through to the conference.

There was an introduction to John Snow, who would chair the Children's Council input at the conference. Presentations and TV clips were put together and 'tested' on other members of the Council. Some alterations were subsequently made but at the end of the weekend planning was more or less complete.

Although the group met up the evening before the conference, this was mainly a 'pre-celebration' event - going to Planet Hollywood, something of a reward for their efforts. By now, they were quite together as a group.

On the day of the conference the young people were warmly welcomed. In their groups of three, young people presented their arguments on the topic they had been working on. All in all, things went according to plan with only a few minor hiccups. All the young people made some sort of contribution, some more than others!

Conclusion
It is difficult to say what impact, if any, this will have directly on programmes, although the 'TV people' in attendance did appear to take notice. Putting first hand opinions across may 'help producers make programmes more in touch with young people's lives', to quote one of the young people. As stated above that is not our purpose here.

The impact on Peter has been more easy to identify and important for his own personal development. For example, the opportunity to take part in the Council meant he was able to visit London for the first time (including Sega World and Planet Hollywood) and fly for the first time on a passenger aeroplane. Peter also felt his confidence and self esteem was greatly boosted - he had spoken publicly to about 30 people prior to addressing this conference which had about 300 people in attendance. On a more abstract level Peter met up with a range of people with different backgrounds and cultural experiences which he would otherwise not have done. This expanded his understanding and challenged his thinking on issues relating to equality and rights, specifically black and disability issues (for example the lack of black cartoon characters, disabled presenters and so on was discussed). Also, significantly, Peter has been asked to prepare an idea for 'Wise Up', a children's programme who utilise young people as presenters. It is not impossible this could transpire to be the beginnings of a career in TV. Its a good opportunity for him!

Finally, it is to be hoped that the start made by Channel 4 in terms of involving young people in discussing children's programmes will carry on, at least to the next world summit conference in 1998, but hopefully beyond. In personal terms, involvement was worth it for Peter and of course it has the potential to benefit large numbers of young people if the quality of programmes is improved.

Peter Phillips *is a young person's representative on the End House management committee in Durham City.*

Richard Barber *works for Save the Children.*

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Cash and Carry? Young people, their friends, and offensive weapons
University of Exeter Schools Health Education Unit 1996
ISBN: 85068 173 1
pp 76

John Balding
Young people and Illegal Drugs in 1996
University of Exeter Schools Health Education Unit 1996
ISBN: 0 85068 174 X
pp 26

Doug Nicholls
An Outline History of Youth and Community Work and the Union 1834-1997
The Community and Youth Workers' Union/Pepar Press 1997
ISBN: 0 94868 053 9
£7.99
pp 41

REVIEWS

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DON BLACKBURN

This book is to be welcomed for its analysis of a wide range of themes relating to children, and especially for its documentation of the issues under what seemed like a Tory lifetime. The contributions to the book span education, social welfare, poverty, media, children and sexuality, rights, crime and prostitution. The overall quality of the contributions is consistently high, though some chapters are rather more persuasive than others in terms of the foundation and details of the arguments presented. For example the discussion of children and the media by Holland was entertaining in the context of a discussion about advertising influences on the shape of children's television. This implied that children were seen as significant consumers by programme makers, or at least significant influences on parental purchases. This raised nagging questions for me about the *real* market power of children. It is ironic that this concern is voiced at a time when significant groups of children in the UK are probably worse off economically than they have been for some time.

The other contributions are well informed and lucid and contribute significantly to an understanding of the reality of life for children and young people at the end of the twentieth century. The discussions are also often marked by well articulated theoretical positions which clarify the analyses and should contribute effectively to debate in this arena. Julia Davidson's and Jacqueline Taylor's chapter on child prostitution is a case in point. In discussing this form of 'sex tourism' within a framework informed by economic analysis and sexual ideologies, the authors effectively place the discussion in focus as part of a more general phenomenon of British society, rather than as a marginalized activity.

It may be claimed that the historical debate about children and young people was focused on the necessity, scale and form of child protection. A key dilemma was always the extent to which the necessity for child protection by adults could be set against a child's own possibility of autonomy. This theme is well articulated in the chapter by Ann and Bob Franklyn in their review of the Children's Rights Movement. It is astonishing looking back from the vantage point of the late 1990s to consider how far the public debate has been shifted into a framework which sees the overwhelming need of the capitalist economy as the significant element

in areas like schooling. With a consequent decline in emphasis on purpose of education to assist children and young people to develop as autonomous, creative adults. In other words, schooling and other social institutions are emphasised as the locations of control over children, the creators of conformity and meekness rather than as facilitators of individual and social development. Around the educational and social institutions there is really no longer a genuine *educational* debate, merely a placid, sometimes half apologetic reworking of Tory ideas. The Labour Party stands particularly condemned here in its new brutalism. The rhetoric of pragmatism combined with a readiness to label critics as naive has marginalized debate and discussion about the purposes of the institutions for those children and young people who inhabit them.

One difficulty that I have with the book lies with the claim made in the opening chapter concerning the influence of Phillip Aries' work in the field, particularly in his proposition that childhood is mainly a modern social construction. Aries' work and also that of some other individuals influenced by his position is unconvincing, and it is about time that this argument was addressed more critically by social scientists. Linda Pollock's (1983) scholarly and detailed refutation of Aries' arguments should be compulsory reading for anyone writing about the sociology of childhood. She describes some of the work in this area as riddled with factual inaccuracies and sloppiness, with some of the claims bordering on the absurd.

On the other hand the quality of much of the writing in the book under review does not seem to me to need to rest on the view that childhood is a social construction. In fact this may be a distraction from the main issue which runs consistently through the text which is a concern to discuss the political assault on children through a growing authoritarianism by both the Conservative and Labour Parties.

It is against this bleak and depressing background that overall, and despite a small reservation, the book represents one more hopeful sign that all is not lost! It does give a significant and confident analysis of the callousness and contempt that the Tory Party has shown for children and young people. One wonders why there has not been a greater stock of this kind of work by others since 1979?

Pollock, L. (1983) *Forgotten Children: Parent Child relations from 1500 to 1900.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

Don Blackburn *University of Humberside.*

REVIEWS

Valerie Jackson
Racism and Child Protection,
The Black Experience of Child Sexual Abuse
Cassell 1996
£35.00 (hbk)
£12.99 (pbk)
pp 84

BEVERLEY PREVATT GOLDSTEIN

This book has clear aims, *that children of every colour, culture or gender, will be supported and acknowledged in a way that is appropriate to meet their needs,* (p viii) and deals specifically with the additional traumas of the black sexually abused child to persuade professionals to acknowledge these and take appropriate action.

It explores definitions and myths that are relevant to racism and sexual abuse, uses case studies and scenarios to demonstrate the extent of abuse and racist responses to it and includes recommendations for good practice. The strength of this book lies in its grounding in social work practice and the Children Act. The scenarios in Chapter five are well thought out, analytical and enable the reader to understand the complexity of multi-disciplinary and racist responses to both assumed and actual sexual abuse of black children.

The deep commitment of the author to black children and the style employed, part story of a personal journey, part training manual, part academic text poses some problems. The myths are unevenly addressed, some in adequate detail eg boys being sexually abused; others eg women not abusing children, casually dismissed. In Chapter six on Statistics, we are invited to decry statistics and largely given lists of unconnected findings without context. The author is inconsistent about the use of the word 'black', defined as inclusive (p 2) and yet used to exclude Asian (p 6).

The author is clearly committed to challenging racism and to acknowledging sexual abuse of black children. In many ways eg in challenging the myths, in acknowledging the diversity within black communities and black professionals, the author challenges racist constructs. However the reader may unwittingly be reinforced in racist constructs by the focus on black children being abused by black adults in Chapter three *Telling Tales,* and by the references to black communities denying the existence of sexual abuse not being set in the context of a general denial of sexual abuse.

There are some excellent recommendations for practice throughout the book and particularly in Chapter seven. Throughout the reader is encouraged to know and appropriately apply the relevant sections of the Children Act for good anti-racist practice. The short bibliographies at the end of each chapter are well referenced. These, and the analysis of the

case studies, are extremely helpful. The reader, however, will need to reframe the 'victim' focus of many of the chapters by complementing this book with reading about black children and adults as survivors and activists.

Beverley Prevatt Goldstein *University of Durham.*

REVIEWS

Pam Carter
Feminism, Breasts and Breast-Feeding
Macmillan Press Ltd 1995
ISBN: 0 312 12625 5 (pbk)
pp 266

JEAN SPENCE

On receiving this book for review, I was not altogether sure about its subject area in relation to the concerns of this journal. 'To what extent are debates and issues around breasts and feeding babies likely to be of concern to the readers of Youth and Policy?', I asked myself. I therefore approached the book thinking that perhaps I would find that interest in two ways. Firstly it was possible that the 'feminist' aspect of the content could be of use and interest in a general theoretical sense. Secondly, it was likely that the book would offer some information relating to the difficulties associated with breast feeding, which would be of benefit to those working with young mothers.

Pam Carter has indeed written a book which addresses general feminist concerns and there is also material which could be usefully applied to young mothers, although there is no specific discussion of the latter. However, the way in which she contextualises breasts and breast feeding and the manner in which she analyses the meaning of women's decisions have led her to write a book which is both fascinating and, I believe, widely applicable for anyone who has responsibilities for working in community settings.

Starting with a discussion of the debates which have surrounded breast feeding since the Enlightenment and the absence of critical thinking within feminism about the subject, Carter has used the question of breasts and breast feeding to explore the dichotomies and dualisms within feminist thinking. In a broad sense, this is the remit of the text. Her intention is to try to move beyond the nature versus culture, similarity versus

difference, essentialism versus social constructionism debates which beset feminist theory. In order to do so, she has made use of Foucault's concept of discourse, identifying the various complex and contradictory discourses associated with breast and breast feeding through which mothers have to negotiate a path of compliance and resistance. Within the breast feeding versus bottle feeding debates, Carter suggests that feminism has frequently been on the side of breast feeding, at the same time promoting concepts of 'natural' motherhood which slip so easily into controlling discourses. The point is not therefore to pursue bottle feeding as representative of female resistance, but to engage with the contextual issues of motherhood and baby feeding. These questions include concerns about living conditions, poverty, health, privacy, the sexualisation of breasts in western culture and women's rights over their own bodies. In this sense, the feminist issues which are being raised in this book in relation to breast feeding have implications for the manner in which professionals conduct their work. Pam Carter suggests that her analysis suggests that health workers who wish to adopt a feminist perspective would do well to pursue a community educational approach rather than to simply, and questioningly advocate breast feeding.

Using the material from a series of interviews conducted with 30 women, old and young, black and white, on Tyneside, Carter grounds her analysis within women's real experiences as mothers trying to do the best for their babies in different circumstances. The use of the interview material helps to keep the book interesting and provides fascinating evidence for the contention that women are both similar and different. As Carter suggests, every mother, not only those in her sample, has a baby feeding story. Mothers use these stories to make sense of their experiences and decisions. The experiences recounted in this book involving women who gave birth between 1920 and 1980 in different material and cultural circumstances demonstrate moments of similarity. Any woman who has been faced with baby feeding decisions will be able to identify with the meanings in the stories told by the women in this book whilst at the same time acknowledging the different pressures and different outcomes of grappling with similar meanings.

What made this book fascinating for me was the manner in which Carter was able to identify and give voice to the complexities involved in the decision making processes around breast feeding. Whilst the decisions made sometimes appear to be a passive response to circumstances, and while many women find it difficult to articulate the range of forces which they encountered on becoming mothers, this book has teased out the way in which women take responsibility for managing sexual meanings, social taboos, messages about good motherhood, health visitors, relations, husbands and the baby in a context of inconsistent messages and contradictory discourses. This process, when disentangled, stands as a metaphor for the manner in which women take responsibility for other

aspects of social life in situations which offer them very little in the way of either public or private space and time. It also bears witness to some of the means by which women struggle to exert control over their own circumstances, frequently using something which is *essentially* female - motherhood and breasts, to defy exhortations to be *natural* mothers. Carter suggests that within this contradiction there lies the possibility for women developing their own discourses around what it means to be mothers and thus to engage in a process of empowerment. Again this has implications for the community educator.

Carter makes a successful effort to suspend her own commitment to breast feeding in order to objectively explore the reasons why women make different decisions despite the overwhelming public messages that 'breast is best'. In doing so, she is able to uncover some of the racism which is entangled within the efforts of western feminists to prevent the global spread of baby milk powder. She acknowledges the reality of companies such as Nestlé making profit through the exploitation of women's desires to 'do the best' for their babies, but she takes issue with the suggestion that 'third world' women make decisions on a different basis from women in the west. She is also able to explain why it is that poorer women in this country are more likely to bottle feed than their richer sisters, despite the contradictory images of such women being nearer to nature than those who are considered more refined and cultured, demonstrating the class-ridden assumptions of much of what has been promoted as progressive public policy by the state.

This is a well informed and well written book. Carter has used her wide reading and her empirical material to good effect and I found much of interest within the text. For those who are prepared to read critically and think about the issues raised in a wider sense, there is much of value if their work involves consideration of gender in youth and policy issues. For those who are particularly concerned about women's health questions and for those who are working with mothers, of whatever age, the book should be required reading.

Jean Spence *University of Sunderland.*

REVIEWS

Craig A. Heflinger & Carol T. Dixon (eds)
Families and the Mental Health System for Children and Adolescents
Sage Publications 1996
ISBN: 0 7619 0268 6
£16.50 (pbk)
pp 261

Roger Hadley & Roger Clough
Care in Chaos: frustration and challenge in community care
Cassell 1996
ISBN: 0 304 33525 8
£15.99 (pbk)
£45.00 (hbk)
pp 226

STEVE ROGOWSKI

I found it rather difficult to consider these two books for one review as they are in many ways very different. Nevertheless one thing they seem to have in common is a disapproval of the political, economic and ideological changes of the last two decades. This, to readers of this journal, as well as myself, is to be welcomed.

Families and the Mental Health System for Children and Adolescents features an edited collection by US academics who examine policy, research and practice issues in relation to families of children with serious emotional disorders. It is noted that the family plays direct and indirect roles in the formal mental health system, from determining whether and when a child or young person enters treatment to providing the context within which therapeutic games are played out. The book looks at service strategies for effective family centred service delivery, the role society can play in strengthening the family and preventing child and adolescent emotional disorders, the support for and the barriers inhibiting parent-professional partnership, the complexities of assessing family functioning, and culturally sensitive service delivery.

It was chapters two and four that I found the most stimulating. They review services for families that go beyond traditional mental health service approaches which focus almost solely on the individual child/young person with the problem. In particular, Albee and Canetto in discussing a family-focussed model of prevention refer to macro approaches to prevention. Causes of many child and adolescent emotional disorders are seen in terms of parental stress resulting from discriminating and economic exploitation. Attempts to remedy this have to tackle, for example, changing the distribution of income and wealth. This in turn means 'social and political changes leading to a rebalancing of power and opportunities for disadvantaged groups

such as women and ethnic groups and persons who are poor'. They conclude by referring to the need for a 'focus on economic policies and programmes based on social justice'. Again this is all well and good.

Other chapters cover: research issues, including a computer-based approach to assessing family functioning; the needs of families who have taken an alternative path to family status, specifically through fostering and adoption; and the difficulties children and families face in rural areas in gaining appropriate services.

Although perhaps a rather dry academic read at times, this book is worth the effort and should appeal to all those with an interest in children and adolescents with mental health problems.

However, a more interesting book for me was *Care in Chaos*. This looks at the recent changes in community care. Although the reforms are widely seen as failing, the culture of secrecy and conformity in health and social services prevent practitioners from speaking out. (Incidentally at a personal level I am only too well aware of this as I was actually suspended merely for writing an article in a professional journal!)

Here though, under the protection of anonymity practitioners talk freely of their experiences, providing a devastating critique of the way the community care changes have been implemented. The authors analyse the fundamental weaknesses in policy and propose what they see as a positive and realistic alternative.

Fifteen practitioners from health and social services are interviewed and, through fourteen case studies, comment on the community care changes. This is obviously not a representative sample but, as the book states, does provide a cross section of informed and committed people in a range of organisations whose views should be taken seriously both as individual statements and for their wider applicability.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One outlines the development of community care policies over the last three decades leading to the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. There is a concise summary of the ideological changes from the breakdown of the social democratic consensus of the post-war years, leading to the rise of the New Right in the 1970s which continues to this day.

Part Two presents the case studies themselves, these representing the views from four professional groups - doctors, nurses, occupational therapists and social workers in a variety of settings. Part Three analyses and interprets the case studies and discusses their wider relevance. There is an account of the world of community care before 1990, the impact of the changes on this world, common problems in the new order and the change strategy used

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by the Government (including macho management) to introduce the reforms. This leads to the conclusion that the reforms contain fundamental contradictions and are deeply flawed. The contradictions include - market versus public service values, increased demand versus fixed supply, needs-led versus budget determined, treatment versus prevention, better services versus poorer working conditions, and co-operation versus competition. As a result the overall impact of the changes has been a decline in standards of care, the provision of services has become more arbitrary, and they are less needs-led that before the reforms. And not least there are alienated professionals, often with feelings of hopelessness and despair.

After outlining their objections to the neo-liberal/Thatcherite project, the authors argue for an alternative based on 'mutuality'. Humans are more than self-interested individuals. As they are social beings, care should be financed collectively and should be free at the point of use.

The book ends, rather tamely I thought, with a call for such things as a national debate on community care, more local control over resources and systems, a new managerialism, more service user and citizen involvement and common regulations governing the support and operation of public and independent service providers.

On the whole though this is an important book providing a timely antidote to the Government's view that all is well in community care. It should be read, even bought, by all those professionals, managers and policy makers involved in providing community care services. Current and prospective service users will also gain by reading this book.

Steve Rogowski *is a Social Worker (Children and Families) with a local authority in NW England.*

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LESLEY GODDARD

A book that is practical and useful, easy to read in an evening or two and simple to use as a reference, should a question or concern surface as one enters into practice with a new client. This is the aim and well met, in my opinion, by Sara Fine and Paul Glasser in their guide, aimed primarily at mental health practitioners across a variety of agencies, although somewhat confusingly they dedicate the book to the full range of unsung heroes, including hairdressers, cab drivers and bartenders.

Fine is a Psychologist who teaches counselling theory and practice, group dynamics and organisational behaviour at Pittsburgh and is also in private practice. Glasser teaches at the School of Social Work, Rutgers University, specialising in working with groups and families. The perspective throughout the book is therefore very much an amalgam of social work and psychology. Whilst the bulk of the book is easily accessible to an English audience, there are occasional differences particularly in regard to Child Protection and serious mental health issues in terms of both terminology and process. The authors have I believe tried to address this by using generic terms in places but nevertheless this important chapter remains somewhat incomplete.

There were instances where I found the style somewhat dramatic and sentimental, patronising in places, with the occasional cliché and statements I considered debatable presented as facts. On the other hand very readable, with attention paid to difference, and the authors made a particular point with regard to the seemingly endless list of contradictions in the rules and principles governing the behaviour of practitioners in the helping professions.

The format is loosely structured into twelve chapters. The authors, conscious that events and procedures intermingle with each other and interact on one another so that it is not always possible to tell where one ends and another begins, have tried to reflect this in their presentation, dealing with issues in context and later reviewing, refining and reflecting in greater depth.

Some issues I felt could have benefited from a more detailed analysis, particularly in addressing the more severe end of the mental health spectrum. However I was particularly impressed by their coverage of ethical issues, a difficult area, too often ignored or merely given lip-service.

Equally impressive was the macro and micro level approach to the subject matter. The authors not only deal with the intricacies of the communication within the therapeutic session but pay attention to politics, organisational rules, management issues, standard setting and evaluation.

The initial chapters consider how therapy can happen, issues of trust and importantly to those of us working in the field, issues arising from child protection referrals or with detained or otherwise reluctant or involuntary clients.

Chapters three and four look in detail at the beginnings of the process, considering the importance of pre-session contact and referral information, the workers own anxiety, greeting the client, even down to how the worker chooses to be addressed, opening statements, note taking and record keeping, establishing the therapist role, the issues of fees and the special considerations of home visiting.

This leads into the heart of the subject, listening and understanding. What a wealth of study, debate, analysis and theoretical perspectives might come into play here. In this slim volume I believe it was not the authors intention to provide such a depth of study but to highlight the complex nature of the concepts and to alert the reader accordingly.

Communication Dynamics are tackled in chapter six. I personally disliked the reference to 'games clients play', finding it contradictory in tone to a focus of value and respect, an unfortunate choice of phrase or way of referring to a particular dynamic.

Whilst the issue of trust is touched upon in the initial chapters, it is felt so crucial to the process as to deserve a chapter in its own right.

Recognising that professionals work equally with couples and families as with individual clients, the next chapter addresses particular issues in this arena.

The chapter looking at working with difference covers a range of related issues from culture and ethnicity through to gender and self-knowledge. I was however left with a sense of assumption as to the readership of the guide itself.

There follows a consideration of serious problems and referring to other agencies and an excellent review of ethical issues.

The closing chapter, entitled 'Afterthoughts' draws together the main themes of the book with practical advice on support for the practitioner.

This is certainly not a stand-alone 'bible' for the caring professions, but then it does not claim to be. As a practitioner I appreciated the practical and very real nature of the text, punctuated by examples from practice, and the sense that the authors were committed and caring professionals

with a wealth of practical experience who had reflected on and debated those very issues we struggle with on a daily basis.

Lesley Goddard *is a senior social work practitioner at Longview Psychiatric Unit for Adolescents, Colchester, Essex.*

REVIEWS

Ian Butler and Ian Shaw (Eds)
A Case of Neglect?
Children's experiences and the sociology of childhood
Avebury, Ashgate Publishing Ltd 1996
ISBN: 1 85972 048 X (hbk)
pp 180

Bob Holman
Children and crime
Lion Publishing plc 1995
ISBN: 0 7459 3121 9 (hbk)
pp 221

KAREN HAGAN

These are two books as far removed from each other as is possible in terms of style and background, though they both attempt to deal with the social problems related to children and the approaches to take for those involved in working with young people at risk.

The main and most useful theme of the Butler and Shaw book is that of hearing the children and young people themselves on childhood - some of the chapters and researchers are better at this than others though. Shaw highlights the pertinent point that adults can not fully understand the world of the child, despite the notion that this is, of course, possible since we have all been children and simply need to get in touch with that part of ourselves. He reflects that we are looking back from a different viewpoint, with different values and ideologies, priorities, experiences and knowledge. This is identified as problematic to qualitative methodology since the examiners often do not recognise the differences in perspectives, never mind taking account of them. Throughout the papers the researchers here, however, discuss this in length and attempt, by focusing on the children's accounts themselves to minimise the misconceptions. Anne Crowley is very thorough in her analysis of the problems and ethics of interpreting and power sharing. I

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was actually left wondering if she, or others had ever considered collaborating with young people as assistant researchers and, thus, provide a forum for a greater degree of power sharing and perspective taking.

Theoretically, the book is supportive of a social constructionist perspective which is in vogue and links this in to the development of ideas towards self-autonomy of the child (also reflected in the most recent changes in legislation). It would be useful in some of the discussions to have some evaluation of the impact of the role of Guardian ad Litems. This is perhaps an area for future examination. There is very substantial consideration of ethical issues around the studies as well as practical difficulties which should be extremely useful for future researchers in the field.

Butler and Williamson's chapter 6 provided the best insight into the child's world and the range of approaches they have experienced from the professionals. It offers an essential opportunity for 'professionals' to tune in to the individuals they aim to help and demonstrated clearly the degree of altercation that exists. Chapter 4 was also useful in this regard but less clearly structured.

This is a critical look at a current system which provides inadequate and unresponsive/insensitive services of youth work and child care eg. workers were 'unfamiliar with the philosophy of autonomy and self determination' despite changes. There are some helpful suggestions for the progression of youth work.

Bob Holman's personal experiences and observations led him into training as a child welfare officer. He became Professor of Social Administration at Bath University but has since moved from academia to a more active involvement in the community. This has been sponsored by the church to which he is strongly committed. Within this book Holman's beliefs and views come across ardently and he clearly owns up to the value base of his work and interpretations. I would like to see all researchers recognise the importance of such honesty.

However, I had problems with the presentation of such a moralistic discussion of the issue of young people and the difficulties they face. I found it simplistic and somewhat naive with the high ground hard to accept, especially with regard to parenting and poverty. I must state, though, that I am coming from a fairly different value base and background (ie. atheistic and following a grounding in experimental psychology and social work 'professionalism'). It is perhaps more to do with such differences that I was a little wary of some of the messages contained in Holman's analyses, such as befriending young people. I was concerned about the possibility of a wave of dangerously inexperienced and misguided 'do-gooders'.

Much of what Holman says is attractive to the common sense approach and in fact much of it is used. There should be nothing new to people

already working or researching in the field. The value of the coverage here of meta-issues such as poverty, the family, the impact of crime and prevention of criminal behaviour is, as Holman identifies, more for the general public with an interest in young people and delinquency.

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W. Gordon, M. Watkins, P. Cuddy
Introduction to the Youth Court
Waterside Press
ISBN: 1 872 870 368 (pbk)
£12.00
pp 160

MALCOLM BRAIN

Readers with limited experience of the Youth Court may understandably assume the writing of an introduction to the working of the court to be a simple enough task. In reality nothing could be further from the truth. Three relevant Acts since 1991 which remain only partially implemented, together with inherent difficulties in reconciling some of their provisions with existing legislation (for example, the welfare demands of the 1933 CYPA and 1989 Children Act in contrast to the emphasis of the 1991 Criminal Justice Act upon 'just desserts' and the seriousness of the crime) make the production of such a book a challenging piece of work. On the whole, the authors have succeeded in doing so.

The three authors are Justices' Clerks and the book is written under the auspices of the Justices' Clerks' Society as a companion to a previous work 'The Sentence of the Court - A Handbook for Magistrates' which tackled issues within the adult court. The book appears to have been written for use by magistrates, and other professionals involved in Youth Court proceedings. The book is divided into two. Part One deals with the background, jurisdiction, powers and procedures of the court, and the nature of youth crime. Part Two deals with the sentencing powers of the court and the means by which sentencing decisions should be made.

Part One provides a well structured and easily understandable introduction to the purpose and operation of the Youth Court. This is assisted by a concise account of the historical development of the court and basic facts about youth crime, which provide an important and useful context for the rest of the book. The roles and responsibilities of the various agencies are

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well covered, and pre-court issues such as cautioning are also addressed. Emphasis is placed upon the need for a separate and special approach in dealing with young people rather than adults, a theme which is reinforced throughout this section. Court procedure, jurisdiction, and the sentencing process (including pre-sentence reports) are well covered. More complex (and potentially confusing) issues such as remands to custody and local authority accommodation are explained, although possibly more detail could have been given regarding the nature and process of remands to local authority accommodation and secure accommodation orders.

Part Two covers the principles governing the decision making process in sentencing and the various options available to the court. The emphasis here is very much upon the legislative requirements involved, whilst stressing that the book is not intended to replace legal advice which should be sought in all the most straightforward of cases. The principles of sentencing are outlined but it is not immediately clear how these should be operated within the Youth Court, although this is perhaps an inevitable consequence of the inherent complexity of the issue compounded by the various and competing legislative expectations placed upon the court. Each of the sentencing options available and factors governing the decision to make an order are described, although surprisingly little information is provided regarding the nature of different sentences and what the individual is likely to experience from them. More extracts from the Home Office 'National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders' may have been helpful in giving details of the type of work done and the basic expectations involved under the various community sentences. Greater detail regarding Supervision Orders, especially Specified Activity requirements and the courts' powers of breach, would have been particularly welcome.

Overall, the book is a very good introduction to the workings of the Youth Court and provides a useful reference point for anyone working with young people in trouble. However, with the current rate of legislative change, increasing politicisation of youth crime and recent reports from the Audit Commission and Labour Party proposing radical changes to the way in which young offenders are dealt with, it may not be long before a full revision is required.

Malcolm Brain is a Youth Justice worker in Newcastle upon Tyne.

ANDREW WEST

The drama of the Ridings School in Halifax (and at other schools) seems to have provoked lengthy public attention. Twice recently I overheard conversations that included the remark, 'what do we think of the Riding School?' - thoughtful older adults anxiously wondering what to make of the issues, finding it difficult to see through the babble of political posturing of politicians, civil servants and quangocrats, with a few teachers, headteachers, unions, local authority workers and perhaps parents thrown in for good measure. The Press Release for one of these books (Miller) refers to the Ridings with the words, 'the news is currently rife with stories of problem children and the implications for schools and teachers. The Ridings School, social contracts between parents and schools, pupil behaviour is now at the top of the educational agenda'. In some ways this last sentence sums up an issue running through these books (though not explicitly): the tripartite division of institution (school), people (parents), and acceptable action or behaviour (of children). Between them these three books indicate some of the plethora of potential responses that exist, and they note (but not all emphasise) the importance of underlying principles and values.

Ann Sherman's work sets out to 'capture the perceptions of children with little school experience, about what the school experience means to them' (unnumbered page 6). She interviewed children from five schools, in their first year, 'about what makes a good school, and the things they learn at school' (p 1) - essentially 'what is school for'. These conversations produced a wealth of interesting material well laid out by Sherman, and incorporating transcripts from the interviews. The importance of the role and power of teachers was very apparent: for example, children refused to accept suggested alternative school routines as viable (p 11), children distinguished important differences in what they learn at school, between work (hard) and play (easy) (p 5). Sherman notes that teachers referred to assigned duties as work and children followed this categorisation: also 'an attitude about the trivialness of play seems to have reached these children' (p 7) (in contrast to the widely regarded *importance* of play for children).

Children saw teachers responsible for creating rules, except for the 'occasional mention of God having a hand in their creation' (p 14). There was no participation of children in school operation: 'in no instance did children say they had a hand in deciding what the rules for their classroom would be' (p 15). Sherman also noted the fostering of an atmosphere of competition (rather than cooperation).

This is a short book, and after the 49 pages giving a fascinating account of children's perceptions, the second half contains two chapters. The first looks at the implications of the 'message children are receiving about school' - 'we hear the children describe school as a place of routines and rules, where naughty behaviour is not tolerated and work is emphasised. School is a place of preparation for the future where the teacher is boss. Few adults would argue against a school system that promoted these ideals' (p 51). Sherman goes on to consider hierarchy and power, the role of the teacher, 'the difficulty in meeting both society's demands and individual needs for the children' (p 71). She discusses implications for education processes in a final chapter clearly aimed more at the professional than the general reader. The implications essentially require an investment in morale and teacher education that it seems unlikely will be forthcoming in the near future.

Turning from the voices of children to the book by Miller is something of a shock. Here the voice of the child is substantially absent. But the books are linked, in 'the notion that behaviour is learned and that new behaviour can also be learned' (p 32), echoing Sherman's description of children who have learned behaviour and rules in school. However, the shock is not surprising, for the book is about 'improving pupil's behaviour' - that is, the behaviour of those who have not learnt the rules and routines - and the role of educational psychologists.

Miller's context is that 'for the last quarter of a century at least, the idea

that the behaviour of pupils in school is becoming more unruly and uncontrolled has never been absent for long from newspaper reports and political discussion' (p 1), and later he notes a series of 'legitimate questions generated by this public concern' which include children ('becoming more out of control'?), parents ('abdicating their responsibilities'?), teaching methods, school funding, the value of teachers, the professionalisation of education. Then through the use of personal anecdotes he moves from the macro to the micro, from the outward sweep to the inward gaze, in order to suggest 'that the behaviour of pupils in schools is a subject which is not easily reduced to a few pragmatic questions' (p 3) - questions to which he sadly does not return.

Miller's book is more limited than its title would suggest, and concerns the role and practice of educational psychologists (as 'EPs' throughout), and their relationships with teachers and schools. He notes that historically two approaches regarding pupil behaviour are - the craft of the teacher (in terms of control), and the study of the 'problem child'. The book progresses through 'teacher culture', including staffroom support and teachers' attributions of the problem, with some interesting material, and then onto the use of the consultant (EP), drawing in particular from interviews regarding 'successful interventions'.

The book edited by Varma continues the technical emphasis of Miller, concerning 'best practice' of dealing, again, with 'problems in children' (p 6). These are defined early on in 'a few examples of the categories of children who experience and/or create problems at school serve to illustrate the challenge to teachers' (p 7): these categories are 'children with learning difficulties, children with specific learning difficulties, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), children with conduct disorders, under-achieving children'. The opening chapter is followed by eight authors looking at different approaches (psychiatric treatment, psychological approaches to assessment, a systemic behavioural approach, the psychodynamic approach) to particular groups (children in mainstream and special schools, children with learning difficulties, children from ethnic minorities) and finally, work with the families of problem children. Problem children are not just of school age in this book, with the case study for the systemic behavioural approach looking at a three year old.

The book makes use of professional language/jargon, and presumes some knowledge in that it lacks an overview introduction or conclusion. It would seem to be aimed at other professionals who will deal with or need to identify those children designated as a problem. (I put it like this, for it reminded me of one conversation concerning the Ridings publicity, where a scholar said it put him in mind of the demonisation process in the Medieval witch trials of Southern France, a field with which he was familiar).

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Taken together the three books reveal a large gulf in the perspectives on, and approaches to, children and school. The existence of a range of professional constituencies, supporting different disciplines is clear: and the distance from asking children their perceptions on school to the issues, processes and definitions of professional intervention, is truly enormous. This should not be surprising since 'children', like 'adults', are not a homogeneous group (which is best implicitly acknowledged in the chapter on ethnic minority children in Varma). But unlike adults, children cannot establish, for example, self-help groups or rights groups. In the absence of work on recording children's views, ideas and perceptions, what is their - children's - 'best interests' is defined by adults, some of whom are in a perpetuating professional culture (as partially illustrated by Miller of teachers). Rules and routines for children, defined by adults, play a large part in all three books: this was particularly cited by Sherman; for Miller one result of the research was that teachers may need 'to experience temporary removal from the obligation to assert school policy' (p 210); while what is essentially the 'the teacher' chapter in Varma, emphasises four rules of classroom management as a basis (p 69).

Bearing in mind the lack of participation of children in the organisation, administration and control of school life, the ideas of 'managing' them, and the major problem of establishing rules and routines across a non-homogeneous group that contains significant differences (culture, ethnicity, gender, age etc) - the non-specialist might dip into Varma to gain insight into that professional world, read Sherman (especially the first half) and look at Miller for particular interest around teachers and school; but try throughout to retain a nagging pain at the back of the head - what does this look like if I am a child?

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MERLE DAVIES

This book was much easier to read than the title may suggest. It is the follow up to an original study conducted in the US, of 26 human service professionals from law, teaching, nursing and social work who had just completed their initial training and were in their first year of working in the public services. The original study looked at how much stress and the sources of that stress they suffered during their first year and the ways in which these new professionals coped with it.

The follow up picks up those same professionals 12 years on and considers what happened when their idealism collided with the realities of their work. How did they keep motivated and what had happened after the burnout many of them experienced in their first years. The book is divided into three parts and in part 1, Setting the Scene, opens up almost like a novel, it had me hooked as it introduced its main characters. One, a poverty lawyer, became a Beverly Hills tax attorney, a social worker had become an estate agent and one of the 26 had died in the interim period. Some had managed to sustain or, in some cases, regain the idealism they had on leaving college.

Under the heading, 'From Stress to Burnout', Cherniss takes us through the changes that took place during the first couple of years in the professional lives of his sample. He discusses how due to the stresses and frustrations of their work they became less caring and committed during this time as a form of self protection. One of the sample was so burned out at the end of the first year that she wanted to give up work in her chosen profession altogether. Eventually they lowered their goals as they came to believe that their original goals were unrealistically high.

Part 2 tackles the next decade to see whether these professionals were able to recover from the burnout and if so what had helped them to do so. When he met up with them again only 10 were still working in the public services and of these, only 8 were still involved in working directly with clients. Of those who had left, he discovered, some had become burned out and lost their idealism and some left because they became more concerned with making money or achieving conventional career success. The decisions to leave public services were complex and reflected the values of society at large. Status was important, not just financial reward but social and profes-

sional respect. For those who stayed they found other ways of achieving this, one, for example, wrote for a professional journal, another was a specialist in his field, this enabled them to gain respect from other professionals.

The author then considers how responsive the professionals have become to change and innovation within their work. He found that they were more flexible and willing to experiment than they had been in their first year as they had gained self confidence in their abilities. However this willingness to experiment was restricted to their own ideas and he questions this limitation to new experiences and the effect on professional progress and renewal. He offers two examples of professionals opening up to external ideas, one where they were involved in the process of innovation and the other 'to make veteran professionals more open to innovation by making them novices again'. Putting them into new situations every five years or so to re-stimulate them.

In part three of the book there are case studies of 5 of the professionals who were the most burned out at the end of their first year of practice 'but were among the most committed and caring ten years later'. Of these, four had made a significant job change within the first three years which had positively affected the way in which they viewed their work. One of the sample had, from the very beginning, found her work intellectually challenging and had been involved in innovative work with her colleagues which had enabled her not to burn out in her first year. This challenge came later on in their careers for others in the form of special interests which helped to motivate and excite them, keeping them satisfied in their work. the most successful professionals were considered to be those who had been able to cultivate an interest which also met an organisational need.

Autonomy was viewed as important for keeping professionals motivated and those with a high degree of autonomy the author conceded were amongst the most committed and satisfied as they were able to utilise their professional skills and design the work in a way which would best do this. This does not bode well for public service professionals in the UK whose autonomy is currently being eroded by changes within the public services. In a warning to those involved in the management of public services Cherniss concludes, 'We should begin to view human service programmes... as moral communities, not "service delivery systems"'.

Definitely worth reading, not only was it interesting for anyone working in, or considering a career in, the public services but also for its human interest appeal.

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Patrick C. L. Heaven
Adolescent Health; the role of individual differences
Routledge 1996
ISBN: 0 415 11578 7 (hbk)
ISBN: 0 415 11579 5 (pbk)
£45.00 (hbk)
£14.99 (pbk)
pp 201

Susan Moore, Doreen Rosenthal and Anne Mitchell
Youth, AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Routledge 1996
ISBN: 0 415 10632 X (hbk)
ISBN: 0 415 10633 8 (pbk)
£45.00 (hbk)
£13.99 (pbk)
pp 174

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RACHEL BROMNICK

Routledge have published two excellent new texts in their *Adolescence and Society* series. In the first of these to be reviewed, Patrick Heaven in *Adolescent Health; the role of individual differences* brings together the research on a number of important concerns of young people and those that care about them. After a general introduction the chapters include health education, stress and coping, body image and eating behaviours, sex and AIDS, substance use, mental health and lifestyle, exercise and diet. These are much written about topics. What distinguishes the approach in this book from many others is the decisive move away from the medical model of health and illness. Heaven acknowledges the stress and uncertainty that some young people face during this development transition, but also highlights psychological growth and positive aspects of health-related behaviour. Hence health is viewed from a biopsychosocial perspective and individual differences are considered across a wide range of cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. The final chapter provides an important conclusion to the book by examining the role of empowerment for successful behavioural change.

The second of these books concentrates the focus specifically on AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases in youth. Moore, Rosenthal and Mitchell have many years of experience and published work in this area between them and have stamped their authority with this important new review of the literature. The authors draw on their own research and that of others but it is refreshing to see the voices of young people used to illustrate their points. The book start with an introduction to the scope of the problem and goes on to consider young people's sexual behaviour in light of these concerns including their knowledge, understanding of risks and attitudes about sexual health.

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Sexual health research has a history of doubting the reliability of what young people say about their sexual attitudes, knowledge and behaviour. The authors here look at the meanings beneath what is said rather than attempting to discover the 'truth'. Whilst much sex education is directed towards encouraging young people not to engage in sex outside of a trusting relationship, they expose the problems associated with 'trusting to love'. They discuss the conservative notions of love and romance that many young people express when talking about their experiences of sex, seeing this as symptomatic of the social pressures within heterosexuality to define sexuality in a particular way. Throughout the book these representations of sex as love are shown to provide a barrier to safe sex practices. The emphasis is firmly on interpreting research findings, although issues of policy and education are considered, including the role of peers, parents and schools.

Both books are strongly recommended to professionals working with young people, in particular health care providers and sex educators, as well as for those who study adolescents.

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Johanna Wyn & Rob White
Rethinking Youth
Sage Publications 1997
ISBN: 0 7619 5522 4
pp 169

PAUL ALLENDER

This book is by Australian authors and aims to present a new concept of 'youth' which challenges the categorisation of youth, based on age, used by researchers, academics and policy-makers.

So two questions immediately come to mind. Is the book relevant beyond the boundaries of Australia and is the book's very ambitious aim fulfilled?

The answer to the first question is a very definite 'yes': *Rethinking Youth* should be of interest to teachers, lecturers and students in youth studies across the world: it provides an introduction to many of the conceptual issues regarding youth that have been discussed in recent years. However, the answer to the second question is definitely not so clear-cut and the remainder of this review will be spent on examining this matter.

First, the nature of this 're-thinking' should be examined. The authors question the category of 'youth' as a concept based on age and write: '...being a "young person" does have real implications, but its meaning is tied to historical and specific circumstances and the ways in which relations of social division are played out' (p 3). So, while there is some commonality between groups of young people, not least as regards the failures of youth labour markets, social divisions of gender, class and ethnicity or race cut across it.

Wyn and White suggest that much of the literature has accepted assumptions about youth from developmental psychology and that little work has been done on the theoretical basis of categorisation based on age. In the place of the universal stages approach of developmental psychology of identity formation, etc. they propose a concept of youth as a *social process.* Generally, they seem to accept the notion of youth as a series of transitions, something that has been well explored in the literature. However, they reject the idea that 'adulthood' represents a state of 'arrival', the end of the transitional process.

They reject the concept of 'adolescence' as a universal experience. In doing this they also, therefore, challenge traditional notions of what adulthood represents. Our authors write: 'Although "growing up" does involve the establishment of an identity, this is not necessarily "fixed" and may go through significant change during one's life' (p 54). In this they are absolutely correct.

In their first chapter *The Concept of Youth*, they also draw attention to the fact that in many non-Western countries the idea of 'youth' is not appropriate because the idea of childhood as a period cared for in a safe secure environment is simply not the case. In Thailand and the Philippines children are sold for sex; the military government in Argentina has perpetrated crimes on young people and in South Africa huge numbers of young people were detained during the apartheid regime. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, in 1986 the International Labour Office estimated that there were approximately 50 million children under the age of 15 *at work*. This led the United Nations to conclude that, in the urban areas of the less developed regions of the world, youth, as a period of transition between childhood and the 'world of work' simply does not exist.

Wyn and White then are trying to conceptualise 'youth' in a way that challenges the traditional notion of it as being based on age, approximately between 13 and 25, and it as a transitional period from childhood. For them, youth is a *relational* concept, based on its relationship to adulthood. If traditional notions of the latter are challenged, as the authors do, then traditional notions of youth are also challenged. If adulthood is *not* about

'arrival' at and 'completion' of identity formation, then clearly youth as a period of 'adolescence' *cannot* be seen as a transition on the way to it.

This argument seems very clear and does challenge the status quo. However, the big question is 'do the authors actually provide the reader with the detailed arguments to substantiate their position?' The answer is, frustratingly, both 'yes' and 'no'.

They challenge traditional conceptions of youth and yet also accept that it does have some validity as a discrete, universal concept. However, they themselves draw attention to the fact that in many, if not most, non-European countries, the concept of 'youth' simply does not exist. For Australian Aboriginal people, the concept is not appropriate to characterise the experience of growing up. So in relation to non-European countries, it might be more appropriate to simply *jettison* the concept of 'youth' as we understand it in the advanced industrial countries? Wyn and White draw our attention to the social divisions of gender, class and ethnicity/race, but don't these divisions really relate to *within* the advanced industrial nations? Wouldn't it be true to say that, generally, we do not understand the conceptualisations related to age in other cultures around the world and therefore that the concept of youth, even as a *social process,* is one based on our exclusive experiences of capitalist economies and societies?

Having said that, the book is extremely good at presenting a 're-thinking of youth' within the advanced industrial economies. This review has concentrated on drawing attention to some of the book's shortcomings and has therefore, so far, neglected some of it's very strong points. The authors draw our attention, throughout, to the failures of the labour markets to provide employment for young people and the consequent marginalisation that this brings. They reject the concept of the 'underclass' and instead emphasise the responsibilities of societies to provide for young people and incorporate them into the mainstream of social life.

They, unsurprisingly, extend their concept of marginalisation to the many adults who also do not have a 'legitimate livelihood' and come to the conclusion that class analysis is central to a rethinking of the concept of youth. In this sense, perhaps there is nothing that new about Wyn and White's 're-thinking of youth': it could be said to be the application of aspects of Marxist analysis to the conceptualisation and theorisation of youth. However, in itself, this does not constitute a problem at all and therefore *Re-thinking Youth* represents a valuable contribution to the debates on 'youth' and therefore I wholeheartedly recommend it to the readers of *Youth and Policy.*

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Eric Blyth and Judith Milner (eds)
Exclusion from School: Inter-Professional Issues for Policy and Practice
Routledge 1996
ISBN: 0 415 13277 0
pp 296

TED HARVEY

REVIEWS

As the moral panic over education continues to gain momentum the quality of argument deteriorates. Exclusion occupies a minor but significant position in the debate, being the logical conclusion for those who see the market as king and have a punitive approach to miscreants, but too clearly linked with issues of unequal opportunities for those with a more egalitarian and child-centred vision for education. The approach of this book, the product of a conference at the University of Huddersfield in 1994, is clearly in the latter category, and here we find a thorough and convincing exploration of an alternative to the current orthodoxy.

The three sections - trends and theoretical overview, consequences of exclusion, and preventive strategies and policies, together form a coherent and detailed analysis of exclusion from every angle together with some strategies for action of similar rigor.

'Trends and theoretical overview' cuts below the prevailing superficiality by first examining the national context of exclusion and then, in an article by Tony Booth, makes a telling critique by looking at the processes behind the bald statistics; clearly exclusion is a complex social phenomena whose representation is problematic and warrants more careful treatment. His observation that 'In practise, it may be a matter of chance whether a pupil is subject to a formal disciplinary exclusion, sent to an off-site disruptive, categorised as having "emotional and behavioural difficulties" or "learning difficulties", and sent to day or residential schools' shows the arbitrariness of the processes involved, and the large handful of salt that should be taken with the reading of any quantitative report.

Other articles in this section shed light on the position of exclusion in a matrix of social and political factors, including the thorny issue of the over-representation of Afro-Caribbean boys in the exclusion statistics. The only disappointment for me in this section is the article by Wendy Marshall on professionals, children and power. This is a central theme which reoccurs throughout the book and, while this article does contain some excellent content it is written in the kind of language which will alienate fellow professionals in their droves.

Part 2 'The consequences of exclusion' continues with the wide-ranging critique of current practise. Carl Parsons even successfully demonstrates the economic wastefulness of exclusions which counted alongside the

clearly negative effects on the pupil him or herself make an unanswerable case for a reconsideration of policy. Several other articles in this section sensitively explore exclusion from the pupil's perspective and reveal the importance of pupil-teacher relationships.

In their introduction to 'Who excludes whom?' Cedric Cullingford and Jenny Morrison point out that 'in the context of the new education market children are increasingly viewed in terms of attendance, behaviour or attainment rather than having any intrinsic value' which beautifully crystallises the only substantially unexplored theme which one could have wished this book to address directly.

In part 3 some preventive strategies and policies are outlined which show that the first two sections need not be impractical theorising or sympathising. In particular the staff sharing scheme brought from New Zealand in 1991 successfully unpicks many of the assumptions which underlie the way teachers commonly work in secondary schools and which produces exclusions in an arbitrary fashion. The cultures of secondary schools is a key issue here and this article raises some profound questions concerning the way they work.

The 'cities in schools' initiative encompassing a whole range of approaches is also covered. Perhaps somewhat inconsistently, this piece outlines the benefits to excluded pupils of the bridge project - a scheme which involves attendance at college and work experience. While one can acknowledge the value on a practical level of such provision, it perhaps does lack the critical edge one expects. Why for instance do the young people respond so much more positively to their experience of college and college lecturers than they did to school and teachers?

Overall this is an excellent book with remarkable consistency given the number and range of contributors. It constitutes a thorough, detailed and powerful critique of common practice together with a similar exposition of a more just and effective alternative approach.

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Penny Tinkler
Constructing Girlhood:
Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950
Taylor and Francis 1995
ISBN: 0 7484 0285 3 (hbk)
ISBN: 0 7484 0286 1 (pbk)
pp 209

JEAN SPENCE

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The period 1920-1950 in Britain, which is considered by Penny Tinkler in this book, is one beset with complex and contradictory messages in relation to gender and adolescence. It is a period which has received some attention from those working within the field of community education because it lies within the range of oral history and is therefore open to developmental work around personal and social history with young and old. It has proved a particularly rich field in exploring the memories of older women around gender issues. We have also inherited a wealth of documentary evidence from those years in written, oral and visual texts. Most particularly, everyone can bring to mind images from films of the time, and probably many of our stereotypes about gender in particular in the years in question come from film imagery, particularly those of the romantic, Hollywood genre. As an alternative source, women working around gender in community and youth work contexts have long been keen on using the film 'Rosie the Rivetter' as a means of exploring some of these stereotypes and asking questions about gender roles during the years of the second world war. Yet the prevailing imagery remains. 1920-1950 was not an age of active feminism. Nor, apparently, was it a time of youthful revolt. The 1939 circular 1482 which begot the statutory youth service was a response to the onset of war and a projection of the effects this might have upon young people, rather than a response to adolescence per se, even though adolescence was more and more coming to be seen as a stage of the life cycle which needed careful management if young people were to develop into satisfactory adults.

The inter-war years saw women achieve full adult suffrage because of the role which they played in the first world war, (rather than as a direct conse-quence of pre-war suffragette and suffragist activity), but they were also years beset with difficulties for women in relation to both the marriage market, where they were in surplus, and the labour market which continued to be seen as the domain of men despite the urgent necessity for many women, of whatever class, to work. The images which we have inherited are of women throwing off the shackles of Victorian conventionality, reaching out into the modern world to assert their independence, but always in a manner which ultimately affirms their femininity and dependence upon men.

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The representations from the second world war and the immediate post war years are if anything, more avowedly anti-feminist. On the one hand we see women struggling to deal with the conditions of war, which included huge efforts in managing disrupted families, evacuation, bombing and rationing and on the other hand we are shown them taking their place in uniform and in industry as they did in the first world war. However these war-time tasks were always considered to be ones of sacrifice. The great sacrifice which women were making was of their 'true selves' as expressed in dependent femininity and the great hope was that after the war, women would be able to return to their natural vocation as wives and mothers living in a romantic paradise of rose-entwined domesticity buttressed by an all-providing welfare state.

Penny Tinkler's book sets out to demonstrate the complexity of the gender issues in a changing and disrupted society. She is concerned with the manner in which girls' magazines between 1920 and 1950 used an understanding of the age and social location of the reader to promote ideas which ultimately reasserted patriarchal dominance and guided young women towards a conventional destination of dependent wife and mother within the nuclear family. Tinkler's thesis is that through a process of negotiation between the needs and interests of the readers, who, after all, would not buy the magazines if they offered nothing of interest, and the needs and interests of publishers, editors, teachers and parents, images of femininity were constructed by writers and editors which attempted to deal with the new 'modern' conditions for young women whilst at the same time re-asserting the old patriarchal message of a woman's real interests lying in marriage and motherhood.

It is clear from reading this book that after the first world war there was something of a crisis in young women in particular fully accepting traditional gender roles. Although the war had clearly taken the heat out of the Suffragette movement, the reality was that the real situation of women was changed and changing. The major change was that most women, working class or middle class, expected to work, especially when they were young and before marriage. Moreover, despite restrictions upon their labour, they had demonstrated during the first world war and demonstrated again during the second world war, that they were able to satisfactorily undertake work which was traditionally designated as male. In these circumstances, ideas about the modern women were born. Such ideas included a freeing of some of the restrictions around the female body and sexuality which prior to the second world war led to a greater awareness of the possibilities of lesbian relationships. Tinkler understands these developments associated with modernity as deeply threatening to the patriarchal establishment. On the one hand, it was crucial to the maintenance of the status quo that women continue to understand their role in the labour market as secondary

to their role in the home. On the other hand, this could only be achieved if young women accepted heterosexuality.

Tinkler suggests that the girls magazines of the period were only able to deal with the complexity of the situation by targeting particular audiences in relation to a combination of their class position, their work/school position and their place on the heterosexual career ladder. What is interesting in this regard, is the manner in which the magazines designed for middle and upper class young women, particularly those still in secondary education, seem to offer wider possibilities and much more progressive messages than for instance the magazine aimed at the younger, elementary school girl or young worker. This obviously reflects the reality of the real range of opportunities available to different groups and the extent of the class divide at the time. However, as the analysis demonstrates, ultimately all women received the same message. This message was that youth was a period in women's lives which could be used to explore the possibilities of being modern as long as certain boundaries - particularly those of hetero-sexuality, were recognised and respected. These boundaries related to such matters as the nature and expectations of work, of relationships with friends, parents and boys, of the body, including a rigidly enforced silence around female bodily functions associated with sexuality such as menstruation and a separation of the body into public and private parts and ultimately demanded total conformity to the idea that a woman's true fulfilment lay in nature - in dependent marriage and responsible motherhood.

Generally, I found this book easy to read. It is well researched using contemporary sources known to youth workers such as Pearl Jephcott (1942, 1948) and Josephine MacAllister Brew (1943) as well as the maga-zines themselves, correspondence with individuals who could remember the period and archival sources - particularly the Mass Observation archives. Occasionally there was some repetition, which probably relates back to the origin of the book in a PhD thesis and sometimes, although I was interested in the subject matter, I found the text slightly tedious and ulti-mately felt that the analysis and the points made could have been commu-nicated in a shorter volume.

The interest of the book lies not only in the manner in which it addresses a period about which there is too little written in relation to young women, but also in its relevance to understanding the representation of women in other textual material from the period. I found myself constantly thinking particularly about the images projected in films and what these meant to the women of the time. I also found myself considering what these some-times contradictory and always complex messages must have meant to women I know who were young at the time. In that sense the analysis has contemporary relevance. Moreover, the approach which Tinkler takes to her subject could be usefully used in relation to contemporary maga-

zines for girls which are projecting quite different images even from those explored by McRobbie in 'From Jackie to Just Seventeen' (1991). I also found some resonance with the messages communicated in magazines produced prior to the first world war.

Overall, Tinkler has produced a thought-provoking text, slightly limited in terms of the range of contextual historical material explored, but fully analysed in relation to the magazines available at the time. The book will be of interest to those working within community education who are interested in gender, youth and history as well as those who have a concern for the significance of media representations in young people's lives.

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Jean Spence *University of Sunderland.*

Charlie McConnell (ed)
Community Education, the Making of an Empowering Profession
1996

JOHN PLAYER

'Would you review "Community Education; an Empowering Profession"?' Sure Tony, Nae bother! I said. What I failed to realize was that Charlie McConnell's edited publication entailed a dash through 32 previously published articles between 1975 and 1995 about some of the key issues and developments in community education in Scotland. Even Sir Kenneth Alexander who wrote the foreword declared that he was 'unable to have read all the contents!' Moreover what sticks in the craw the most is the fact that this £15 paperback is very poorly bound. Parts of Charlie McConnell's lucid, but managerial, introduction are scattered in my one year old son's bedroom along with Postman Pat et al.

With these minor difficulties in mind, part of the purpose of this book is to celebrate the twenty first anniversary of 'The Challenge of Change' or more commonly known as 'The Alexander Report', the government report which was seminal in the development of community education in Scotland. As Charlie McConnell points out 'The Alexander Report' is

acknowledged as a milestone by the community education profession and was very much the product of a social democratic ethos. In Part One of the volume subtitled 'the Challenge of Change' it is left to Ian Martin to critically evaluate this social democratic ethos supposedly underpinning the consensual views of community education adopted by the then Scottish Council for Community Education. Martin seems the most determined, in this volume at least, to relate to structural inequality as the real cause of educational disadvantage and he has the courage to set out five basic principles which would underpin his model of community education. With Charlie McConnell, Martin is at pains to point out that community education is not 'axiomatically radical', a self evident truth that may seem glaringly obvious in the late 1990s but in the late 1970s this was more of a contested notion given the advent and subsequent demise of the CDPs.

However in the early 1980s Strathclyde Regional Council set about placing community education within a positive discrimination and wider social strategy to combat multiple deprivation. This volume reprints the paper 'A Little Local Inequality' by Ronald Young, one of the leading architects of Strathclyde region's Community Development strategy, in Part Two under the heading 'the Boundaries of Change'. Ronald Young's opinion of Glasgow City Council's recent decision to delete community development from their Social Work Development would be pertinent and interesting. Not least because it is evident that with the funding cuts imposed on Scottish Local Authorities by the Scottish Secretary of State, community education and community development in particular seem exposed, undefended and vulnerable.

For me Ronald Young's article is of interest because as a local politician he was attacking the local state for 'being too hierarchical and therefore oppressive of initiatives'. Charlie McConnell, I feel, glosses over or fails to engage with community education's role in corporate management and governance. Charlie, in his editorial, seems to suggest that good corporate management and support for local community action as highlighted by 'Strathclyde Regional Council's Social Strategy for the Eighties' is a contradiction that was somehow resolved. Community workers working on such issues as the 'Poll Tax' in Strathclyde would no doubt argue that the local state did not 'support collective action building from the bottom either by example or argument' as outlined in the strategy. Moreover, the hierarchical nature of the Community Education Service in Scotland is not, as it was for Ronald Young, a concern for the Editor of this volume. McConnell does point out that he did previously in an article reproduced in Part Three take the Service to task for being too conventional and not linking community education to community development and social action.

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As a community development worker employed by the Community Education Service I found Part Four useful especially Jean Barr's article which argued that much of the community development approach in education lacked rigour and in fact sold the 'disadvantaged' short in 'cognitive content'. The question here being is community education and community development genuinely educational. The resolution of which is important for the defence of issue based, work and touches upon some of the themes inherent in Harold Entwistle's 'Antonio Gramsci; Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics'.

Part Four includes articles on the advent of the competence model of training of community education workers introduced by CeVe, a sub committee of SCEC (sponsors of this volume), and the introduction of Performance Indicators for the Community Education Service in 1993. Both of which have been subject to much controversy and have been criticised as 'testament to the power of functionalism' and suffused with 'pseudo commercial language of the market'. McConnell in the editorial argues that the 'profession' has been sensitive to these concerns and has revised their proposals accordingly. Cynically it might be suggested that the editor as Chief Executive of SCEC is unlikely to argue otherwise. In fact, McConnell understandably uses the editorial to promote SCEC's role in 'ensuring that the profile of community education is now much better established in Scotland than in any other part of the UK'

I do feel that this very valuable volume fails to deconstruct the use of words such as 'empowerment'. A jargonistic word used so prominently in the title of the volume that it tends to be used in a 'hopelessly rhetorical and sloganised way' (I. Martin). This is indicative of the volume's inability to really grapple with community education's contradictory role in managing poverty on behalf of the British State. While it is these contradictions that allows space as change agents on one hand, on the other they constrain us as capillaries of the Scottish Office in administering cuts in provision to the 'disadvantaged'.

To conclude here rather than continue to 'rant' this volume is very useful and recommended reading and 'aw that' given that there is an acknowledgement of an underlying agenda belonging to the sponsor SCEC.

John Player is a Community Education Worker, Wester Hailes, Edinburgh.

Shane J. Blackman
Youth: Positions and Oppositions
Avebury
ISBN: 1 85628 637 1
£35.00
pp 269

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HELEN M.F. JONES

Many will welcome *Youth: Positions and Oppositions* as a worthwhile addition to the canon of studies focusing on young people. Particularly interesting and controversial aspects are the ethnographic methodology and the generation of grounded theory. The first, as with any other methodology, has both its advanatages and disadvantages whilst the latter results in some concepts of potential interest to future researchers. Blackman gathered empirical data by sharing the experiences of four groups of young people who were studying at a school in the south of England. All are academically able. One group of young men and one of young women are defined by this achievement as 'boffins'. The other two groups are defined by their involvement in youth culture; the young men as 'mods' and the young women as 'new wave'.

In order to express his data, Blackman has developed a new theoretical language. I found the process of developing grounded theory particularly interesting to follow through and, in this case, it proved to be a successful framework. However, whilst I found the methodology fascinating, the empirical data illustrates some of the difficulties facing the ethnographer. As an ethnographer, Blackman documents and analyses: he is not engaged in models of work more familiar to many people who work with young people. The rôle is difficult to sustain and inconsistencies are evident in Blackman's handling of situations as well as in the documentation and analysis. For example, transcriptions reveal variations in Blackman's participation in group discussions: he contributes information on circumcision and nuclear power but does not correct the idea that the age of lesbian consent is 21. On another occasion he notes, 'in an attempt to prevent the conversation from deteriorating I introduced the topic of marriage'. This provides an opportunity for the young men to indulge in an oppressive, sexist tirade which, despite the fact that he raised the topic, Blackman does not challenge.

Blackman notes key differences in his relationships with the four groups. Further analysis of the consequences of these differences would have made an interesting and important addition. In the first chapter he observes, 'I established a close relationship more quickly with the youth groups with whom I shared an interest in youth cultural style and music,

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than with the academic groups'. Why did his interest in academic work, evinced by his conducting research for a doctorate, not provide a 'shared interest' with the academic groups? More significantly, he acknowledges that, as a male researcher, his relationship with the young women's groups is different from that with the male groups. The implications of this fact raise certain difficulties. In particular, the use of judgmental vocabulary when referring to the young women raises doubts concerning his objectivity and, indeed, integrity. The new wave girls' version of school uniform, for example, is adjudged 'sexually attractive without conforming to conventional markers of female prettiness'. Of their frankness concerning topics such as masturbation, male erection and sexual intercourse, he remarks, 'their expressive command of this subject matter is disturbing'. Blackman does not examine his own attitudes to the young women nor how this affects his analysis. The effect of his presence is similarly neglected although its impact is apparent.

The remarks about the young women are linked with a lack of clarity concerning the precise significance of patriarchy and absence of definition of Blackman's interpretation of feminism. The rôle of the ethnographer restricts opportunities for exploring such subjects with the young people and conclusions have to be drawn from witnessed behaviour. Blackman suggests, 'the new wave girls can be understood as becoming feminist'; a conclusion based in their confidence in their sexual identities and their consequent challenge to male control of language. The boffin girls, who intend to gain degrees, good jobs and responsibility, are not identified as 'becoming feminist'. Their knowledge of sexual matters is less developed but their attitudes encapsulate a vision of equality founded on a strong self-identity, self-reliance and understanding which would merit feminist analysis.

Overall, the data concerning both groups of young women is particularly interesting - pointing towards a positive future for them. This is, of course, borne out by recent statistics concerning girls' academic achievements. However, in this context, the age of much of the material becomes evident. The empirical research seems to have been conducted during the mid-1980s: the young people are taking 'O' levels (impossible after 1987), they impersonate 'Crossroads' characters, singing 'Mother of Mine' is an in-joke and Thatcher is PM. With the exception of the first and last chapters, most of the references are to publications from that era. The exploration of the empirical data and the extrapolated grounded theory remain of interest but the virtual absence of references to texts less than a decade old undermines the significance of some of the conclusions drawn from the data.

A comprehensive glossary would have been a useful alternative to the inconsistent inclusion of explanations within the text and would have

made aspects of the youth culture more accessible. The reader is told what the young people mean by 'my old man', 'the old bill', and 'pigs' - and what a poker is for. However, 'O' levels, CND and purple hearts are unexplained. 'Newsom' pupils and Bourdieu's concept of habitus are mentioned without clarification. 'A dog' is defined as 'a slag', a term which the author uses a if it was a technical term rather than an offensive word with sexual connotations based in the patriarchal attitudes criticised elsewhere in the text.

In conclusion, I found both the book's data and its methodologies interesting and would recommend it to anyone interested in the study of young people. However, it seemed to me to have the feel of 'work in progress' - as if the thesis has not completed its transition to published book, despite the age of the data. Finally, I have never previously encountered such an atrociously poor example of the art of proof-reading in a published text.

Helen M.F. Jones *Lecturer in Community and Youth Studies*
University College of St. Martin, Lancaster.

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Short Cuts

Helen Roberts and Darshan Sachdev (eds)
Young Peoples' Social Attitudes:
Having their say, the views of 12-19 year olds
Barnardos 1996
ISBN: 0 90204 630 6
£18.99
pp 168
Available from Barnardos, Tanners Lane,
Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

John Balding
Young People in 1994
University of Exeter Schools Health Education Unit
ISBN: 85068 160 X
pp 157
Available from School of Education, University of Exeter,
Heavitree Road, Exeter EX1 2LU

John Coleman
Key Data on Adolescence 1997
Trust for the Study of Adolescence 1997
ISBN: 1 871504 21 X
£14.99
pp 87
Available from Trust for the Study of Adolescence,
23 New Road, Brighton BN1 1WZ

John Balding et al
Bully Off: Young people that fear going to school
University of Exeter Schools Health Education Unit 1996
ISBN 0 85068 175 8
pp 154

John Balding et al
Cash and Carry? Young people, their friends, and offensive weapons
University of Exeter Schools Health Education Unit 1996
ISBN: 85068 173 1
pp 76

John Balding
Young people and Illegal Drugs in 1996
University of Exeter Schools Health Education Unit 1996
ISBN: 0 85068 174 X
pp 26

Doug Nicholls
An Outline History of Youth and Community
Work and the Union 1834-1997
The Community and Youth Workers' Union/Pepar Press 1997
ISBN: 0 94868 053 9
£7.99
pp 41

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TONY JEFFS

Six of the above publications are largely data based. All are useful but by far the most exciting and potentially important is the *Young People's Social Attitudes: Having their say, the views of 12-19 years olds.* 1983 saw the launch of the *British Social Attitudes Survey* an annual nationwide survey of approximately 3500 individuals. It was designed to unearth both what a cross section of British people were thinking about key issues at a given point-of-time and monitor changes. In 1994 the survey was extended to include young people aged 12 to 18 living in the households covered. Topics specifically addressed included age of consent; education; crime and punishment; gender and family roles; race; politics; and expectations regarding the future. The book comprises a collection of well-written and accessible chapters linking the findings of the Survey to other research. For those who work with or are simply interested in young people this book is absolutely essential reading. The debt of gratitude which I suspect will be eventually owed those who initiated this extension of the BSA will be difficult to repay.

All the publications emanating from Exeter are linked to a series of surveys which have looked at health related aspects of young peoples lives. Although the focus is on health this is interpreted widely and *Young People in 1994* contains a welter of data covering diet, social activities, expenditure patterns, schooling and family relationships. In addition are specialist studies on bullying, the carrying of weapons and use/availability of illegal drugs. Much of the data re-surfaces in the Coleman publication but it is still well worth turning to the originals for the breadth of coverage and insights offered.

Key Data on Adolescence can perhaps best be described as mini Social Trends devoted to young people. It gathers information from a range of contemporary sources, adds a commentary and reproduces the data in an easily digestible form. With separate sections on demographic trends; education and training; physical health; mental health; and crime it provides a quick and accessible source of data for the busy trainer or worker looking to check out an impression or illustrate a point. Not cheap but well worth

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having on hand if you can afford it. Let us hope those responsible will find the time and energy to produce this annually.

Doug Nicholls has produced an outline not a book - there is a difference. What the reader gets is a chronology listing year by year key publications; government reports and legislation; political events; youth and community work initiatives; and CYWU developments. Here is useful bibliography, a barebones history and a repository where those so inclined can check out dates or titles. Sadly it is in many ways a lost opportunity - how much more valuable it would have been if a commentary and brief history of the CYWU had been added. Having done the hard toil why oh why did the author not treat us to a celebration of the achievements of the CYWU? To an account which gave some insight into the lives and work of those who have contributed so much towards sustaining a small but nevertheless valuable organisation.

Tony Jeffs *University of Durham.*

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Working Space: is the section of the journal which aims to reflect: Current practice done by or with young people; and opinions on issues facing young people. Contributions can be written in whatever style the contributor feels comfortable with. For further details contact Richard Barber or Tia Khan.

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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, cmnd 8686, London, HMSO.

Any information which is supplementary to the main text should be noted by a number in parentheses and listed in numerical order at the end of the article before the references, under the title of Notes.

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