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'TEENY THUGS IN BLAIR'S SIGHTS'

Media Portrayals of Children in Education and Their Policy Implications

KEITH LUMLEY

On 26th October 1996, the *Guardian* headline - 'Teeny Thugs In Blair's Sights!' signalled New Labour's commitment to deal with youth crime. The following day, as if to confirm the maxim that journalists hunt in packs, the headline in the *Daily Express* demanded - 'Say Sorry For Your Yobbery; The Police To Read Riot Act To Five Year Olds'. Both stories illustrate the increasing tendency for news media to portray children as being 'out of control' of their parents, the police, the courts and their communities. News stories detailing the allegedly incorrigible nature of children and young people have tended to focus on the criminal justice arena, but increasingly the press concern has shifted to education. This article documents a series of events that triggered a period of cynical news reporting of children in education by analysing seventy-six newspaper articles from six national and local newspapers' between August and December 1996. This sample includes coverage of events at the Ridings Comprehensive School in Halifax, West Yorkshire, and the Manton Junior School, Worksop, Nottinghamshire.

The analysis reveals how particular events, the Conservative Party Conference and later the conviction of sixteen year old Learco Chindamo for the murder of head-teacher Phillip Lawrence in October 1996, triggered a change of emphasis in media stories concerning young people and education. The Chindamo trial reports, which are clearly associated with the 'criminal justice' news arena, were tenuously linked by the media with 'education' news stories because the victim was a headteacher and the offence occurred near school premises. As a direct result of the Philip Lawrence story, local news reports of incidences of pupil misbehaviour at the Ridings and Manton School, which would otherwise have been ignored by national media, enjoyed remarkable prominence in newspaper, radio and television reports. There was a second consequence of the Lawrence story. News reports of the pre-election debates over the adequacies of government education policy were supplanted by stories of failing moral standards and the uncontrollable behaviour of school children. The two separate news arenas of criminal justice and education became conjoined. The former acted as a catalyst for the portrayal of negative images of young people in the latter, with scant initial consideration of the social or educational context of the schools concerned. The function of such coverage was diversionary; children, and not education policy, nor lack of resources, were represented as the root causes of the students' 'unteachability'.

Prior to August 1996, news media coverage of education had tended to be focused on ideological debates about which schools politicians' children should attend as well as attacks on Conservative education policy, rather than on the pupils them-

selves (Webster & Sherman in *The Times* 23/1/96). However by the end of the summer school-break in August 1996. Local newspapers were reporting headteachers' refusals to allow 11 year old Mathew Wilson and 13 year old Sarah Taylor into Manton Junior School and Ridings Comprehensive School, because of their allegedly disruptive behaviour. 'This Yob Goes Or We Do' (Lennon & Slack in *The Worksop Guardian*[2], 30/8/96) and 'School Snub - Mum's Walkout After Girl Denied Classroom Place' (Waites, in *The Halifax Evening Courier*[3], 2/9/96), exemplified the local news-media reporting of school-life. In both cases, blame was directed at the particular child involved without reference or discussion of underlying socio-economic factors.

The Worksop Guardian continued its negative reporting of Mathew Wilson throughout September and October 1996 in nine articles which employed the word 'Yob' and the phrase 'Problem Pupil' at least fifteen times. *The Halifax Evening Courier's* reporting of The Ridings School story used similarly negative labels such as 'Lawless', 'Unteachable' and 'Unruly' on seventeen occasions in twenty published articles. This press disparagement of the young people concerned was combined with a complete neglect of the underlying social problems such as poverty, disputes between rival teachers and poor management of the school's situation that were certainly evident at the Ridings School but which did not receive any media attention until a BBC *Panorama* programme (discussed later) picked up on these issues after the initial furore had died down; and then with considerably less journalistic vigour and editorial quantity. These local newspapers seem to vilify their own readership, the very people they relied on to buy their newspapers; a prima facie case of 'biting the hands that fed them'. Local newspapers apparent indifference to such local economic considerations suggests how commonplace and uncontroversial these negative portrayals of young people had become.

The strong condemnatory tone the local papers adopted was more reminiscent of the national tabloid newspapers which enjoy no local ties or any loyalties to a local readership. The local newspapers in Worksop and Halifax established the editorial tone that was adopted by the national press when the story moved into the national news agenda later in October. In early October 1996 there was a flurry of newspaper stories which began increasingly to mix 'education' stories (concerned to explore aspects of education policy), with reports of incidences of school violence. *The Times*, for example, headlined 'France Shocked by Violence in Schools' (Gilmore 4/10/96), whilst its sister Sunday newspaper reported, 'U.S. Teachers Decry Unruly British Pupils' - a story accompanied by a photograph of British children giving the 'V' sign contrasted with a picture of American pupils enjoying a tranquil science class with their teacher (O'Reilly, *The Sunday Times* 6/10/96). *The Times*' headline 'Four Years For Boy Who Took Gun To School'(English, 9/10/97), shamelessly and emotively linked this case with shootings at Dunblane Primary School on March 13 1996 in which sixteen pupils and a teacher were killed. These stories were part of the bringing together of the education and criminal justice news arenas.

This convergence of education and criminal justice themes in news reports was extremely fortuitous for a Conservative government eager to launch new Education Policy proposals in the run up to the general election. They coincided neatly with the Conservative party conference (9th-11th October 1996) at which the then education secretary Gillian Shepherd pledged a 'Crackdown On School-rowdies' (Watson, in *The Express* 11/10/96) and 'More Discipline in Schools' (Leathley in *The Times*, 11/10/96). The pre-conference - 'Unruly British Pupils' article in *The Times*, seems to have provided a platform which Gillian Shepherd could use to endorse some of the central tenets of New-Right ideology; namely that well loved if unholy trinity of law, order and discipline (Jones et al, 1994; 119). From this ideological perspective, the appropriate policy seemed to be to launch a moral quest to improve children's behaviour both within and out of school, rather than policies to alleviate some of the deprivations of the social environment in which young people lived out their lives. No less an authority on moral and political issues than Michael Heseltine's mother articulated the judgmental and punitive mood of that moment; 'Give Tearaways A Thrashing Says Heseltine's Mum' *The Times* reported (Lee, 8/10/96). T*he Daily Telegraph* (15/10/96) wished to offer endorsement of this New Right approach in tandem with criticism of New Labour's position. 'Blair Fails The Family' the *Telegraph* announced, despite a further article in the same edition - 'Blair Puts Emphasis On Duties Of Family Life' - which appeared to realign New Labour's approach to children with that of the New Right (Hibbs). The press had set the stage; the politicians had performed the 'warm-up act'. The main event was about to begin. The two news arenas of juvenile crime and education were about to conjoin to generate an extraordinary partial, selective and vicious, outcrop of press coverage portraying young people as 'out of control' within schools and their communities. The audience would love it!

The conviction of sixteen year old Learco Chindamo on the 17th October 1996, for the murder of headteacher Phillip Lawrence, intensified the national news-media focus on to the issues of 'out of control' children, education, school-life and morality; journalists' scramble for stories made the opening of Harrod's January sale seem like an ordinary queue! Learco Chindamo's trial, an uncontentiously criminal justice news story, was tenuously linked with education news stories at the Ridings and Manton schools. These previously exclusive local news stories were suddenly and dramatically into the national news agenda and enjoyed extensive media coverage as 'lead stories' even though the Riding's story had been known to national journalists since March 1996. Articles (including cartoons) portraying negative images of young schools students increased in the sample newspapers from 14 over a 50 day period (29/8/96 - 17/10/96) to 32 in the subsequent 15 days (18/10/96 - 1/11/96), triggering a national debate about children, young people and their morality; news media portrayal of children in education became one dimensional.

The 32 reports spoke of 'Britain's Moral Vacuum' and asked 'Is This The Family From Hell?' and reported with approval a 'New Law To Force Heads To Discipline

Pupils' (*The Sunday Telegraph*, Dalrymple 27/10/96). *The Express* - 'Say Sorry For Your Yobbery...' (Walters & Chapman, 27/10/96) and *The Times* 'Archbishop Says A Loving Slap Can Be Good For Children' (Gledhill, 26/10/96 lead article) offered further examples of relentlessly critical press coverage. Even the social worker's favourite newspaper, the liberal minded *Guardian*, waded in with an uncharacteristically venomous headline - 'Teeny Thugs In Blair's Sights...' (Hetherington, 26/10/96). Such an editorial tone articulated what Franklin describes 'as the political agenda of the moral-right' (1996). This political agenda was in full flow after widow Frances Lawrence made a powerful statement to the press. More over, headlines such as 'Party Leaders Join Widow's Fight' (Norwicka in *The Guardian*, 21/10/96) and 'Major And Blair Back Crusade' (Sherman & Bale, in *The Times*, 21/10/96), confirmed that New Labour was now clearly re-aligning itself with what previously were identified as 'New-Right' ideological stances. So much for the diagnosis; but what of the prescription? The press turned its attention to the question of how best to deal with this perceived problem of 'out of control children' in schools and society.

One answer which proved popular with politicians and the press alike was provided by Frances Lawrence, the widow of the murdered headteacher, in her call for 'A New Mood Of Moralism' in *The Guardian* (22/10/96) and the establishment of 'A Nation-wide Grass Roots Movement Led By Teachers, The Police And Parents Dedicated To Healing Our Fractured Society And Banishing Violence' (Norwicka in *The Guardian*, 21/10/96). However, this grassroots movement did not include a voice for children. Young people, rather than society as a whole, were targeted for a re-education in morality. *The Daily Telegraph* argued for 'A-Levels To Place New Emphasis On Moral Questions' (Lightfoot 28/10/96). Education and crime remained tenuously linked while these news stories remained 'news-worthy' with the so-called 'moral crusade' in full swing and with little attention paid to the social influences affecting the Riding's and Manton schools. There was also little consideration of the effects that government policy was having on teachers' and pupils' opportunities to perform effectively in school, while the media highlighted individual behaviour rather than the social environment. This brief marriage of the education and criminal justice news agendas peaked around 26th October 1996, before pre-election policy proposals came to the fore in late November 1996. But the damage had already been done as negative perceptions of 'out of control' children seemingly became compounded as 'normative' symbols of childhood and school-life.

Education and government policy as a news item had taken a back seat during this period in favour of education and pupil-behaviour as news. What Cohen (1972; 259) describes as 'moral panics' occur, according to Roberts, 'at times of profound social change', and may be used by those in power to divert public attention from policy inadequacies (1993; 14). The Education Act 1993, as with many other 'New Right' government polices, created controversy and a competitive market-system in education resulting in demoralised and de-skilled education personnel (Fischer 1993, in Malcolm et al, 1996; 211). Schools are required to buy-in special educational

needs (SEN) support for children with learning difficulties and for those with 'behavioural problems' who are similarly categorised SEN. According to Schostak schools treat as a low priority SEN children with behavioural problems, predisposing headteachers and governors to opt for exclusion rather than buying the support these children require (in Garner, 1996; 188 & see also Parsons, 1996; 183). Government policy at the time appears to have created an artificial impression of increasing numbers of out of control children by encouraging an environment where exclusion became an easy budget saving option.

Parsons (1996; 177) identifies an increase in school exclusions from 2910 in 1990 to 12000 in 1994, which if analysed without further qualification alongside news reports that categorise the Ridings children as 'Warring Tribes' (Charter & Wilkinson in *The Times* (23/10/96), may predispose newspaper readers to perceive that the problem is increasing. Parsons' work confirms Garner's conclusion that headteachers and governors preserve financial budgets and school performance status by taking the 'exclusion option' rather than 'buying in' SEN support (1996; 195). This position is further corroborated by the number of exclusion orders that are overturned on appeal due to 'unsatisfactory reasons' (ibid). In defence of headteachers, only limited options exist as to what can be provided for behavioural SEN children. The Conservative government's response had been Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) established by section 298 (schd. 18) of the 1993 Education Act, but these establishments are selective in who they accept, leaving many children excluded and without educational support. Yet despite lack of provision of suitable resources Home Office circulars entitled 'Pupils with Problems' continue to emphasise that it is the children who require 'corrective' action without providing suitable supportive means (DFE 1994 in Garner 1996; 192). In essence 'problem children' are promoted as a threat to order and school performance which, in conjunction with overstretched school budgets, combine to encourage the use of segregation and punitive measures, including exclusions. Thus superficial analysis and dramatised reporting of apparently rising exclusion rates were used by the media as evidence of the incorrigible nature of children, despite evidence that other factors may be at work, as further analysis of the newspaper sample reveals.

During the period August-December 1996, news-media recognised the increasing numbers of exclusions from schools in headlines such as 'Number Of Children Sent Home Doubles' (Peel in *The Halifax Courier*, 5/9/96), but identified the cause of the malaise as 'a hard-core of problem pupils' (ibid) rather than blaming underlying social and policy factors. For example, where Parsons (1996; 179) demonstrates that many exclusions are justifiably overturned on appeal, news reports at the time suggested otherwise. Instead of recognising young students as victims of a punitive system they were portrayed as the antagonists, exemplified in *The Guardian's* report entitled 'Teachers Threaten Action As Violent Pupils Are Reinstated Around Britain' (Carvel 18/10/96). It was perhaps unsurprising then, when *The Times Educational Supplement* illustrated the cross party consensus with its report that 'a

discipline clampdown will follow the election with the implementation of a new Education Act by the government of the day, whoever that may be (Dean 18/4/97). One particular proposal advocated increasing the period of exclusion from 15 consecutive days per term to 45 consecutive days (ibid).

A further social factor that was explicitly overlooked by the majority of the news-media and is evident in the Ridings and Manton school areas, was the poverty that nationally one in three children now suffer (Oppenheim et al 1996; 1). Poverty correlates with 'high exclusion rates, social dislocation, and low educational achievement' (Parsons, 1996; 183), yet news-media handled this factor in a manner that confirmed Beresford's view that journalists portray people who are poor as 'bad, sad and undeserving' (1996; 8). This was true until early November 1996, when emphasis started to shift. The BBC's current affairs programme *Panorama* acknowledged social issues such as poverty experienced by the children at the Ridings School and analysed in some depth all sides of the debate, marking a water-shed in the nature of news-media reporting of these incidents (Bashir, 1996).

In his introduction to the documentary, reporter Martin Bashir highlighted the fact that the Ridings School story had been focused on children as being 'out of control' and the centre of a national debate over moral standards and discipline. The programme identified that this was 'a story of neglect, broken promises and failure to recognise that the school was in serious trouble'. It revealed details of education policies that had left the Ridings as 'a dumping ground' for those children unable to attend other local grammar and grant maintained schools due to selection processes which effectively excluded most of them. The closure of a local comprehensive school had seen groups of rival school children and teachers moved under one roof at the Ridings without consideration of the potential for conflict that such mergers might produce. Moreover the number of the newly amalgamated groups of teachers exceeded the numbers of positions available at the Ridings causing resentment and internal disputes centred around who would stay and who would be made redundant.

Clearly this programme was identifying for this first time that 'out of control' children were not the sole cause of the problems within the education system and that other issues required analysis including the nature and content of news media coverage, as this article has primarily sought to illustrate. Ultimately, *Panorama* demonstrated the effect that the media have in shaping public perceptions of school-life (Baker 1996; 187). One photographer was shown placing and photographing a 'school closed' sign on the Riding's school-gates, to enhance dramatic effect and no doubt the value of the photograph. Social factors had broken through but not before damaging perceptions of children in education had been reasserted.

Analysis of newspaper coverage around the period of Bashir's programme (4th November 1996) revealed a media reassessment of the story at the Riding's and Manton Schools but failed to acknowledge its own involvement in creating the

misconceptions and 'moral-panic' that ensued. *The Times* (O'Leary 31/10/96) reported, 'Inspectors Blaming Teachers At Ridings', albeit amid calls for the reintroduction of 'caning' and the continued castigation of Mathew Wilson in Worksop; 'Head To Close School In Row Over Tearaway (ibid. 29/10/96). The solution to the Mathew Wilson affair was reported locally as - 'Problem-Pupil Set For School Transfer', once again focusing on the individual rather than his environment (Frisby *Worksop Guardian* 15/11/96). Absent in all media reports was an explicit acknowledgement that events had been reported sensationally. Instead the stories fizzled out until news reports five months later revealed that 'Mathew Wilson Had Been A Scapegoat' (Frisby, A. in *Worksop Guardian*, 18/4/97). Manton school management had been deficient, it was reported, and that Mathew Wilson had suffered the death of his father and a close cousin, environmental factors that had not been dealt with during the earlier period of reporting. Similar climb downs occurred over the Ridings with BBC Look North reporting (9/5/97) that an inspection at The Ridings school had revealed that its problems had been partially rectified and pupils were now doing well; the same pupils, of course, who had been portrayed as 'unteachable' and 'out of control' some six months earlier. This had eventually confirmed *The Times* article 'Inspectors Blame Teachers At Ridings' that was published as the furore died down (31/10/96). Unfortunately, if not surprisingly the article was relegated to page thirty-one, some thirty pages behind its more vociferous predecessors that had adopted the opposite viewpoint. But at what cost? Moving the blame from pupils to teachers for the apparent ails within the educational system could hardly be seen as progress!

In summary, between August and December 1996 the majority of media reports about children and education were explicitly or implicitly negative towards children and young people, linking unrelated criminal acts with school-life in an attempt to justify the call for the re-teaching of moral values to children. National newspapers revealed the crisis at the Halifax and Worksop schools almost as 'exclusives' despite the fact that local newspapers had been reporting the same stories for several weeks. Among the 76 articles analysed here there were 75 references to children which used negative descriptive terms such as 'Thug', 'Yob', 'Tearaway' 'Unruly' and 'Unteachable'. The same articles also called for more discipline in 40 references that originated primarily from the media frenzy following the Learco Chindamo trial. Only *The Guardian* and *The Halifax Evening Courier* balanced some of its negative reporting of children, by acknowledging social factors but did so on only 21 occasions.

After December 1996 the education news-agenda focused on the run up to the general election, analysing each party's manifesto and once again separating education from criminal justice and 'moral crusades'. Such changes in news content reflected how the British media, intentionally or otherwise, represent a picture of the world that 'reflects perspectives and ideology overwhelmingly in favour of the existing power-holders' (Fairclough, 1989; 51). This is especially true when the story is

deemed to be of interest to the news audience, as Negrine points out, since 'without sales the newspaper can not survive and the television news broadcast can not exist indefinitely' (1994; 118). Having served the purpose of the re-election of politicians, however, the news agenda appears to be refocusing on its negativity towards children, reporting alleged rapes by junior school children in school, inferring that these incidents are an every-day occurrence (Ungoed-Thomas, & Alleyne, in *The Mail* 9/5/97). In addition, the new Labour Governments proposals to send in 'hit squads' to sort out 'problem schools', seems to set the tone for future news agendas that may be detrimental to the perception of children in education (MacLeod in *The Guardian*, 12/5/97). The analysis of newspapers presented here illustrate some of the ways in which education and school-life are represented as an arena in which children are beyond reasonable adult control. The news subject areas of crime and education temporarily conjoined, exploding into a plethora of emotive and exaggerated news articles in which children were seen as a cause of society's problems when they are overwhelmingly its victims. The coverage of Ridings and Manton Schools recalls the criticisms voiced by Lord Justice Butler-Scloss following the Cleveland child abuse Enquiry.;

> *Media coverage has too frequently been flavoured by its concern to scapegoat. They invariably misrepresent important issues and routinely report factual inaccuracies...They [The Press] play a crucial role in generating a climate of opinion sympathetic and receptive to particular proposals for change. (in Franklin & Parton, 1991; 7)*

In conclusion the news media, if it continues to negatively portray children in all of its news arenas including education, will do no more than promote a pessimistic attitude to the majority of children who 'deserve better than they are getting, are not well attended to, and are devalued and neglected by society' (Etzioni, 1995; 63-4).

The Ridings School has since been recognised as having rectified many of its problems (BBC 9/5/97), yet in one sense the negativity of media reporting during the period analysed here has attached stigma to the school itself. A visit to the Ridings school by David Blunkett (Education/Employment Secretary) on Friday 5th June 1998 was reported in both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers only through reference to an alleged criminal act committed at a nearby school; *The Mirror* (6/6/98) 'Boy Stabbed in School Row...The stabbing [allegedly] occurred as Education Secretary visited nearby Ridings School - once called the worst disciplined school in Britain'. *The Guardian* (Wainwright, 6/6/98) employed a similar approach to reporting the visit; 'Stabbing At Halifax School...shortly before Education Secretary David Blunkett visited the town to monitor progress in tackling disciplinary problems and under-achievement at the nearby Ridings Comprehensive'. The negative legacy of the nature of news reports of incidents at the Ridings during 1996 is epitomised in the way that potentially positive stories concerning progress made at the school only receive attention in this instance when associated with sensationalised stories

of 'out of control pupils' elsewhere; even when the only association the story has with the Ridings is that both schools exist in the same town. It appears that time does not necessarily heal old wounds.

I should like to express my sincere thanks to Bob Franklin at the University of Sheffield for providing the platform, opportunity and impetus to complete the original essay as part of his Media and Social Policy degree module and ultimately for his advice and expertise in redrafting its original form into this article.

***Keith Lumley**, University of Sheffield.*

Notes

1 The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Express, The Guardian, The Worksop Guardian, The Halifax Evening Courier. See other sources in bibliography for a full list of the articles used.

2 Weekly newspaper

3 Daily evening newspaper

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	15/10/96	2	Blair Fails family/Return to Family Values.
	20/10/96	12	Pupils Fail to Measure Up in Math's/English.
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	27/10/97		Ridings Mark Varley...
	27/10.96		Is This the Family From Hell?
	27/10/96		New Law to Force Heads to Discipline Pupils.
	27/10/96		Great and Good Support Carey Over Smacking.
	28/10/96		Schoolmistress Faces Discipline.
	28/10/96		A-Levels to Emphasise Questions of Morality.
	28/10/96	1	Shephard in Moral Guidance Furore.
The Express.	11/10/96		Get Tough Shephard Pledges Crackdown.
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	27/10/96		Say Sorry for Your Yobbery.
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	18/10/96	6	School Feud Led to Heads Killing.
	21/10/96	1	Party Leaders Join Widows Fight.
	22/10/96	14	New Mood of Moralism.
	26/10/96	6	Teeny Thugs in Blair's Sights.
The Halifax Evening Courier.	2/9/96		School Snub.
	5/9/96		Number of Children Sent Home Doubles.
	19/10/96		School in Crisis - Head Quits.
	21/10/96		Expulsion Row Pupil Has Baby.
	22/10/96		Dossier of Shame -60 Out of Control Pupils Named.
	23/10/96		Bill to Tackle Schools Crisis.

The Halifax Evening Courier.	24/10/96		High Hopes Lie in Tatters.
	24/10/96		Recipe for Disaster
	24/10/96		Inspectors Ordered in to Look at Pupil Discipline.
	25/10/96		Get Your Act Together.
	25/10/96		Cartoons from The Sun and The Times.
	28/10/96		Pupils Walk Out of Trouble School.
	30/10/96		MP's Warning On Selective Schools.
	1/11/96		Schools in Turmoil.
	1/11/96		Failing its Pupils.
	1/11/96		PM Told : Act Now.
	4/11/96		Mass Expulsions Ruled Out.
	5/11/96		Chairman Blames Lack of Support.
The Times/Sunday Times.	4/10/96	35	France Shocked by Violence in Schools.
	9/10/96	5	4 Years for Boy Who Took Gun to School.
	11/10/96	6	Shephard Pledges More Discipline in Schools.
	11/10/96	35	Country's Angry Youth Enquiry.
	18/10/96	6	Headteachers Killer Linked to Mill's Attack.
	18/10/96	1	Headmasters teacher 16 Gets Life.
	18/10/96		Youth Convicted was Leader of Teenage Knife Gang.
	19/10/96	1	Head's Widow Appeals for Moral Revival.
	19/10/96	1	V. Bottomley's Daughter Sent Home for Drinking.
	21/10/96	1	Major and Blair back Crusade.
	22/10/96	7	Good Citizenship Crusade.
	22/10/96	7	61 to be Expelled in Halifax.
	22/10/96	7	Crusade Gives Edge to Moral Teaching Plan.
	23/10/96		School Riven by Warring Tribes.
	24/10/96		Shephard Puts Team into Strike-threat School.
	25/10/96		Expulsion Demands Product of Union Battle.
	25/10/96		Grammar Schools Dumped Problem Pupils on Ridings.
	26/10/96	1	Archbishop says Loving Slap Can be Good For Kids.
	28/10/96		Back School Discipline.
	28/10/96		Letter to Editor From N. De Gruchy.
	29/10/96	1	Head to Close School in Row over Tearaway - Manton.
	29/10/96	4	Code for Schools Omits Marriage From Core Values.
	30/10/96	1	Caning Call from Shephard.
	30/10/96		Right-wing Urge return to Caning.
	30/10/96		The Real Scandal of Our Schools - Child rights.
	31/10/96	31	Inspectors Blame Teachers at Ridings.
	18/4/97	14	Discipline Clampdown in Schools Will Follow Election
The Worksop Guardian.	30/8/96		This Yob Goes or We Do.
	13/9/96		Parent Fury Forces Showdown at Crisis School.
	6/10/96		My Son is not a Yob.
	20/10/96		A Tale of Two Tearaways.
	4/10/96		Experts Called in to Manton School.
	25/10/96		We Will Strike.
	8/11/96		End of Dispute in Sight?
	15/11/96		Problem Pupil Set for School Transfer.
	22/11/96		First Day For Mathew at New School.
	18/4/97	1	Mathew was a Scapegoat.

THE CONCEALED CONSEQUENCES OF CARING:

An examination of the experiences of young carers in the community

CHRIS TATUM & STAN TUCKER

The provision of informal care

This article is concerned with exploring the experiences of those young people who perform major caring tasks within the context of the family unit. It takes as its starting point the need to understand how particular discourses of youth have shaped both public and private responses to the lives of young carers. In addition, detailed consideration is given to the way in which the implementation of community care legislation has assisted in producing a range of concealed consequences for those young people involved in caring for others. It is estimated that up to 40,000 young people are involved in looking after both adult and sibling family members in the United Kingdom, (Becker, 1995) with young carers being defined by the Carers National Association (CNA) as those young people 'whose lives are restricted' by virtue of the fact that they look after a sick or disabled relative (Heal, 1994).

The introduction of the NHS and Community Care Act in 1990 served as a legislative landmark in terms of creating a different official discourse concerning the provision of informal care for the sick, frail, elderly and disabled at home. In part the legislation was developed as a New Right Conservative response to what was perceived as an over-bureaucratized, inefficient, obdurate and repressive state. In part it was the result of the development of 'privatism' where individuals were encouraged to find private solutions to what were seen as essentially private responsibilities. (Midwinter, 1994, pp.152-153). Thus, a Right-inspired ideological view of the importance of family-based welfare emerged. Accordingly, the family came to be presented as part of a 'tripod' of institutions, involving a 'minimum state' and a 'voluntary church' (Fitzgerald, 1985, p.47), that was to bear the responsibility for promoting free market welfare arrangements and personal choice. The ideological assumption was also made that women would play a central role in supporting 'private family' care functions as part of the 'all-consuming' role of 'motherhood' (David, 1986, p.139). It was this assumption in particular, which attracted wide ranging criticism from feminist writers concerning: the way previously 'informal' caring arrangements came to be reconstituted as 'formal' packages of care (Parker, 1993); the use of 'rampant biological determinism' to position women within the family (Land & Rose, 1985, p.78); and the failure of women to achieve personal freedom and status due to the demands placed on them by caring roles and relationships. (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989, Lewenhak, 1992).

However, academic research and analysis concerning the assumptions underpinning family-based community care have tended to concentrate on the perspectives of adults either giving or receiving care. As a result only limited attention has been

paid to the needs, aspirations and concerns of those young people who often find themselves carrying out significant amounts of caring work. Through this article then, an attempt is made to redress the balance of some of the past and present debates about the provision and outcomes of care in the community. In doing so it is the intention to add to the valuable work already undertaken by the Loughborough University Young Carers Research Group (YCRG), for the YCRG has contributed greatly to the development of understanding on the impact of caring for young people (see for example, Aldridge and Becker, 1993a; Dearden and Becker, 1995b).

Much of the discussion that follows is directly informed by the work of the Young Carers Research Project at the Open University (YCRP). Over the past two years researchers have been involved in interviewing young people with caring responsibilities and their parents. Some 40 interviews have been conducted involving 24 young people (16 female and 8 male) in the 10-21 age range. In addition a total of 8 adults being cared for and 8 other adult family members were interviewed in their own homes. The research was conducted in two demographically, economically and socially different communities - a New City in the South East of England and an industrial community in the Midlands. Throughout a focused interview format was adopted (Cohen and Manion, 1989) to examine the experiences of young carers and other family members; the impact of caring on family life; the nature and levels of support offered at home, in the community and through social welfare agencies; and young people's views and ambitions for the future. (Liddiard and Tucker, 1995, Liddiard, Tatum and Tucker, 1997).

Different discourses or the same old stories?

There is a real problem to be confronted in exploring the lives of young carers. Their experiences are not easily located, classified, or quantified through the kind of prevailing academic and professional discourses that have characterized much of the research about, and service delivery for, young people. Unlike other high profile categories of youth they are not seen as 'diseased', 'perverted', 'needy' or 'rebellious' (Griffin, 1993). They also do not qualify as the stuff of 'moral panics' (Cohen 1973), where the statutory and voluntary sectors are urged to react to and control what are deemed to be the actions and activities of disruptive, unruly and dangerous young people.

Consequently , the lives of young carers are not publicly scrutinized or responded to through the kinds of 'problematizing' discourses that are more usually applied to the young and which warrant therapeutic, educational or 'care and control' interventions (Griffin, 1993). They are in a rather paradoxical position - we don't know how to treat them and so we largely ignore them. Thus, it is relatively easy for the needs of young carers to be dismissed or ignored when setting any local or national welfare agenda. The young carer, by virtue of the caring that he or she performs, does not easily become a 'suitable case for treatment'. Risks of exploitation or mistreatment

have also to be balanced against the demand to uphold family privacy, largely determined by a 'residual model' of welfare where 'families carry the burden of responsibility to provide all needs' (Dalrymple and Burke, 1995, p.104).

Within all this it is possible to view young carers as an alternative labour source which is involved in supporting those officially sanctioned informal caring arrangements that develop within the context of the family. Yet this is a source of labour where the actions and activities undertaken often fail to gain any kind of public recognition. And even when this does happen, there is considerable confusion as to how the actual contribution of young people to supporting family life should be measured. In part this confusion can be attributed historically to one of the key perspectives that has been applied to the socialization role of parents within families. Frequently when the nature of the parent/young person relationship is analysed, the presumed immaturity of the young person is stressed, together with the need for adult control and regulation (see for example, de Mause, 1974, p.52). However, displays of caring by young people actually call into question the traditionally perceived power base upon which family relationships are generally seen to be constituted. Young people sometimes choose, or are sometimes forced to take on duties and responsibilities that are viewed as the legitimate domain of the adult world - cooking, cleaning, providing medication, household management, and so on. Thus, a public denial of the needs of young carers serves to bolster one of the key assumptions of this form of family ideology. The assumption that the parent is always in control, in the sense of being a consistent provider of social welfare and support, can remain largely unchallenged if significant amounts of caring by young people are obscured or go unrecognised.

Running alongside this discourse of care and control however, is a very different kind of discourse: a discourse that locates the period of youth within a much broader context of them being 'adults in waiting' who have a responsibility to give something back to their family and community. Caring and service to other family members is viewed as a natural part of a much wider social agenda, where young people are seen to be in debt to their parents and other significant members of adult society (eg carers, teachers) who have 'looked after' them. Caring from within such a perspective can easily assume the mantel of a public service that is carried out in the private domain of the family. Indeed, this view of debt and duty inspired 'voluntary' caring by young people has a long history in social policy terms. For example, reports into the work of the Youth Service have variously advocated 'community involvement' by young people to support those 'other individuals whom they see as disadvantaged' (Thompson, 1982, p.43), 'community service', and other forms of 'volunteering' (YSDC, 1969, p.90). Through this perspective the activities of young carers, although uncosted and frequently unrecognised in social, personal or political terms, can come to be viewed as an appropriate mechanism for the delivery of care in the community. Their contribution to caring can be easily justified both as a repayment for services previously rendered by adults and as preparation for the realities of later life.

In addition, the issue of young people caring, creates major problems for some state welfare professionals who frequently see their actions and activities directly related to supporting 'liberal humanistic' views of child rearing (Stainton Rogers et al, 1995). Here, emphasis is placed on promoting parental responsibilities, the limiting of intervention to situations of neglect or abuse, and a focus on responding to 'special needs'. However, the representation of parenthood in operation is largely constructed around notions of the fit and able adult who receives, or needs little in the way of support from their offspring. Where intervention into family life occurs, it can often be seen as the product of an investigatory process which focuses on the presumed pathological inadequacies of the parent in relation to the childrearing process. Parenting that is viewed as different can easily become parenting that is deviant. Hence, family members frequently go to great lengths to disguise the role and extent of the duties and responsibilities of the young carer. Locating young carers therefore, can itself be a difficult task (Segal and Simkins, 1993). Often young carers and their parents fear that either the person caring, or the person being cared for, will be removed from the family home.

Thus, the lives of young carers are directly influenced by a range of complex and sometimes competing expectations of the period of youth. At one and the same time caring can be viewed as 'normal', 'abnormal', an indicator of potential neglect, a sign of developing maturity and a block to personal and social development. However, the reality that many young people do carry out caring roles within the family is indisputable (Aldridge and Becker, 1996). Furthermore, many will continue to do so, even though the adult world of social policy makers, academic commentators, and welfare professionals may publicly pronounce on the inappropriate and potentially exploitative nature of such caring relationships. For many families the luxury of choice in such matters is not one that is afforded to them.

The context of informal care for young people

If, as has been argued, the roles and responsibilities assumed by many young carers go unrecognised, or are sometimes not responded to by social welfare agencies, it becomes even more important to analyse the potential outcomes of such experiences for the young people involved. To respond to the needs of young carers there is a requirement not only to understand the demands of caring, but also the direct impact that it can have on the lives of those involved. In ignoring or minimising the contribution made by young carers to family life, feelings of resentment and anger are easily generated:

> *My Dad's social worker, she doesn't speak to me or my brother about how we feel about caring for my Dad and what we've got to do. Sometimes this can make me feel very upset and unsure.*
>
> *...We've had no help from social services. That makes me really mad. We was going to have help but I said I could like do it. Mum says it's best to be private sometimes.*

Our analysis of the hidden consequences of caring is in fact underpinned by three dominant manifestations of caring that were revealed through the work of the YCRP - the necessity to care is usually driven by matters of choice, compulsion or collusion. Often the desire (or demand) for young people to take on a caring role is directly influenced by one or more of these factors. Caring was frequently described as 'something you do naturally without thinking that is what it is. a part of normal family life'; or as important 'to keep the family together'; or as a source of some 'joy' and personal fulfillment; or as something that was 'hated', 'loathsome', and the breeder of resentment and 'lost opportunities'. However, the concealed consequences of caring are not only the product of such desires and demands, for they also have to be linked to wider representations of family ideology concerning the expectations of young women and men, the shifting dynamics of family life, and the levels of interaction and intimacy that are the product of individual relationships.

Family life for young carers is different from the experiences of young people who do not perform such caring tasks. For as Brannen et al (1994, p.7) argue:

> *Changes in the balance of responsibility between parents and young people have consequences for the relative balance of power between them.*

For some young people the expectation is that they will undertake often quite demanding caring tasks within what can be difficult home circumstances. In many instances we found that young carers experienced long days where they might be involved in for example, giving early morning medication; helping to get siblings off to school; housework; returning home immediately after school to help in meal preparation. Young carers frequently have to manage their time in the most effective way possible, which in turn can create great personal pressure for them. Many felt abandoned to their fate as far as support from welfare agencies was concerned:

> *There was no one to help you. You were just left. No Social Services or anything like that. A nurse came once and that was it. She didn't even talk to me.*

Concealed consequences of caring

The lives of young carers are often complex, demanding and crisis ridden. Caring duties and responsibilities can also be wide ranging, with some young people on occasion acting as sole carers, others acting as secondary carers (supporting a primary carer or looking after other family members), and yet others performing a combination of the two roles. Levels of caring, and the duration for which that caring must be carried out, also varies considerably. For example, one young carer had only been involved in such activities for a few weeks, while another reported that she 'couldn't remember when things were any different. It's gone on for years'.

However, even though there were variations in the nature, duration and levels of caring displayed, it proved possible to isolate a number of common concealed consequences of caring for the young people involved. By concealed consequences we are referring

to those consequences of caring that are sometimes hidden from public view by the actions and activities of family members; are largely ignored by welfare agency personnel; go unaddressed because of the preoccupations of decision makers and academic researchers to pursue particular ideological preoccupations for social policy; and are the product of an analytical focus on the experiences of adult carers. It is to a more detailed consideration of these consequences that we now turn.

Caring as influencing family dynamics

There can be no doubt that the carrying out of significant amounts of caring will have a direct impact on the nature of any relationship, be it offered from inside or outside the family unit. Caring creates a level of expectation and commitment for the carer that will necessitate the ongoing expenditure of energy, time and effort. On the other hand, the person experiencing that care may develop feelings of guilt and anger that are the direct product of the position in which they find themselves. However, when a parent falls ill or is disabled, and subsequently has to be looked after by a young person, the whole dynamic of the parent/child relationship can fundamentally change. For example, it was found that those adults who were being looked after by their children sometimes developed deep feelings of unease about the expectations and outcomes of the caring relationship. They were found not only to resent their own inability to carry out what were often described as 'simple household tasks', but they were also concerned that the young person involved might feel obligated to perform complex caring duties that could generate a degree of unwelcomed, or at the very least unexpected, intimacy.

In many instances, while every effort was made to meet the expectations of the parenting role in terms of both care and control functions, recognition was given to the fact that without the support of the young carer any continued long term home-based care would be impossible. Frequent experiences of role reversal also caused confusion for both the parent and young person as to where the main responsibilities and duties for the welfare of the family unit should be located, since such forms of role reversal brought with them opportunities for inverting traditionally perceived parent/child power relations. One young carer summed up the situation thus:

> *You sometimes don't know where you are. you are somewhere between being an adult and a child, but you do things that your friends would say your parents should do. You have feelings you know you shouldn't have like saying in this situation I am in control and it doesn't matter what she says.. when dad's away I sometimes think yes, this is me in charge now.*

Caring can also have an impact on the self-image and behaviour of adult family members. For example, some adult males with a caring responsibility appeared to consistently resist any demands that were placed on them to modify, or significantly alter, existing relationship patterns and functions. In particular, fathers whose partners

or children were sick or disabled defended the importance of acting in the role of the male 'breadwinner' above that of being a contributor to the direct care of another individual within the family. The consequences of this particular perception of 'appropriate' male behaviour manifested themselves in a variety of ways which included responsibility for the childminding of siblings consistently falling on the young carer and a failure to acknowledge the respite support needs of the young person acting in the caring role. In addition, it appears that long term caring can have an impact on the willingness of adult male partners to continue to reside within the family. In approximately 25% of the interviews conducted the father had either temporarily or permanently left the family residence. Temporary absence usually involved the individual concerned working away from home for long periods, while other adult males left the family home for good. One adult female who was being cared for summed up her family circumstances thus:

> *In the end he [her husband] couldn't cope with my illness and the kids needs as well. He made a choice and it wasn't us. I probably should have seen the writing on the wall from the start.*

The development of such a situation can obviously place increased levels of responsibility and stress on a young person who may already be physically and emotionally overburdened.

However, it would appear from the research findings that adult female carers are more likely to be willing to accept and proactively manage the changed family circumstances and dynamics that can arise out of caring. For the most part they attempt to develop a closer working relationship with the young person who is involved in joint caring acts. They sometimes act to shield the young carer from the frustrations of the person being cared for, and they will often take time to develop the skills and knowledge of the young carer or discuss day-to-day issues and concerns.

Yet this form of relationship is also not without its difficulties. Often women carers have to divide their time in a way that is not expected of men, between home and work - particularly when the financial circumstances of the family are impoverished. Frequently such work is part-time and has to be carried out in the evening or early morning. In such circumstances the young person is 'required to stand in and do their bit' in terms of supporting and responding to the demands of other family members. These arrangements can act as a catalyst for the development of various kinds of family disputes, especially when young carers themselves feel that not only are they required to carry out difficult and potentially exhausting tasks, but that they also have to compete for the attention of one of the most significant adults in their lives.

Thus, it becomes increasingly important when assessing the needs of young carers to take account of wider family structures, relationships and care demands. The needs of carers and those being cared for do not divide neatly for the purposes of

assessment. Sometimes the needs of the young carer can only be met by improving the level of resources and services being offered to the person being cared for. On other occasions it is important to take specific account of the dynamics of family life - particularly in situations where a reluctance to care is displayed on the part of other family members.

What can be said with a degree of certainty is that a holistic response is more likely to resolve some of the specific problems and difficulties faced by young carers. As Becker et al (1998, p.62) point out:

> *...young carers and their families require recognition of two sets of needs and rights: those of young carers and those of their disabled parent(s); needs assessments for both; intervention to assess needs and to utilise appropriate services that are benign, sensitively managed and based on the principle of listening to the needs of the whole family...*

Caring as social exclusion

The acts of caring carried out by many young carers in society are, in certain instances, vital to the maintenance, structure and organisation of the family unit. Yet at the same time, such acts have the power to exacerbate the social exclusion of young people. Here, the term social exclusion is being used to describe how 'social arrangements' and forms of 'institutional behaviour' can have a direct and 'prejudicial' impact on the lives of particular individual and groups of young people (see Stainton Rogers, 1997).

The social exclusion of young carers appears to unfold in two specific ways - social exclusion that is the consequence of the behaviour of those welfare professionals that have both direct and indirect contact with them and social exclusion that is the product of the family circumstances in which they find themselves. It is perhaps easier to understand the latter form of exclusion, which generally occurs because of the kind of work in which young carers are typically involved. Often the work patterns necessitate standing in for an absent parent who may be regularly absent from the family home:

> *You can't really stay for clubs and different activities, because you're needed at home. Mum works at a supermarket at night so I have to get home to dish the tea up.*

Or the weight of caring responsibilities can prove to be so great that there is little opportunity to socialize with friends, and even when this does occur the young carer can have great difficulty in forgetting the demands of home life. A group of young carers described these demands in the following way:

> *I went out last night with a friend. I was something like fifteen minutes late and she was worried...*

When Dad gets up; he's got about an hour to two hours before he goes out and I go out...

I didn't tend to go out in the evening 'cos my Dad would be at work and the boys would be on their own.

It is apparent that such lost opportunities for socializing, joining after-school clubs and youth groups, and taking time away from the pressure of what may be difficult home circumstances, can create feelings of resentfulness, frustration and anger. Some of the young people interviewed laid particular stress on the levels of anxiety and stress that caring does produce, as well as how they felt 'left out' of many peer group activities.

The social exclusion produced by institutional behaviour is, however, of a very different order. Institutional behaviour can take many forms which may include being ignored by representatives of health and social welfare agencies involved in community care assessment processes (Becker and Aldridge, 1994); a failure by schools to recognise how caring can influence not only performance levels and attendance, but also participation in extra curricular activities; a lack of understanding or awareness by organisations, such as the Youth Service, of the social and recreational needs of young carers; and a refusal to publicly recognise the value of the contribution made by young carers to supporting family life even when that contribution is made at great personal cost and with little or no support from external welfare organisations (Meredith, 1991).

Young carers frequently fail to have their needs identified, or responded to, by those whose direct concern is the development and management of heath, social welfare and education services. The marginalisation of young carers is often 'justified' on the grounds that only limited resources are available to deliver community care and that these must go to those who are seen to be in the greatest need. However, the actions and activities of public welfare agencies do little to alleviate those forms of institutional discrimination that have led many young carers to feel 'cheated of my childhood', exploited, and ignored. Recent legislative activity, in the form of the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995, may well help to facilitate change. For the first time the needs of young carers are to be given formal recognition in the public domain. However, a different context and climate for caring also needs to be created, stimulated for example by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), where, as Roche (1997) argues, the 'three Ps' of 'provision', 'protection' and 'participation' are used to promote changes in both practice and resource allocation.

It is also recognised that as public awareness grows concerning the lives of young carers, we are seeing a significant expansion in projects being developed to specifically respond to their needs. Currently there are over 100 such projects in existence throughout the UK. However, if this improvement is to be sustained it will be nec-

essary to ensure that such schemes are supported through mainstream funding. Otherwise there is the ever-present danger that these initiatives will occupy the margins of youth work supported through charitable, voluntary or National Lottery funding. What must be avoided at all costs is a knee jerk reaction on the part of policy makers which evaporates as soon as other priorities become more pressing.

Caring as substitute parenting

Frequently where young carers are situated within a family with younger brothers or sisters, the complexity of the caring role can significantly increase. In many instances the young carer may not only be involved in acts of direct care, but they can also experience a shift in responsibility for the day-to-day welfare of siblings:

> *I'm the eldest of three, so you expect to have to do things. It was like that before Mum became ill. Basically, now I have to do a lot more. I do my best, but I sometimes think, 'This isn't down to me, it's your job.'*

Such a shift then, can take a variety of different forms. For example, young carers may be required to cover a wide range of tasks including making sure younger children are quiet, checking that siblings are dressed appropriately for school or social occasions, supporting brothers and sisters who are encountering difficulties at school, and ensuring that family rules of behaviour are observed.

Clearly, in taking on this range of tasks, tensions are created for all parties concerned. An ill or disabled parent can experience a level of ambiguity about the expectations placed on them to offer care and control that meets with wider societal expectations. Parents frequently described that they felt 'unworthy', 'inadequate' and 'awkward'. Indeed, some parents, while recognising the practical limitations that their illness or disability placed on them, found themselves trying to reassert their authority through the use of what might be described as dominating or aggressive parenting behaviour. Much of this behaviour can be directly linked to the engendering of feelings of low self-esteem and the realisation that 'this is likely to be the situation for ever now'.

A change in caring relationships can also serve to create a range of competing pressures for the young carer. They have to deal with the expressions of dissatisfaction voiced by younger children about substitute parenting. It is perhaps easier to deal with these when such forms of caring are seen as a temporary arrangement. However, when caring arrangements assume a more permanent form, both the young carer and siblings can quickly come to feel that they are being deprived of those forms of care and control which their peers enjoy in 'normal' family units. The outcome may be a refusal to cooperate. Or it can be the creation of an alliance between other children in the family to undermine the young carers authority, expertise and position. In some instances siblings and young carers alike may try to seek support from friends and relatives in order to help them understand the changing dynamics of family life.

Caring as a positive experience

It is easy to forget, particularly when young people find themselves in situations that demand a great deal of time and energy, that caring for another person can have positive outcomes attached to it. Certainly it appears that some young carers gain a great deal from the work they do within the family. They can also find themselves developing their personal skills and knowledge about the nature of particular disabilities and illnesses through involvement in processes of caring that are largely governed by experiential learning.

A commonly expressed view on the positive outcomes of caring is captured in the following quote:

> *It's enjoyable in some ways, because I get to do lots of things I like. I like the cooking; it's nice if there's a mess or something and you clean it up and you think 'I've done that well.' Not many people I know can do this stuff. My friends don't really know how to work the washing machine, they can't cook.*

Thus, acts of caring have the potential to influence those 'significant transition' points (see Tucker, 1997) which occur in the life of a young person. Here, the term significant transition is specifically used to define a range of events and activities with the potential to critically change existing roles and relationships, behavioural expectations, and lifestyles within a particular family unit. Clearly, in considering the concealed consequences of caring, such transition points assume a high degree of importance. For caring presents an additional dimension of experience that has to be encountered and negotiated, if young people are to maximise their potential and achieve their personal goals. However, it would appear that positive outcomes are more likely to occur when certain conditions are found to be in place. These conditions include the availability of another person, either inside or outside the family unit, who is willing to offer support and guidance when required; the opportunity to be able to contribute to decisions concerning the apportioning of caring tasks, and the ability to 'claim time for yourself' when it is required; acceptance by peers of the importance of the caring work to be carried out and the impact that it will have on social arrangements; and the existence of at least a reasonable degree of confidence by the young person that they have the ability to meet the demands and expectations of the caring roles that are created for them. Furthermore, the provision of some form of respite care was seen to be important, as it allows a temporary change in the pattern of family life to occur.

Caring also offers the opportunity for young people to gain status both within and outside of the family. Young carers described how caring had produced in them feelings of maturity and responsibility. Indeed, such feelings were used as a way of understanding and evaluating their life experiences against those of their peers:

> *I look at some sixteen year olds and I just think they seem really childish, because of how they act and everything, and I've never really been like that.*

Of course, it can be argued that such statements are little more than justificatory attempts to derive a sense of dignity and meaning from the caring work that has to be carried out. However, even if this is the case, it is important to be aware of, and acknowledge the importance and value that some young people place on caring; in pronouncing on its worth they draw considerable strength and energy for the future.

Caring as gender reinforcement

Perhaps one of the most important concealed consequences of caring that needs to be considered here, is the impact it can have in terms of gender reinforcement. The caring experiences of young women and young men, to a large extent, mirror wider social expectations, as well as the day-to-day demands and role 'requirements' of family life (White & Woollett, 1992, Apter, 1990). Not surprisingly, therefore, those forces of socialization that circumscribe, define, and structure male and female roles, can be seen to be active in families where young carers are located. In addition, it is important to note that many of the young people interviewed seemed to accept, often without question, the gender-based caring roles, relationships and expectations that were placed on them within the family. In part such an acceptance accords with the view expressed by Oakley (1996, p.39) that:

> *...the social processes embedded in the cultural assignation to masculine or feminine gender still have a great deal of power to influence experiences, values, perceptions and ambitions.*

The form that caring takes for young people is extensively shaped by the structure and organisation of the family unit, as well as that which is seen to be 'acceptable' in terms of the behaviour requirements of young women and men. However, the concealed consequence of caring revealed here, is directly attributable to those caring processes which produce a further level of intensification in relation to gender role development: in caring, young people are even more likely to adopt the roles and relationships created for them within the family unit.

It is evident from the research findings that parental attitudes are highly influential in both reinforcing traditional patriarchal roles and relationships, and deciding on the nature and intensity of work to be carried out. Again, the view of one young female carer serves to capture the very essence of the differences concerned:

> *You're the girl; you're expected to help out and do the jobs mum does, just fill in even when you resent it. I'm being honest, I still think that way sometimes when it gets on top of me. At the end of the day I'm there to help dad as much as possible, whatever that means.*

Some parents, in turn, argued that it was 'more natural for girls to care' and that being involved in caring would equip them to perform 'the role of wife and mother' in later life. It was also seen to be important that young women should learn what in fact caring means 'at first hand' in terms of the skills, knowledge and

emotional labour involved. In all this, an expectation exists that young women will want to care for other family members.

For boys the situation appears to be markedly different. A great deal of the caring carried out is influenced by the fact that they are expected to perform a substitute fathering role during the absence (either temporary or permanent) of the adult male partner. However, caring is more likely to be suspended either when the absent male partner returns to the family home, or the person being cared for feels stronger and is able to take on wider responsibilities for a period of time. There are also discernible differences in terms of the kinds of tasks carried out by boys and girls. The boy's role was frequently depicted as being concerned with crisis management, discipline, and the maintenance and continuation of family life in a way that met with the approval of the adult male partner:

> *The thing with leaving Pete in charge is that I can trust him to deal with things like I would. To take control and sort things.*

Whereas girls invested much of their time in providing ongoing welfare, counselling and mediating in disputes and difficulties as they arose. Accordingly, young women carers appeared to have a far more restricted social life outside the immediate confines of the family, and they were more readily expected to sacrifice their immediate hopes and ambitions to sustain the 'normality' of the family unit for the benefit of its other members.

There can be doubt that these particular research findings support a long-standing sociological analysis concerning the nature of family life, the roles of men and women, and the ideological preoccupations of domestic work (see, Oakley, 1974). The expectations placed on the young women and men concerned are, in no small part, shaped by a set of gender relations that reinforce not only parental expectations and beliefs, but also the expectations and beliefs of many of the young people involved in acts of caring.

Caring as influencing life chances

Caring by young people can have a major influence on their life chances and future expectations. Many of the young people interviewed experienced feelings of 'being trapped' within the caring roles that had been created for them. These particular feelings appeared to exist at two levels - the immediate and the long term. Parental concern was also expressed about the longer term caring scenarios that were likely to unfold, either if the young person left, or remained, within the family home.

The outcome of all this was that, in a number of instances, both parents and young people failed to discuss the future, and where it was discussed at all deep feelings of guilt were engendered on both sides. For example, a significant proportion of the young people interviewed felt that they would be abandoning the

person they were caring for if they left the family home, whereas for some parents the future was viewed with uncertainty and trepidation:

> *Sometimes it is easier not to think of life without her. For me institutional care will be the ultimate result.*

The level of dependency produced in such relationships (particularly those of a longer term duration) reflects in many respects the experiences of adult carers in terms of the feelings that are produced concerning future life expectations, being tied to the family home, and the ways in which some young people assert that whatever they do, 'it will not be enough' (Pitkeathley, 1989, p.53-56). However, there are also differences that need to be highlighted and recognised between the experiences of adults and young people who care. First, some young people struggle to express, because of their lack of social experience, the feelings that caring can generate in terms of it potentially thwarting their hopes and ambitions for the future. Second, caring by young people, as has been argued, frequently goes unrecognised in the public domain and is therefore a subject to be avoided with peers and external adult family contacts. Thus, some young people find that they are unable to easily obtain appropriate advice and information that will aid decision making. Finally, caring when it manifests itself as a 'hidden' family activity can act as a developmental barrier for young people, in terms of the range of activities and opportunities that are available for them to acquire personal and social skills that are not directly related to acts of caring.

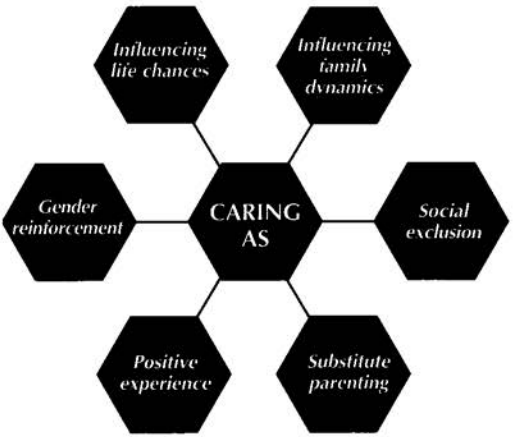
Some concluding thoughts on the case for recognition

Through this article an attempt has been made to analyse the life experiences of young people who play a significant role in caring for sick or disabled members of their family. In conducting such an analysis, specific attention has been given to assessing the impact that the development of community care legislation can have on the expectations, life chances and ambitions of young carers. In addition, particular focus has been placed on understanding the impact of the concealed consequences of such social policy making activities, and consideration given to examining why the contribution of young carers to the maintenance of family life is often ignored or under valued.

In presenting the discussion in this way a concerted effort has been made to demonstrate that not only is there a need to understand the nature of the caring work involved, but also that by developing such an understanding it is possible to become more aware of the personal and social needs of young carers. Indeed, the case is made that whether young carers choose or are forced to enter into family-based caring relationships, such relationships affect matters of self-perception, esteem and the ability to take up opportunities that are available to their peers. In considering the concealed consequences of caring for young people, the necessity for the development of both academic, policy making and practitioner awareness and

understanding is also advocated. The concealed consequences of caring, summarised diagramatically below, are far reaching and need to be responded to by those who develop policy and manage and deliver services for young people.

Fig 1: **The concealed consequences of caring**



However, such an analysis raises a series of wider debates concerning the treatment of young people by those involved in developing health, social care and education provision. For it is clear that the analytical discourses used to define the public and private relationships, actions, and activities of young people, serve to shape institutional actions and priorities. A socio-political preoccupation with 'problematizing' the period of youth, also makes it difficult for social policy developments to reflect and emphasis much more than the presumed negative and deficient aspects of young people's lives.

In all this then, the question remains as to how the needs of young carers can be responded to. In reality, what has to be created is a different kind of agenda for intervention that is founded on the active valuing of the contribution made by this group of young people to family life. There is also a requirement to recognise that caring can have profound social, emotional and behavioural consequences for all those involved. By concealing the outcomes of particular forms of public policy making activity, little is done to enhance the quality of life enjoyed by young carers either now or in the future.

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THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF YOUNG MEN:

Suicide and the Adolescent Male

SIMON BRADFORD AND CATHY URQUHART

Introduction

A recent research project involving one of the authors of this paper indicated that 26% of a sample of 950 young people in Surrey had considered taking their own life and that 8% of the sample had actually tried to do so (Bradford, Day, and Gough, 1995). This, and other evidence (Hill, 1995, Samaritans, 1995) indicates that suicide and attempted suicide amongst young people have reached frightening levels over the past ten years. In this paper the relationship between young men in particular and suicide is discussed. The paper explores how prevailing social factors - specifically the ways in which gender expectations shape aspects of young men's conduct, their relationships and their views of themselves - coupled with specific personal crises may predispose young men to an increased risk of suicide. Interviews undertaken with a number of young men and young women exploring their perceptions of 'being male' and 'being female' (Urquhart, 1995) are drawn on in the paper. For the purposes of the paper we adopt Durkheim's definition of suicide:

> *...death resulting directly of indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.* (Durkheim, 1975, p. 44)

Like Durkheim, we do not see suicide soley as an individual act deriving from extreme personal unhappiness or hopelessness. Although individual feelings and perceptions are significant, there are important social factors which we suggest profoundly influence the individual conduct of young men and as such their propensity towards suicidal behaviour.

Adolescence, Masculinity and Suicide

Adolescence and young adulthood are times of transition and sociological and psychological discourses frequently emphasise the difficulties associated with these 'stages' of life. Adolescence has become regarded in the popular consciousness as a time of 'storm and stress', a period when problems 'naturally' emerge and subside as the developing individual progressively comes to terms with a new status. As well as being a 'metaphor for change', it seems that youth or adolescence can provide indicators to the nature of change itself and some of the often hidden factors which may give rise to social problems. As Fornäs suggests, young people have a 'seismographic ability' to register and express social change (Fornäs, 1995, p. 1). However, it is important to acknowledge that the experience of adolescence is powerfully mediated by a range of factors including class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, geographical region and of course gender. These factors are also significant in the context of suicidal behaviour (Hill, 1995, p. 44-46). Gender has particular salience.

Most small boys quickly learn that to survive and succeed in the world, they need to be both physically and emotionally tough. Angela Phillips argues that attaining

manhood becomes a process in which many boys and young men learn to become desensitised, and the '...openness of the small child shrinks further and further into the shell of the man ' (Phillips, 1993. p. 9). This can pose a dilemma. How can young men achieve emotionally healthy manhood when on the one hand they are pushed to be tough and macho, to notch up as many conquests as possible, to acquire material commodities which establish their identity and prove their own worth in the world, whilst also having to balance their own needs for communication, to love and to be loved, and to stand alone neither in life nor perhaps ultimately in death. This tension between social expectations and individual feelings which emerges in childhood or adolescence undoubtedly accompanies many men through their lives.

As men's traditional sources of social and cultural capital change, maleness can not be seen as static, no longer '...a papal balcony from which to look down on the rest of the world' (Samuels 1995). Indeed, and perhaps ironically, men (and young men in particular) are regarded by some analysts as becoming increasingly marked out by indicators of disadvantage. For example, long-term male unemployment has grown dramatically and the number of women (with or without children) choosing and able to live independently of men has also increased. This means that the acquisition of manhood on the basis of a domestic division of labour in which men are both 'breadwinner' and 'head of the family' may not be options.

In 1996 registered unemployment amongst females and males stood at 6.3% and 9.7% respectively (Office for National Statistics, 1997, p.85). Even though many women are invisible in these figures (for instance if they're looking after children or claiming income support), in the 16-19 age group the number of women is higher than the number of men (Thomas, 1994). The expanding service sector of the labour market increasingly offers what has traditionally been seen as 'womens work', usually low-paid and part-time (Moore, 1995a), inevitably challenging some men to reappraise both their employment potential and their work identity.

Boys labelled 'behaviourally and emotionally disturbed' outnumber girls by 4:1 (Phillips, 1993, p. 24). Substance use and abuse is more common amongst men: 2% of women and 7% of men are estimated to be heavy drinkers. Men are three times as likely as women to be alcohol-dependent, and 75% of registered heroin users are men (Samaritans, 1995). Boys are far more likely to be perpetrators or victims of physical attacks than girls (Phillips, 1993, p. 49), and crime statistics show that men represent 90% of convictions (Coote, 1994).

And of course, statistics on suicide amongst young people reflect a similar gender imbalance. In 1992, suicide overtook cancer as the second leading cause of death after road deaths, of young people under 25. The number of young men in the 15-24 age range who killed themselves rose by 71% over the decade between 1982 and 1992, and 80% of young people who end their lives in this way are male (Samaritans, 1995). Although in the same period overall suicide figures have

declined, and suicide amongst women has almost halved, 16 in every 100,000 men (and up to 500 men under 25), kill themselves each year. This means that in Britain around 70 young people a month aged between 15 and 24 kill themselves. Of this 70, at least 55 are male. As Hill points out, suicide rates amongst minority ethnic young people do not simply mirror those in the wider community. Young Asian and African-Caribbean women for example appear particularly vulnerable to suicide and suicide attempts, whereas Asian young men appear less vulnerable than white young men. However, because death certificates in Britain do not record race the actual figures for suicide among minority ethic young people are unknown. Similarly, Hill indicates that although between 20 and 25 percent of young gay people in the United States report suicide attempts, the proportion of youth suicides among British gay young people is unknown. (Hill, 1995, p. 21, 44-46)

Four times as many young women as young men *attempt* suicide, mainly by overdosing on prescribed drugs, a method which allows some possibility for recovery. Men use more violent and therefore potentially more certain means of ending their lives (vehicle exhaust gas, hanging, or in the United States, firearms), lending an ironic twist to Angela Phillips' remark on the pressure for young men to be seen to succeed in whatever they do. As she notes, 'If they can't win, they would rather not play' (Phillips, 1993, p. 25).

Young men who choose to reject life each have their own reasons for suicide. However, the huge and widespread age and gender-specific increase in youth suicide reverberates more than the sum of individual tragedies, particularly in a society in which it is often claimed that young people are the '...most valuable - and valued - resource. When a young person dies by his or her own hand, more than the life, and future life, of that person is lost. So, too, is a measure of hope' (Vince & Hamrick 1990, p. 99). Similar trends in youth suicide to those in Britain are apparent in the United Sates, Australia, Canada and other parts of Western Europe. What is it about contemporary culture and some young men's experiences which seems to lead so many of them to reject life in such a final and devastating way? There may be two aspects to this.

First, young people's transition to adulthood have changed markedly over recent years. The factors of class, race, gender and locality have a growing and differential impact on young people's educational, domestic and housing transitions (Coles, 1995, p. 8), leading to increasing inequality in general and for young people specifically (Williamson, 1993, Commission on Social Justice, 1994). In a society in which material expectations are rapidly increasing and material consumption has become a powerful symbol of personal value and status, significant levels of youth unemployment have left many young people without legitimate means of achieving these aspirations. Young men may be particularly hard-hit. Of all young men aged 16 to 19 nearly 21% were registered unemployed in 1996, compared with 15% of young women. Inner city and former industrial areas are particularly

prone to unemployment, and in these areas unemployment in this age group may be very much higher than the national average, rendering working class and black young people more vulnerable than others (Office for National Statistics, 1997, p. 84). The Black Employment Institute estimates that 55% of black young people in Britain are unemployed, but there are differential rates of unemployment amongst specific minority ethnic groups (Shire, 1997, p. 5). Although a significant proportion of young people who are registered unemployed may be in full-time education or training, these activities do not offer the social capital which derives from work. For substantial numbers of young men, work offer the social capital which derives from work. For substantial numbers of young men work is no longer the guarantor of psychological or material identity and this may have a bearing on suicide rates.

Second and relatedly, investing contemporary life with coherence and a consistent framework of meaning is not always easy. As Bauman points out, 'postmodernity's sin' is to deny the order, structure, and foundation claimed by modernity (Bauman, 1992, p. xviii). Some commentators point to a deep sense of uncertainty and foreboding which pervades the moral order.

Gaines writes of the 'cultural poetics of death' suggesting that as the millennium approaches, Western culture has become preoccupied and trapped by the idea of snowballing into chaos (global disaster, world war, civil unrest, and so on). For some, the new millennium has become 'The End' rather than a symbol of fresh possibilities. As we '...gorge on post-apocalyptic art; we see ourselves as dissipated road warriors on an exhausted, depleted emotional landscape - Armageddon, doom and gloom, death and destruction - these themes are localised, internalised' (Gaines, 1991, p. 250). Until relatively recently the individual may have felt safe and assured of future security, though lifelong marriage, lifelong job, God, Science or Tomorrow, but such reference points have been exposed to terminal doubt, leaving shifting meanings and deep uncertainty. Declining religious authority has been replaced by what Alvarez refers to as '...an uneasy and perilous freedom' (Alvarez, 1971, p. 111). Arguably, such 'freedom' casts young people out to uncharted waters on which many adults are themselves adrift and bewildered. For some adolescence (the 'in-between time') stretches on and on and its boundaries with adulthood become ever more ambiguous. Many young people (like adults, find themselves without the economic political and social power with which to use their freedom constructively, and that young people are believed by some adults to have increasing freedom is deeply ironic. Contemporary freedoms bring difficult decisions and deep tensions which for many are hard to bear. Perhaps the ultimate act of individual freedom could be seen as suicide. At times of crisis, if there is nothing else that a young person can control, he or she still has the final say in whether or not to stay alive. Suicide has been acknowledged as a form of communication, '...albeit imprecise and with no opportunities for reclarification' (Cimbolic and Jobes, 1990, p. 51). It may feel like a way of taking control, a clear communication in an uncertain world, the ultimate I-statement: tragic, self-obsessed,

utterly alone. Suicide is an awesome act. It might be seen by some to lift an otherwise insignificant life out of the ordinary, to inspire a '...primitive baffled terror' (Alvarez, 1971, p. 49) in those left behind. As Gaines points out, for some young people suicide has become '...hip, dangerous, the final resistance to adult authority, a last stand against conformity' (Gaines, 1991, p. 248). The contemporary romanticisation of suicide as the exclusive domain of creative but tortured genius is summed up by Camus, 'An act like this is prepared with the silence of the heart as is a great work of art' (Alvarez, 1971, p. 87). The ironic status of the 'live-fast-die-young' imagery first poignantly expressed by James Dean in the 1950s has emerged again recently. Rock-suicides like those of Kurt Cobain and Ian Curtis appear to confirm the invariable connection between 'art and suffering'. As Gaines observes, '...the image of martyr-as-hero is deeply embedded in our culture: from religion to pop, in Christ, in our own contemporary rock legends' (Gaines, 1991, p. 248). For some young men with unfilled aspirations this offers a seductive narrative whose imagery may resonate deeply with their own circumstances.

In the remainder of this paper we identify a number of cultural factor which seem to preclude young men from acknowledging their emotional vulnerability, or sharing concerns about their lives. We discuss material from interviews completed by one of the paper's authors with fifteen white young people aged from 14 to 18. Nine of them were young men and six were young women. All of the young people were in full-time education except one young man who was working and one who had been excluded from school. All of the young people were members of a youth centre in a large town is Southern England and were typical of the Centre's membership, and all lived in the lower-middle class area surrounding the youth centre. The young people all volunteered to participate in the interviews which were semi-structured, took up to an hour each and were undertaken individually to explore the young people's perceptions of 'being male' and 'being female'. In particular, questions were asked about personal relationships, future aspirations and feelings about these, differences between young men and young women and suicide. Although the inevitable limitations of this research are recognised, the interview material gives considerable insight into the background to young men's increasing suicidal behaviour.

My life, my future...

The young men who were interviewed often interpreted questions of future hopes and aspirations in terms of perceived job prospects. These young men's ambitions were invariably constructed using stereotypical notions of 'getting a good job and providing for my family'. For them, their male identity still appeared to be entirely defined by work and domestic circumstances. However, one young man questioned this:

> *Blokes think if I'm earning the money she should look after the baby and do the cooking, but I think they should sort it out together equally...*

Other young men in this group understood the major pressures in their lives as being economic, within the context of demands and expectations from relationships with partners, and an anticipated role as 'head of the family'. One put it simply:

> *Women don't have it as hard as blokes 'cause they rely on men to bring home the bacon.*

Another young man said that:

> *You have to go out and get a job to support your family and there aren't many jobs.*

In contrast, young women's responses to questions about the future showed that they were interested in combining career aspirations with more 'social' concerns. There seemed to be an important distinction here between the notion of 'career' which was embraced by the young women, and for young men the simple idea of having 'a job' in order to provide an economic return. In the interviews with young women it was notable that their sense of self and identity was often defined in terms of their relationships with others, particularly friends, but family as well. As one of them put it:

> *...having people around you who love you is the main thing isn't it?'*

They seemed to recognise that their identities are critically shaped by the level of intimacy achieved with others. Young men on the other hand, seemed to define self almost exclusively in terms of individual effort and achievement: the heroic male figure often struggling against the odds to 'bring home the bacon'. Schomessen points to this distinction between male and female identities:

> *The core of the concept of femininity consists of a longing for communality, togetherness, caring about others and a desire for closeness to others. At the core of the concept of masculinity is a feeling of being active, which involves self-assertion, self-confidence and self-expansion (Schomessen in Holstein-Beck, 1995, p. 111).*

Although the danger of 'essentialist' notions of femininity or masculinity must be acknowledged, our interviews showed considerable differences between the ways in which young men and young women think of themselves. The sense of the active individual male was strongly and consistently expressed by young men in a number of the interviews. The interviews suggested that overall, young women were more thoughtful, reflective, and imaginative about their futures than the young men. They more often appeared to be informally politicised over power imbalances and gender issues. Perhaps because of this they seemed to feel more confident about their future than many of the young men. As one young women put it:

> *You've just got to be yourself, who cares what other people are saying it's what you think and what your friends think.*

Friendship and Personal Relationships

Most of the young women who were interviewed named a female friend as the closest person to them, and the person with whom they would share personal difficulties. Only one young man identified male friends in this way. Interestingly, most young men interviewed identified their mothers as the person with whom they would be most likely to talk about personal matters.

One young woman perceptively described how boys and men rely on women as an 'emotional safety valve':

> *Men are brought up to be strong people, support everyone else, look good in front of their friends, act hard. Women aren't under so much pressure to be hard. Women are brought up to show their feelings and share their feelings. If you bring boys up to be able to talk to someone they'll be alright, and they feel more open around women, 'cause women are more open themselves.*

The expectation on girls to be carers from an early age can be a source of intense pressure. For example, three of these young women cited their siblings' drug abuse as being amongst their major current concerns. Such perceptions of what counts as appropriate femininity might also be constraining if seen as the *only* way of being feminine. However, the capacity for caring and intimacy can also be a source of two-way support and nurturing. This same interviewee went on to talk about the importance of her friendship group to her own social and emotional development:

> *In the past year or so I've become a lot more open, especially towards my close friends. I can talk about anything - we're always having deep and meaningful conversations, I suppose we're quite mature in that way.... We can have a laugh but we can also have a meaningful conversation. We've all grown up and developed our feelings more - we want to be ourselves, not who our parents or school want us to be.*

This young woman was able to move away from childhood and parental dependence, to a wider network of support and care. Like her friends, she was part of a network of *interdependencies* rather than being either independent or dependent.

In contrast to this, young men talked about the pressure which their friendships appeared to entail rather than any support that they derived from them. As one young man put it:

> *If you're in a big group and you're upset, people will just laugh at you, and think 'what a wimp'!*

In similar vein, another young man said:

> *I don't find it easy to talk about my feelings with my friends - you don't know what they're going to say. They could either understand it or they could take the mick, and go telling everyone what you've being saying.*

This vulnerability, which for many young men underlies the peer-group dynamic and its culture, often leads to what Phillips refers to as learning the 'trick of distance' (Phillips, 1993, p. 70). It means that many young men may often fail to experience the emotional intimacy which appears to characterise young women's relationships. Emotional distancing, suggested by the quotes above is as Phillips suggests part of the socialization process through which boys become men. The young men interviewed acknowledged intense peer-pressure to be seen to be tough and in consequence to conceal any sign of emotion which might be perceived by others as weakness. Some of the young men referred to friendships with young women in which they felt emotionally safer and more secure than in all male peer groups. As one young man said:

> *I'd sooner talk to a girl than a bloke about a problem - they take it in more, listen and soak it in.*

There was a general perception by young men of female friendships being closer and more supportive than those which young men had experienced with other young men. Another young man believed that:

> *Women show their feelings more, they can talk to someone close but men keep it all inside.*

There was a feeling amongst the young men interviewed that girls are 'allowed' to be more individual within a group, to somehow resist established norms and gain great self-esteem by doing so. In contrast, they thought that boys and young men are not expected by their same-sex peers to threaten the fragile identity of teenage maleness which is so often centred on conformity, albeit a conformity concealed under the guise of breaking rules.

> *Girls can control themselves more - they're more mature in front of their mates.*

and

> *Girls don't do things just 'cause of their friends usually, but boys feel they have to.*

Such pressure doesn't always originate from immediate peers. One young man noted a general social expectation, mediated by the peer group, about how young men should behave:

> *There's more crime, an increase in drugs, pressure on teenage boys to do all these things... everyone expects you to try.*

Girls' perspectives on male friendship reflected the gender differences perceived by young men. As one young women put it:

> *Women find it a lot easier to talk to other women, are a lot more open about their feelings - men try and bottle it up, try to be hard.*

and

Boys have to look macho, and can't show their true feelings - that's easier for girls.

More positively, our interviews with some of the young men suggested that they felt able to begin embracing some elements of shifting gender definitions and expectations. Some of them suggested that they wanted to extend their emotional experience to encompass ways of behaving which might previously have been seen as 'feminine'. These young men were apparently trying to make new behaviours their own by incorporating them as positive aspects of their identity. One young man said:

Over the past year I've opened up and expressed my feelings to one person, and now I feel more confident about it.... He's shown me it's not such a bad thing to open up. I always thought if you had a problem it was best to keep it to yourself, but that builds up pressure in you, you get angry and start losing your mates. I used to let off steam in a big way - have a fight, get drunk - but now I talk about my problems straight away.

This young man was able to get close to at least one other man and to breach some of the older conventions of what it means to be male. However, for many of these interviewees the male as 'lone hero' remained the principle reference for dealing with personal difficulties in particular, as well as the social world in general. Asked about who he talks to about his worries, one young man replied:

I keep it in and get depressed. I feel stupid talking about my feelings, I sort them out myself, I wouldn't expect anyone to be there for me.

Another said:

I tend to keep it to myself - I usually just sort it out on my own.

Despite their personal experiences, all interviewees (both male and female), stressed the importance of *the principle* of sharing problems and being close to other people as a way of coping. However, for most of the young men in this group at least, *acting* on this principle seemed to present difficulties.

Talking About Suicide

Some of the young women interviewed talked about times when they had thought about suicide. All of them appeared to be deterred by the consequences that suicide would have on friends and family or reflected on the opportunities offered by those relationships for talking through difficulties. This meant that they felt that they would not reach the point of attempting suicide. It was apparent that strong friendships and close relationships with parents or other significant adults were factors likely to inhibit suicide attempts. However one young woman who was interviewed explained her reasons for considering suicide. Not as a desire to die but apparently as crying out to be cared for:

I've thought about hurting myself so I'd be in hospital so somebody would take notice of me.... When I get really desperate I just want to slit my wrists and find someone to take me to hospital, somebody to notice me.... I've always wanted someone to save me because they wanted me to live.

This is especially poignant as four times as many young women than young men attempt suicide, although four times more young men actually succeed in killing themselves.

One young man suggested that higher levels of male impulsiveness and willingness to take risks may help to explain why men use more violent and ultimately lethal methods in their suicide attempts. This also hinted at the myth of the 'lone-suicide-as-hero'.

It's harder for women to kill themselves - they can't bring themselves to do it. Men can just do it, they think it doesn't matter on the spur of the moment, but women are curious, they think about it, they think it might get better.

Another young man made the point about men suppressing their feelings:

It's a pride thing with men, they don't like admitting that things are getting them down, they like to think that they can sort it out themselves, but sometimes they can't.

And another young man said:

Once men have made up their minds, they wouldn't admit they couldn't hack it.

It has been suggested that females have more fear of death or injury than males, although males attach a greater sense of social disapproval to suicide thoughts. Rich et al (1992) argue that young men's fears of social disapproval, their greater tendency towards anger and impulsiveness, and their reluctance to seek help are important facts which contribute to gender-specific differences in suicide. Other analysts have pointed to underlying economic factors (whose impact may also be gender-specific) influencing suicide. Attendant upon increasing wealth from some young people is a growing pressure on all to consume, and through consumption to construct a legitimate identity. In one young man's words:

There's always something else to get... motorbike, car, trying to find the money is hard. There's so much pressure these days because everyone wants the best in life. Young men have got an ego problem - 'if I don't get this I'll be a little nobody, if I don't achieve this I don't count as a person'.

Our interviewees suggested that other reasons for increasing numbers of young male suicides included family problems, drug use, other people's expectations, failing exams, racism, unemployment, a lack of money and uncertain futures. Some of these factors have a particular significance for young men, and others have potentially equal importance for young women.

Conclusions

Although it is important to acknowledge the clear limitations of the work reported here, a number of important points emerge from this paper and provide some insight into the increasing numbers of young male suicides.

Youth suicide occurs in the context of increasing material expectations among all sections of society, not least young people. Relatively high levels of unemployment amongst young working class men and some black young people may mean that for substantial numbers of them these expectations are unmet. Because material consumption is so significant in conferring young people's identity (through fashion or music for example) significant numbers may be seriously disadvantaged in this sense. It is worth noting that the consequences of recent punitive changes in benefit arrangements have fallen hardest on the young, and will increase the vulnerability of young people to factors which are identified here and elsewhere as contributing to the current alarming levels of youth suicide. Employment status (and thus housing and domestic status) is also extremely important in symbolising the achievement of adulthood and because of high levels of unemployment, adult 'male-dom' may not exist for some working class and black young men as it does for males occupying other social positions. The cultural capital acquired through work is denied to them and the social anchorage that work provided may be eroded, with undoubted implications for the formation of a secure identity. Simple poverty, increasing drug use, high levels of bullying, and strains on family life were identified by the young people we interviewed as likely to contribute to an increased risk of suicide among young people. It is important to consider how these experiences are mediated by the intersection of structural factors during young people's transitions to adulthood.

We have suggested that the young men interviewed here rarely had the close support networks of same-sex peers that many young women appeared to enjoy. The gender-specific nature of peer group experiences means that young men appeared to lack a context in which personal difficulties could be discussed, and vulnerabilities acknowledged. The interviews suggested that there were marked differences in the 'competence' displayed by young men and young women in talking about themselves and their feelings. It is almost as if some young men lacked a vocabulary in which to discuss these aspects of their lives, at least in the company of other young men. For many young men their masculinity appeared to have become a straight-jacket: confining, precluding intimacy, and often isolating whilst paradoxically offering an apparent security upon which to construct individual identity. In contrast, the young women who were interviewed seemed considerably more confident of being emotionally open and through this more connected to their peers. Indeed, their 'emotional literacy' was a defining feature of their developing identities, and appeared to enable them to manage the effects of anxiety and stress more readily.

The paper identifies the different ways in which friendship or peer groups shape the perceptions of young men and young women, and the contrasting opportunities

which these groups provided for the support of their members. The male peer group might be seen as sometimes placing powerful strictures on the opportunities which young men have for sharing their uncertainties and vulnerability. Male peer groups seem to have an important role in mediating and transmitting broader representations of masculinity which mark out what it means to be male. These are constructed in ways which emphasise individual strength (both physical and emotional), detachment, and competitiveness. Young men identified the peer group as a source of pressure to conform to particular norms of conduct. It is ironic that whilst the peer group lays claim to so much of the formation of youngs men's identity, it apparently offers so little in terms of emotional support. In contrast, the young women's friendship groups appeared to have a largely affirmative roles in their lives. Jobes and Cimbolic point out that suicidal young people have problems in their relationships with peers, and are less likely than other young people to have someone in which to confide (Jones and Cimbolic, 1990, p. 40).

We have pointed to the differences in the ways in which young men and young women talk about their aspirations for the future, and the implications of these for their developing identities. The confusion (or perhaps naiveté) which some young men have about changing gender roles, and shifting employment patterns and possibilities is suggested in the paper. For example, young men in the group tended to see their futures in terms of work (conceived as 'a job' in which they acted as 'breadwinner'), and a 'traditional' domestic division of labour which for some young women is clearly no longer part of their extant reality. Young women in this group appeared to be much more aware of their own capability and capacity to transform circumstances into opportunities. They talked for example, much more in terms of work as 'career'. It seems reasonable to suggest that the young men's perceptions act as a potential source of disadvantage and vulnerability as they are likely to lead to disappointment and disillusionment as well as restrictive and unrealistic expectations on future female partners.

The young women with whom we talked indicated that their personal relationships with both family and friends acted as an important inhibitor to suicide attempts. It seems that young women's apparent emotional competence, and the nature of their experiences and relationships in the friendship group are mutually reinforcing. However, there is a puzzle here. If higher levels of intimacy characteristic of young women's friendship groups are seen by them to provide support and affirmation, then why are levels of *attempted* suicide amongst young women so much higher than for young men? Perhaps this can be understood as an (ironic) example of young women's capacity for communication, and attempted suicide a bid to ensure an unambiguous expression of emotional need. It is significant that young women's suicide attempts are largely undertaken by means which seems calculated to 'fail'. Attempted suicide by young men should be seen as no less of an expression of need, although when actual suicide is intended and achieved, this undoubtedly constitutes a very different communication.

A number of authors have discussed the extent to which so-called 'post-modern' societies fail to provide the security and certainty which are often attributed to earlier social and cultural arrangements (Bauman, 1992, Giddens, 1990, 1991). Whilst we should be cautious in assuming that discontinuity and dislocation are new experiences in themselves, they may have a particular bearing in current circumstances. Changing patterns of employment, altered gender relations, new discourses of masculinity or femininity may undermine young men's sense of certainty and security, particularly when these are seen to damage opportunities for economic independence. Whilst overall, aspects of these changes are undoubtedly positive, for many they represent a new landscape and vocabulary which may be difficult to negotiate. Too often we suggest, young men are forced to cope alone (or not) with personal difficulties some of which are associated with these changes. The work reported her suggests that a significant number of young men may need more support in finding their way on this rapidly changing terrain, and statistics on young men's suicide indicate that there is much work to be done to contain a growing problem. Because of their capacity to work informally with young people through close and supportive relationship which are often established *on young people's terms,* youth workers are in a particularly strong position to offer the kind of help which some young people require. Youth workers' skills in encouraging young people to become more reflexive have much potential in enabling young men to understand and negotiate the shifting boundaries of male identity. Help of this kind could make a vital contribution to the reduction of young male suicides.

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THE DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORK TO THE PROMOTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL HEALTH:

A case-study

SUE BLOXHAM

Introduction

The central government intervention in the 'curriculum' of the youth service via a series of Ministerial Conferences in the late 80s and early 90s was partially predicated on the identification of 'what is it that youth work can uniquely offer?' (National Youth Agency, undated). The Labour minister with responsibility for the Youth Service, Kim Howells, has recently echoed this requirement to demonstrate a distinctive role for youth work as a condition of bringing the service onto a statutory footing (Young People Now, 1998). A vision of what this distinctive role might be is clearly evident in recent policy developments. For example, with employment perceived as the key solution to social exclusion, poverty and crime, a role is suggested for youth services in using their special relationships and skills with disaffected young people, to 'bring them in' to the new (and old) schemes and courses that will be the 'Gateway' to improved employment prospects (Policy Update, 1997). Indeed, even in the secondary school phase, youth services are being increasingly engaged by schools in efforts to raise achievement and break the cycle of low achievement and truancy which are considered significant causes of unemployment in young adults.

As always, identifying the purpose of youth work involves a philosophical struggle for 'Youth and Community workers' in finding a role (and funding) which doesn't conflict with their analysis of the social condition of young people; the perennial dilemma of 'in and against the state'. This is no less so in relation to the contribution of 'Youth and Community workers' to sexual health interventions, which forms the subject of this article.

Sexual health has become a major concern and current 'issue', particularly the sexual health of young people. The cultural ambiguity about what constitutes 'sexual health' for young people means that the topic is usually considered in a negative light, associating it with the absence of sexually transmitted disease (STD) or unplanned teenage pregnancy (Aggleton 1991). Adolescent pregnancy has clearly been seen as a problem in recent years. This is evidenced by the 1992 government statement 'The Health of the Nation' which set a target for a 50% reduction in pregnancies to under 16s by the year 2000. Furthermore, the 1993 Conservative party conference was surrounded by considerable debate about developing policies to discourage young single women from becoming pregnant. The current Labour government has continued the theme with a major emphasis on reducing the dependency of single mothers on welfare benefit. They decided to implement the previous government's

decision to axe Lone Parent Benefit and Labour politicians have continually emphasised 'never married' young mothers as the fastest growing group of single mothers. This is reflected in the 1998 Green Paper on welfare reform which includes a target to reduce teenage pregnancies as part of the strategy to support families and tackle child poverty (Guardian 1998).

Harris (1991) argues that immature motherhood, and sexuality and pregnancy outside of marriage, are seen as a threat to the institution of the family. She suggests that 'The control of women's sexual and reproductive lives is of fundamental importance for the preservation of the modern, nuclear family' (p1). From her perspective, the family is seen as having an essential role in meeting the labour needs of a capitalist society, where *wives* meet the physical, emotional and sexual needs of the *male* workforce and raise the next generation of workers and mothers.The *family* of the 1990s does not fit comfortably with the notion of two married parents with dependent children, supported by an employed father.

However, what is clear from studying the field of teenage pregnancy and childbirth is that this is no new phenomenon in either its reality for young women or its investigation by professional researchers and policy makers. As Bury (1985) says, we know which girls are likely to get pregnant and we know what efforts can be made to reduce unplanned teenage pregnancies. It is easy to find publications from the 60s, 70s and 80s which have explored the antecedents and outcomes of adolescent sexual activity and pregnancy. Indeed, the figures suggest that teenage pregnancy, if anything, is on the decrease (Phoenix 1990) although there has been a significant increase in pregnancies to under 16s with 'between a quarter and a third of girls now claim(ing) to have first had sexual intercourse before the age of 16, compared with 2% in 1964' (Guardian 1993). Nevertheless the majority of teenage mothers are in the over 16 age group (Peckham 1992).

Consequently, the new concern with teenage parenthood is more to do with the social context of that parenthood and the growth of 'single' rather than 'teenage' mothers. According to the Department of Social Security, figures for 1992 show that nearly a million lone parents were claiming income support at a cost of £3.4 billion per year. Of this figure, £145 million a year went to those under 20 (Guardian, 1993). Perhaps policy targets for young people's sexual health are inappropriately located in a *Health* report because they are clearly financial targets associated with *Benefit* policy.

Of course, treating teenage motherhood simply as something that can be manipulated by punitive alterations to the welfare system and local authority housing obligations, is simplistic and reductionist. It presumes a level of control over one's life, a degree of advance planning, and an ability to assert oneself in relationships with men that are highly unlikely amongst this age group, even if they *wished* to avoid pregnancy. And its implications will be to intensify the poverty and disadvantage already linked to young motherhood.

There are clearly identifiable patterns regarding teenage sexual activity. The proportion of young people reporting first sexual intercourse under 16 differs across social classes (Johnson et al 1994) and teenage girls in deprived areas are six times more likely to have unwanted pregnancies than those in affluent areas (Smith 1993). Furthermore young women from affluent areas (Smith) were more likely to have abortions if they became pregnant. However, Phoenix strongly challenges the notion that teenage parenthood *causes* poverty and argues, from her research, that the young women who have children early are the same women who face poverty and hardship whenever they have children. It is their poor educational background and employment prospects that create the poverty, not their motherhood.

This suggests that it is at least an *education* issue in its widest sense (that is: the broad education of young people, not just health or sex education) and it is highly spurious to argue that it is different levels of sex education which are the key factor in young people's understanding of and control over their sexuality. Nevertheless there are key weaknesses at the level of specific sexual health education and services for young people. These include inadequate access to advice, information, and contraceptives, and inadequate or inappropriate sex education (Thomson & Scott 1992).

Of course, enabling young people to avoid unplanned pregnancy (although the most current and contentious area) is only one aspect of adolescent sexual health interventions. However, although the advent of HIV/AIDs brought the issue of sexually transmitted diseases amongst young people into sharp focus, there is considerable evidence that sexual health provision remains largely directed at preventing unwanted pregnancies and providing appropriate contraception (Pitts et al 1996). This is despite the fact that young people are at particularly high risk of contracting STDs (British Co-operative Clinical Group 1997). For example it is reported that 10% of sexually active young women are infected with Chlamydia which can develop into pelvic inflammatory disease with with long term potential for infertility (Brook Advisory Centres, 1997). However, it is easily left undetected because it is often asymptomatic and only 23% of 16-24 year olds have ever heard of it (Brook).

This broader social context for young people's sexual health has the potential to disable 'Youth and Community workers' likely to experience a conflict between supporting young people in their choices and sexual expression whilst acknowledging both the potential for social exclusion and poverty that may accompany young parenthood, and the risk of contracting diseases with long term consequences to their health. What are the 'best interests' of young people in relation to sexual behaviour? In addition, 'Youth and Community workers' have usually focused at the individual and small group level with a concentration on building self-esteem, information and decision-making skills, yet they are clearly tackling an issue which is influenced by a much broader (and uncontrollable) set of factors, not least gender relations. Their dilemma is not helped by the controversies and debates surrounding welfare dependency and the possible role of early, unmarried parenthood in prolonging that dependence.

Despite these uncertainties, there is growing evidence of the importance placed on sex education and sexual health promotion by 'Youth and Community workers' with a range of reports (Burke 1994a, Burke 1994b, Coyle & Loveless 1995, Public Health Resource Centre 1995, Waldock 1991) and relevant resources (Jewitt 1994, Lyford 1991, Youth Clubs 1994), particularly linked to HIV/AIDS. What should the role of 'Youth and Community workers' be in this field of sexual health? How can they operate alongside other health and education agencies who may have very different 'performance indicators' in this field, yet retain their own integrity in what they are doing? What might their distinctive contribution be which enables them to work in young people's interests? This article explores these issues by reporting on a case study in collaborative approaches to sexual health intervention with young people.

Definitions of sexual health

A positive definition of sexual health adopted by Orton (1994) encompasses 'informed individual self-direction and mutually protective collaboration between individuals', and Goldsmith (1992) includes 'sexual expression and enjoyment without exploitation, oppression or abuse'. Brooks-Gunn & Paikoff (1993) have developed a similar definition of adolescent sexual well-being. It would be hard to quibble with these statements but the translation of these broader definitions into appropriate objectives for practical interventions is loaded with controversy particularly when considering target outcomes. Indeed, it seems far more reasonable to identify underlying skills and self-attitudes, and access to appropriate information, counselling and clinical services, than to specify what particular outcomes should emerge from that provision, because the latter should be in the control of the young people, themselves. Consequently, in identifying the interpretation of sexual health for young people, the research team drew on a range of sources (Ingham 1993, Doppenberg 1993 & Jewitt 1994) in order to specify what elements should be provided. These are:

- *Development of high self-esteem, self assertion, and decision-making especially in the area of relationships and sex*
- *Development of 'interactional competencies'- skills to handle sexual relationships*
- *An opportunity to discuss their developing sexuality openly with adults and peers*
- *An opportunity to discuss sexual behaviour and contraception*
- *Easy access to information, advice, and contraception*
- *Easy access to information, advice about and treatment of, sexually transmitted infection*

This list strongly suggests that providing for the sexual health needs of young people demands a range of different professional interventions. Some of the elements are so clearly educational services whilst others are clinical, and yet others feature

the skills of individual support and counselling. Consequently, not only is there a recognition of the need for services specially targetted at young people (Allen 1991, Pitts et al 1996), there is a strong argument for planned multi-service provision in the field of adolescent sexual health.

Interagency collaboration

In the wider field of health and welfare, there has been an increasing belief in the benefits of collaboration between different professional groups (Rawson 1994, Casto 1994, Delaney 1994 and Mackay et al 1995), particularly in relation to health care and health promotion (Butterfoss et al, 1993). In this regard, Leathard (1994) identifies over 50 terms to describe the idea of people from different professional groups working together, and for the purposes of this paper I shall use the term 'interagency collaboration', defined as shared planning and/or delivery of work across different organisations, involving different professional traditions and skills.

The benefits of collaboration are considered to be numerous and include rationalisation of resources, a reduction in duplication of effort and the provision of 'a more effective, integrated and supportive service for both users and professionals' (Leathard, 1994 p7). It is also seen as a response to the increasing complexity of society (Casto 1994), where focussing on the behaviour of individuals without attention to other factors in their environment is likely to have less impact (Butterfoss et al). Interprofessional collaboration may also contribute to improved communication between professionals working with the same clients (Mackay et al, 1994) and Nezlek and Galano (1993) point to the increased potential of 'coalitions' to influence policy making in a positive way. Youth and community agencies, with considerable experience of working alongside other agencies such as schools, have also been part of this movement towards interagency collaboration (Jobstown Youth Action Project 1990, Waldock 1991, Allen 1991, Public Health Resource Centre 1995).

Yet interagency work is not without problems (Mackay et al 1995) and as Dryfoos points out 'Collaborative plans are difficult to achieve because of the differing characteristics of the agencies involved' (1994, p145). The research points to a range of factors which appear to enhance or constrain collaboration. These include the extent of shared aims and values, good interpersonal relationships including understanding and mutual respect between the professional groups, the existence of shared and relevant training, the inclusion of both grassroots' commitment and formalised co-ordinating strategies, and the role of organisational power (Bloxham 1996). It could be anticipated that the controversial field of sexual health would place additional pressures on collaborative ventures with greater need for shared values and mutual respect.

The case-study

The research team identified an initiative in a district in the North of England which comprises a medium sized town (pop.40,000) plus surrounding villages. The research focused on this particular initiative because it involved shared planning

and delivery of sexual health activity involving four different professional fields: 'Youth and Community workers', secondary school teachers, health promotion officers and staff working in community health services. However, it was not a centrally planned initiative.

The aim of the research study was to examine interagency collaboration in the field of young people's sexual health. This paper forms part of the results of this study and concentrates on the perceived contribution of 'Youth and Community workers' within the overall experience of interagency collaboration. Limitations on space prohibit more extensive reporting of the research findings but they are published elsewhere (Bloxham 1996 and Bloxham, 1997).

A small group of staff from the different organisations involved participated with the research team in designing a research strategy. A qualitative, interview-based method, was selected as most likely to allow for the collection of material both because some of it, such as the personal relationships involved, may be sensitive, but also because of the narrative nature of respondents answers about the development of the collaboration.

The interviews were designed to elicit information and views regarding the nature and funding of any inter-agency collaboration in the field of young people's sexual health, the aims of the work, training available, how the collaboration was established and developed, constraints on the work, perceived difficulties in collaborating, contributing factors to effective collaboration, and future plans. The interviews took place during March to June 1995. Minor amendments to the question schedule were included after the first six interviews to improve the clarity and relevance of the questions. The interviews were carried out with 25 staff from the community health service (8), health promotion (3+1 joint appointment), the youth and community service (7+1 joint appointment) and four secondary schools (6), who were identified by senior staff in each organisation. The interviewees included a combination of managers with some policy making authority (for example: heads of school departments, the clinical services manager for the health authority, the HIV prevention co-ordinator) and those delivering the services (for example: classroom teachers, the doctor and family planning nurses at the young person's clinic, school nurses, health visitors, and health promotion officers.) In the case of 'Youth and Community workers', those interviewed were generally staff who both worked with young people themselves, and managed the work of part-time staff.

The interview material was analysed, firstly, by categorising the different practical elements of the provision and identifying the respondents' views about the specific contribution of interagency working to that service. Secondly, the analysis focused on the perceived effectiveness of, and constraints on the provision. The data reported here pertains particularly to the specific contribution of the youth and community work to the collaboration.

The findings

This interagency collaboration, discussed below, had been established slowly over a number of years and it had built up largely on the basis of networks of contacts between interested individuals. For example, 'Youth and Community workers' had developed links with secondary schools and gradually gained a key role in delivering elements of personal and social education. Teachers had asked their school nurse to participate in sex education lessons in order to provide more current and specialist information. An information shop had obtained the services of a health visitor to provide regular advice sessions and emergency pregnancy tests.

Informal, early arrangements had gradually become more formalised. For example, a joint appointment was created between the Health Promotion Unit and the youth and community Service to specialise in sexual health work with young people and a youth worker was appointed to work at a young people's clinic. At the point when the research took place, the specific elements of the collaborative provision were: personal and social education (PSE) and 'drop-in ' facilities in school, advice and information facilities in the community, detached youth and community work, clinical provision, youth groups and support and training from a health promotion unit. The diagram (fig. 1) attempts to illustrate the different roles that 'Youth and Community workers' played in the initiative, and the following text explores the nature of their contribution to each element of provision.

Fig 1: **The role of Youth & Community Workers in the different elements of provision**

Personal and Social Education in Schools

Sexual health education was offered in school as part of a broad curriculum of PSE including essential elements of building self esteem and confidence, personal relationships, decision-making, and taking risks. This, largely group-based work was mostly delivered by school staff, but 'Youth and Community workers' frequently went into schools to contribute to the curriculum. Other key professionals in the collaboration such as the school nurse, and health promotion personnel also contributed to PSE.

These external staff were felt by teachers to bring a specific range of knowledge and skills which can enhance the teaching in the sensitive area of sexual health. The PSE teachers interviewed generally agreed that such people can bring in up-to-date information. The reported benefits of the youth and community contribution were that pupils were more likely to open up to strangers, they worked in an informal way in class creating a better atmosphere for discussion, the absence of authority, and the fact that youth work staff were more comfortable working in a field which was difficult or embarrassing for some teachers. 'Youth and Community workers' also considered that their particular approach enabled them to establish different kinds of relationships with pupils compared with teachers and they felt able to involve young people with all levels of ability.

Language and communication appear to be at the heart of this ability of 'Youth and Community workers' to create an appropriately informal atmosphere. Whilst other professional groups such as teachers may feel heavily constrained in their use of language, or uncomfortable hearing adolescents' use of bad language (PHRC, 1995), 'Youth and Community workers'' understanding and familiarity with young people's expressions can prove important in developing non-authoritarian and trusting relationships. As trusting in the confidentiality of staff is considered vital by young people in this area (Allen 1991, PHRC 1995, Pitts et al 1996, Health Education Authority 1996, Jackson & Plant 1996), such relationships would seem an important first step to increasing their participation and openness.

There was general agreement amongst all parties about the complementary nature of their different roles in the delivery of the sexual health curriculum with benefit to both pupils and professionals.

Drop in facilities in schools

A more recent development designed to contribute to the provision of sexual health services for young people has been the establishment of drop-in facilities for young people in their secondary schools. All four of the schools involved in the research provided a drop-in advice and information facility for pupils. This was a general facility and not specifically focussed on sexual health. The sessions were usually provided by school nurses but two schools provided a weekly lunchtime drop-in staffed by 'Youth and Community workers', to which access was limited to older pupils in one of the schools. Drop-ins also provide a referral point for teaching staff when pupils bring up questions or problems that are beyond their expertise or outside their area of responsibility. The broad remit of drop-in facilities acts to protect young people's confidentiality as they are not specifically linked to sexual health.

Interviewees identified this provision as an important addition to the educational programme as it allows young people to gain one-to-one information and advice; it reflects the fact that the development of young people's sexuality and sexual activity takes place at different rates and therefore it is impossible to neatly match all pupils individual needs with the age-related school curriculum; it provides the

confidentiality required by young people and it enables staff to suggest specific clinical and advice facilities outside school.

Detached/outreach work in schools

One youth and community worker indicated she was trying to establish an extension of their school-based drop-in facility to include mixing with young people in school recreation areas during their break times in order to help them become aware of what services are available both in and out of school. A further advantage of this informal 'detached' work is seen to be the opportunity it gives pupils to develop a vocabulary regarding sexual health issues that will assist them in discussions with health professionals and others.

Kirby et al (1994) stressed the importance of follow-up and outreach activities by health personnel in schools, and the targeting of sexually active students, although recent UK work suggests that young people prefer facilities away from school (Jackson & Plant 1996).

Advice and information Services in the Community

Outside school, the youth and community service operated a range of advice and information projects for young people which are seen to play an important role in the overall access to sexual health services by young people. One organisation that featured in our research data offered both general drop-in sessions and specific advice sessions on subjects such as health, contraception and parentcraft. Staff from Community Health Services and Health Promotion work alongside 'Youth and Community workers' in this facility, and where appropriate, young people are referred to other services.

An 'information shop' such as this project can offer an approachable, central, access point for young people, unsure of what specific service they need. Staff can provide first-line information and advice, using appropriate personnel (for example health visitors) where necessary to carry out services such as pregnancy tests. However, the strongest feature is the link they offer to other agencies. In the case of sexual health, this may be referring users to a Young Persons Clinic, a Family planning Clinic or a GUM Clinic. This link may involve taking a young person to the appropriate service in order to provide support and advocacy. The research indicated that other services, considered this 'link' function to be very important in helping users access their facilities.

However, the youth and community worker managing the shop was the only interviewee to question whether such interagency work might compromise young people's confidentiality. He felt that health and social services' staff considered that discussion of cases between professionals was acceptable whereas he believes that staff should strive to preserve client confidentiality at all times. In general, interviewees argued that the range of provision acted to protect confidentiality for young people. For example, teachers were able to refer pupils to other professionals who would not be under the same duty to disclose information regarding underage sexual

activity. Clearly, discussion of confidentiality policy and practice is essential to effective working relationships in this area of provision.

Detached youth work in the community

Detached youth and community work has a long history of provision designed to make contact with and offer support and services to young people on the street and in other places where they gather. A strong feature of the local Youth and Community Service strategy emerging from this research, is the emphasis on using detached work. Respondents felt that detached workers can gradually gain the confidence of young people and encourage them to discuss issues such as sexual health. They have also provided young people with condoms and helped them to access other relevant provision such as Family Planning and GUM Clinics, an information/advice shop, the Young Persons Clinic, and various specialist youth groups. The research suggests that the existence of detached 'Youth and Community workers' is considered very important by health professionals in helping young people to become aware of, and access, clinical and other services related to sexual health. It was also seen as important for young people's confidence in using services that they can meet the same faces in school, on the street, in the Information /advice shop and at the Young Persons' Clinics.

Personnel across all the other professions were very clear that 'Youth and Community workers' provided a vital link in enhancing the work of other agencies in the difficult area of sexual health. Their specific role in meeting young people 'where they are', through detached work, provided access to those young people most likely to have missed schooling and least likely to feel confident accessing formal services such as clinics.

A number of recent reports have similarly identified this link role for 'Youth and Community workers'. A Public Health Resource Centre (PHRC) report on a young people's health clinic and peer education project mentions that 'Youth and Community staff' 'brought a so much better understanding of young people and how to reach them' and particularly emphasises their strength in *accessing* young people and their ability to relate to them. Pre-existing informal education and contacts with young people by 'Youth and Community staff' facilitated unexpectedly high attendance at the clinic by young people. Lynch (1995), in a study of the sexual health needs of young people in the Southampton area, also mentions the particular ability of youth service staff to reach young people in a variety of settings, including outreach work.

This link function appears to be facilitated by 'Youth and Community workers'' ability and experience in functioning across a wide range of professional roles. For example, workers appeared to be successfully managing the varying demands made on them from such widely differing contexts as teaching formal classes in school, being approachable to dissaffected young people on the street, negotiating with health service managers, acting as a receptionist in a young persons' clinic and working one-to-one with young people in drop-in facilities. The different skills and impression management involved in negotiating such a range of roles is significant.

Part of this impression management related to inclusive use of language with young people. The freedom 'Youth and Community workers' enjoy to use young people's colloquial expressions and explicit language in discussion of sex was mentioned as a key feature in helping young people bridge the gap between their existing knowledge and the formal language they are likely to meet in sex education and health settings.

Young Persons' Clinic

As mentioned above, a young person's clinic has been established one afternoon a week after school. The clinic provides a one-stop facility for contraception, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and advice on sexual health. It is the fairly unique combination of GUM and Family planning Services which has been particularly successful with an unexpected emphasis on STD diagnosis and treatment amongst those attending.

The clinic operates a no-appointment system and attempts a strongly 'non-judgemental' approach in order to encourage young people's use. Although predominantly clinical staff, the team includes a male youth worker. This interagency element is seen as vitally important by the clinic staff interviewed because the youth worker can encourage young people he meets in his other work in schools, on the streets and in an information/advice shop, to make use of the clinic knowing that there will be a familiar face there. This also applies to some of the clinical staff who can refer young people to the clinic from their work in school drop-in sessions. Furthermore, the youth worker is valued for the 'non-medical' dimension that he brings to the clinic; for example stage-managing the reception space with pop videos, drinks and leaflets to create a young people-friendly atmosphere. Clinical staff admitted that these 'user-friendly' ideas would just not have occurred to them. Use of the clinic was steadily increasing at the time of the study and a high proportion of the users are male.

Furthermore, not only did 'Youth and Community staff' appear to encourage young people to make use of other services but they also added to the user-friendly image of various provisions. For example, the research indicated that including a youth and community worker in the staff of a Young Persons Clinic was seen as significant in improving the young people's perception and use of the service.

Other reports (Pitts et al 1996, Allen 1991) point to the importance for young people of meeting a familiar face and knowing who they are going to see when they attend for advice, information and health care. Collaborative work as discovered in this case study appears to provide 'continuity of care' when sexual health services and education are provided across different organisations. The fact that 'Youth and Community workers' can refer young people to other agencies, such as a clinic, where the young person knows they will meet the same familiar youth and community worker seems to be an important asset of collaborative work illustrated by this case study.

Allen, (1991) in an evaluation of three family planning and pregnancy counselling services for young people, suggests that youth services, amongst others, should be involved in an advisory capacity concerned to develop thinking about the best means of offering services for young people. Collaboration and liaison is seen as important in tapping the 'expertise and resources of all possible sources' (p311). She stresses the importance of outreach work with other organisations because 'It must be recognised that professionals and other agencies are usually the "gate keepers" controlling access to groups of young people, and that outreach work can usually only be developed through these gatekeepers' (p294). One type of outreach work is making contact with young people who are not already known by other agencies, but she also emphasises that such work should be done by the same staff involved in providing the direct service. This viewpoint supports the notion of 'Youth and Community staff', with their specific outreach skills, also being an important part of clinical sexual health provision for young people.

Youth groups

Our research identified a number of different youth groups in the locality for which all or part of their brief was related to young people's sexual health in the broadest sense. These included young women's groups, young men's groups, young (and very young) mothers' groups, youth clubs/groups based on housing estates, junior youth clubs, and drama/arts-based groups. These groups are largely run by 'Youth and Community workers' but in a number of instances, they are jointly run with staff from health promotion or Community Health Services such as a parentcraft sister.

Such groups were seen to provide a unique opportunity to offer young people informal education, away from the constraints of the school curriculum, and centred on the young people's specific needs and experiences. 'Youth and Community staff' felt that activities, discussion topics and explicit language may be used in such groups which may not be tolerated in the school setting and the voluntary nature of attendance by young people is likely to enhance their interest in and commitment to the group, particularly for those young people who have a generally disaffected experience of school. However, staff expressed concern that the voluntary nature of such projects (and the limited resourcing of youth and community work) means that this work reaches a very small proportion of the age range and therefore it can only be seen as an important complementary programme to the general provision offered in school. There is a continuing dilemma for 'Youth and Community staff' in reconciling the competition between high quality work with small numbers of young people and the alternative of a much more superficial approach spread across larger numbers.

Health Promotion Unit

Whilst generally focusing on the role of 'Youth and Community workers' in this initiative, it is important to note the supportive work of the local health promotion unit.

In co-operation with schools, 'Youth and Community workers', and Community Health Services, the unit appears to have had an important impact in encouraging the overall programme of work, particularly a number of innovative initiatives such as the appointment of a Young People's Health Information Worker in conjunction with the Youth and Community Service. Health Promotion specialists see themselves as operating at the level of policy and strategy development, researching needs assessment, and purchasing appropriate services. Rather than face-to-face work with groups, such as young people, they see their role increasingly as one of the training and development of professionals in order that they can have an effective health dimension to their work (in whatever field). They also provide resources for health promotion.

What are the gains for youth and community agencies?

The PHRC report (1995) identifies how an alliance with other agencies enabled other professions to recognise and value 'Youth and Community workers' 'core skills and approaches to the work' and this finding is supported by our case study in that the more contact other professional groups had with 'Youth and Community workers', the greater the understanding and respect for their varied, but distinctive role.

The PHRC report also stated that it provided an 'area of growth and development at a time of repeated budget cuts' for the local Youth and Community Service. The financial benefits are also identified by Burke (1994a) who argues that 'with money too tight to mention in many youth services, collaborating with relatively cash-rich health promotion teams is appealing'.

In this case study, 'Youth and Community workers' considered that their input into the school curriculum was important for other areas of their work because the pupils would become familiar with them, it gave them an opportunity for structured group work that young people would be less likely to tolerate in community settings and it enabled them to inform pupils about other services available to them outside school.

The perceived effectiveness of the provision

The research at this stage was largely concerned with the nature of the project and the processes of collaboration. However, we did ask the respondents how they perceived the effectiveness of the work described above. The data suggests limited agreement over effectiveness. Whereas all staff interviewed demonstrated a commitment and belief in the work, health service staff were more confident about effectiveness, based on the numbers of young people using facilities such as the Young Persons' Clinic and returning for follow up visits. Respondents considered that contraceptive and family planning services had become more accessible to young people than in the past. 'Youth and Community staff' and teachers were more circumspect, indicating that young people's behaviour was difficult to change and the results of the work hard to measure. They were more likely to

'hope' that they were being effective. However, a number of teachers felt that young people were becoming less self conscious, more confident and asking questions that suggested 'something is happening'. 'Youth and Community staff' were pleased with the increased use of services and their information giving function, but less confident that young people were putting their knowledge and assertiveness into practice at the crucial moments during their personal relationships.

This uncertainty regarding outcomes is echoed elsewhere, particularly in relation to 'measurable' outcomes such as increased use of contraceptives and lower rates of pregnancy. Oakley et al (1995) reported on the paucity of evaluation studies which demonstrate a positive impact for sex education projects. It is an extremely difficult area of work to measure effectively and there has been a noticeable lack of evaluative research on which to base future sexual health strategies (Peckham 1992). However, there is some evidence that countries with greater access for young people to sex education and birth control also enjoy the lowest rates of teenage pregnancy, birth and abortion (Ray 1994). Furthermore, research suggests that sex education may lead to a delay in the onset of sexual activity (Baldo et al, 1993).

The results of existing studies give strongest support to comprehensive approaches as in this case study, particularly those linking health care with schools. Studies of young people's clinics in US schools suggest that the greater their emphasis on pregnancy and AIDS prevention, sexual health education and on-site distribution of contraceptives, the more likely they are to improve young people's use of contraceptives (Brookes-Gunn & Paikoff 1993, Dryfoos 1994, Kirby et al 1994).

Certainly this case study suggests that the factors linked with these 'conventional' notions of success in adolescent sexual health are assisted by an interagency approach involving 'Youth and Community workers', where a youth worker methodology enhances access to both education and services. The case study suggests that 'Youth and Community workers'' distinctive skills and unique roles in this process can be summarised as linking young people to services, inclusive use of language, informal style and relationships, working successfully in a range of contexts and increasing the attractiveness of essential services.

However, as discussed earlier, 'conventional' measures of success in sexual health services for the young are highly controversial and would not sit happily within the philosophy of many 'Youth and Community workers' who may be more concerned to support young people in their choices and sexual expression rather than work towards targets for less sexual activity, increased use of contraception, fewer unintended pregnancies and reduced incidence of STD. Nevertheless, I would argue that the distinctive role identified above can be seen as essentially inclusive. 'Youth and Community workers' at their best are providing opportunities for young people to get access to information and public services, in this case health and education related, that many of us take for granted. One could argue that whilst it

may, implicitly, involve working towards government targets, it is also part of ensuring that young people obtain their rights to social citizenship: 'the right to the prevailing living standard in society' (Jones & Wallace, 1992, p 19) which comes from education, health care, welfare provision and housing.

Interestingly, the research evidence did not indicate major differences between the different agencies in their aims for the work. However, this consistency may have been an outcome of the collaborative process. The interview material suggests that those joining the collaboration did not necessarily begin with shared aims, except broadly inasmuch as they wanted to improve education and services to young people in the general area of sexual health. However, it appears that informal training may have been inherent in this collaboration which acted to develop increasingly mutual values and approaches to working. Thus, 'Youth and Community workers' were able to gradually promote a non-judgemental attitude to young people as well as an informal approach which acted to increase access, trust and participation. In other words, youth service involvement may encourage other agencies working with young people to adopt a more empowering and inclusive approach.

Problems and constraints

The growth of mutual values between the staff in the different agencies may also have been a feature of the informal way the collaboration was established with interested staff choosing to become involved. Indeed, an important contribution to the success of interagency collaboration in this project was the unhurried, informal and incremental way that the provision had developed (Bloxham 1996). However consistency and breadth of services has not been assured by such an informal approach to co-ordination. The interview data indicates that provision has grown up gradually and has depended heavily on the initiative of individuals who have made efforts to establish relationships or bring in workers from other agencies.

The research indicated that the health promotion unit and the Youth and Community Service were most active in attempting to co-ordinate provision, particularly through the maintenance of a district wide young people's sexual health group. However, meetings were poorly attended by representatives of other organisations and thus policy making and development of services was extremely limited. These two organisations, as a result of their limited size and influence, had least power to negotiate demands and struggled to involve other organisations in a framework for co-ordination. There was concern that this would have consequences both in terms of resources and in terms of the potential marginalisation of the youth and community service.

Undoubtedly intervention in young people's sexual health will continue to be an area of controversy, not least because of the conflict between the influence of the moral dimension in current debate about sex education (Meredith 1989, Health Education Authority 1994, Lees 1994), alongside the recognition that open acknowledgement of teenage sexuality offers the best promise for reducing the onset of sexual activity and unintended pregnancies.

The challenge for 'Youth and Community workers' is to find an approach which works with the acknowledgement of teenage sexuality, whilst avoiding being forced into putting government targets before the genuine interests of young people. The dilemma, of course, is to identify the genuine interests of young people in this complex area! However, this case-study has reinforced ideas about the distinctive contribution of 'Youth and Community workers' in, at least, ensuring that young people have the opportunity to achieve a number of the key elements of sexual health identified above. Perhaps the most important task still awaiting many local authority youth services is in convincing schools, health services and other agencies to recognise that contribution and build it into their planning.

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STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES TO YOUTH:

Structuration theory and bridging the gap

VERNON GAYLE

Abstract

This paper explores the idea that youth research in Britain stands at a crossroads and that currently two traditions exist. The first of these traditions is symbolised by the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and is primarily a cultural studies approach to youth. The second tradition is symbolised by the youth transitions approach which has largely been concerned with investigating the structural aspects of young people's lives. I suggest that the two traditions of British youth research typify the familiar sociological tension between sociology of action and sociology of structure. I propose that developments in mainstream sociology, offered by structuration theory, provide useful intellectual insights that can address the issue of integrating cultural and structural approaches to the study of youth.

Youth Research

The Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Research Programme 'Youth, Citizenship and Social Change' will provide the impetus for a new round of research on young people. The programme called for proposals for empirical research projects in a number of areas and states that 'there is a pressing need for a new research programme on young people, which addresses their changing situation and the connections between transitions in the different areas of their lives' (ESRC 1997, p.1). A goal of the programme is to fund research that will contribute to the development of theory on youth.

In part the ESRC initiative has acted as a catalyst for this paper which is an attempt to bring together a series of ideas about doing research in the area of the sociology of youth. Put less grandly these ideas are the product of some of my thoughts in light of undertaking my own research and teaching the sociology of youth. The ideas that I intend to express are to a large extent exploratory and intended to be evocative rather than the last word on the subject.

In what I consider to be an important contribution to the debate on youth and policy in the 1990s, MacDonald, Banks and Hollands (1993) argue that youth research in Britain stands at a crossroads. They assert that two traditions exist. The work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) symbolises the earlier of these traditions, but has been almost dormant for a decade and a half. The CCCS approach was located within a cultural studies paradigm and was largely concerned with inquiry into youth subcultures. The Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) 16 to 19 Initiative symbolises the second approach and has its genesis during the Thatcher years (see Bynner, 1987 & 1991; Bynner and Heinz, 1991; Roberts, 1995). This second tradition has largely, although not exclusively, been concerned

with youth transitions and the investigation of the structural aspects of young people's lives, for example (un)employment, training and education.

It is reasonably plausible to consider that the cultural studies paradigm gave way to a more structural sociology of youth (Irwin, 1995). Whilst there is general evidence to support the reportage of this apparent paradigm shift in youth research it is not quite as neat as this binary opposition suggests. There have been a few studies of youth which have attempted to bridge the gap between cultural and structural analysis (e.g. Hutson and Jenkins (1987), Wallace (1986), Hollands (1990 & 1995), Banks et al (1991) & MacDonald and Coffield (1991)). I suggest that despite these studies, youth research does indeed stand at a crossroads and to borrow an hackneyed phrase from Dawe (1970) there are 'two sociologies' of youth.

MacDonald, Banks and Hollands (1993) emphasise that the two traditions have correspondingly fallen into opposing camps in terms of their research strategies. The work of the CCCS produced sophisticated theoretical accounts of the relationship between youth, class and sub-cultures through the collection of ethnographic data. Research in the second tradition has mostly been undertaken using quantitative surveys. There have been various critiques of the CCCS approach which have largely focused on the absence or invisibility of various groups from the finished accounts of empirical research (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995). By contrast the accounts provided by the second tradition have generally said little about youth culture.

In a playful piece on the sociology of youth, Coles (1986) writes that the subcultural studies of youth in the '60s and '70s such as those produced within CCCS, were topical, and enjoyable to teach, but are now regarded as somewhat of an embarrassment by students. My experience of teaching the sociology of youth is that undergraduates consider earlier work on youth, such as the CCCS research, to be rather interesting. In contrast my students state that more contemporary sociological studies of youth are boring. Having taught statistics to large numbers of undergraduates I am not phased by claims that material is boring. These students' perceptions of youth research are interesting because, in most other cases, students perceive that more recent sociological research is more interesting than older sociological studies. One of my colleagues suggests that the appreciation of this older research might be due to its resonance within the general retro mood of student and popular youth culture. Whilst fascinated by this idea I have, as yet, no evidence to support it.

My retort to my students is that research in the second tradition is generally technically very competent but lacks sociological imagination, unlike studies from the earlier tradition such as Hall & Jefferson (1976), Willis (1977) and Hebdige (1979). I would further argue that this is not just a feature of the sociology of youth and is evident in other areas of sociology. A similar point might be made about the sociology of work if we compare earlier research (for example Beynon (1975), Pollert (1981) & Cavendish (1982)) with research undertaken under the ESRC Social Change and

Economic Life Initiative (SCELI) (see Gallie, 1987). In the case of youth I find this ironic since the desire to avoid the limitations of single discipline perspectives inspired the ESRC 16 to 19 Initiative to favour multi-discipline research (see Bynner, 1991). This situation however might partially reflect the ESRC favouring economics and social policy above gender and cultural studies during the late 1980s. The conclusion to MacDonald, Banks and Hollands' argument is that:

> *There is a crying need for researchers, in the 1990s, to turn again to more theoretically-informed investigations of youth (sub)culture which are cognizant of weaknesses and strengths in earlier traditions.... The advances in understanding gained through the transitions approach of the past ten years should not be forgotten and there may be value in attempting further integration of cultural and structural approaches to youth studies.... The time has come, however, for a re-evaluation and it is hoped that, in deciding new directions for youth research in the 1990s, those who hold the purse strings for research grants will seek to: broaden and enliven the field of enquiry; integrate the cultural and structural aspects of distinct research traditions; and encourage younger researchers, in what has become a somewhat elderly and greying discipline (MacDonald, Banks and Hollands, 1993, p.4).*

Highlighting the problem of trying to understand social structures and social processes is not new within the sociology of youth. Allen (1968) is one example of an earlier concern with this issue. The theme of integrating structural and cultural accounts when researching youth is also highlighted by Jones (1988). She argues that the challenge that faces the sociology of youth is to examine the processes involved and to locate them within social structures. In her view this would provide a framework within which to locate cultural research within the wider structures of society and make it possible to fill the gaps that remain in the sociology of youth with new empirical research.

Jones (1988) provides three reasons as to why this has not been done before. First, because of the romanticism which has existed within the sociology of youth, there has been a reluctance to look beyond the flamboyant and to study ordinary youths. Second, since much youth research is policy oriented, there has been an emphasis on social problems. Third, the predominance of ethnographic methods has resulted in a failure to locate young people within social structures.

Jones (1988) argues that 'the way forward in the sociology of youth would appear to be to recognise these concepts of process and structure and to integrate them empirically' (p.717). Her own specific remedy or solution is to propose the use of quantitative analysis. She advocates secondary data analysis of some of the existing large and complex data sets (in particular the National Child Development Study and the General Household Survey). Jones' solution is interesting and there is obvious merit in attempts to mine such a potentially rich vein of data. This solution however,

is pitched very much at the methodological level of research techniques and arguably it is hard to find any examples of youth research that have attempted to derive combined structural and cultural explanations through this methodological approach.

My position is that the development of structuration theory within mainstream sociology, might provide theoretical intellectual insights which are helpful in addressing the issue of integrating cultural and structural approaches to the study of youth. This position is initially premised on the idea that the two traditions of British youth research symbolize the familiar sociological tension between sociology of action and sociology of structure. Therefore some of the insights that structuration theory provides for superseding this dichotomy within sociology in general, can be employed in the service of integrating cultural and structural analysis in sociological studies of youth.

Giddens' Structuration Theory

Anthony Giddens is extremely prolific and his work covers a variety of topics (Bryant and Jary, 1991). In addition to his own material there is a variety of secondary literature on Giddens and his work (Craib, 1992). The theory of structuration (see Giddens, 1976 & 1984) has generally been accepted as an important development because it attempts to supersede the dichotomy between structure and agency, structure and process and determinism and voluntarism (Bryant and Jary, 1991).

Structuration theory is Giddens' attempt to radically reconstruct social theory. Fundamental to structuration is Giddens' attention to the differentiation between interpretative sociology and structural sociology. He claims that it is not, as it is typically regarded, a product of the division of labour between micro and macro sociology. In contrast the problem of relations between the constitution of society by actors and the constitution of those actors by society has nothing to do with this differentiation as it cuts across any such division. Giddens argues that neither the structuralist or the functionalist schools have adequately grasped the constitution of social life as production by active subjects. The philosophy of action perspectives had virtually ignored the problems of institutional change and structural analysis due to the extreme relativism and subjectivism that is inherent in such approaches. This is in contrast to structuralism and functionalism that regard production as the necessary outcome of social structure rather than being anything to do with the accomplishment of human agents. The introduction of the concept of 'structuration' is his individual attempt at rectifying this (Giddens, 1976).

Structuration theory attempts to demonstrate how social structures are constituted by human agency and yet at the same time are the very medium of that constitution (Giddens, 1977). To inquire into the structuration of social practices is to endeavour to explain how structures are constituted through action and how reciprocally action is constituted via structure. This is central to structuration and Giddens employs the term 'the duality of structure'. The adoption of this concept attempts to avoid the dualism of structure and agency.

The innovative character of structuration theory is demonstrated in the fact that it reorientates established sociological ideas. 'Structure' in structuration theory differs from the term previously used in sociology (Bryant and Jary, 1991). Structures are the very media whereby the social world is both produced and reproduced (Giddens, 1977). Structures are 'subject-less'. Interaction is constituted by and in the conduct of subjects. Structuration, as the production of practices, refers abstractly to the dynamic process whereby structures come into being. In this sense structures have no specific socio-temporal location, they are characterised by the absence of a subject and cannot be framed in terms of a subject-object dialectic (Giddens, 1976).

Giddens considers structures as 'systems of generative rules and resources' (Giddens, 1976, p.127). Giddens does not have a determinate concept of rules but considers that they are subject to chronic ambiguities of interpretation. Rules can be contested and be a site of struggle and can be transformed in the continual process of the production and reproduction of social life. Rules are embedded in social systems and do not exist in anything other than in their virtual sense (Craib, 1992).

The difference between Giddens and the French structuralists is that he conceptualises the necessity of resources in the discussion of rules (Giddens, 1979). In *The Constitution of Society* he argues that we cannot conceive of rules without resources as the latter provide the vehicle by which the transformative rules are incorporated into social action (Giddens, 1984). Resources are the media by which transformative capacity is employed in social interaction (Giddens, 1979). I think that Giddens is suggesting that rules have to have some tangible basis. He further subdivides resources into allocative resources and authoritative resources. Allocative resources are involved in the generation of power, they include environmental and physical artefacts. Authoritative resources are non-material although still involved in the generation of power. They can be derived from the capability of harnessing the activities of human beings. In this sense resources are the tangible media, both physical and non-physical, by which rules can be realised.

Integral to a sociological account of culture is the conception of human agency. It is empirically demonstrable that there are features of social life that are more or less widespread and that endure for shorter or longer periods. This cannot be explained in terms of the inherent properties of action (Craib, 1992). Giddens draws ideas from the established social action perspectives and in much the same way as he re-theorises structure as a more comprehensive concept, structuration also extends the established notions of human agency. Underwriting the duality of structure is what Livesay (1989) terms as the recognition of the importance of human agency without relapsing into the crude voluntarism of most action theory.

Giddens argues that 'sociology is not concerned with a "pre-given" universe of objects but with one which is constituted or produced by the active doings of subjects....The production and reproduction of society thus has to be treated as a skilled performance on the part of its members' (Giddens, 1976, p.160). Structuration

provides a more sophisticated model of social action which accommodates agents' knowledgeability, especially in their capacity to provide fully accurate accounts of reasons for their actions (Livesay, 1989). The production and the reproduction of social life has to be treated as a skilled performance on the part of individuals and not as a mechanical series of social processes. This is not to say that actors are at all times aware of what these skills are or how they are exercised, or that the forms of social life are adequately understood as the intended outcomes of action (Giddens, 1976).

Within structuration the realm of action is one that is bounded. Actors produce society but they do so as historically located actors, not agents of free will. Within structuration theory the knowledgeability of actors is always bounded, both by unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences. The key unintended consequences of action that Giddens analyses are reproductive. Namely the recursive reproduction of structural rules and resources through the process of structuration (Livesay, 1989).

The duality of structure positions structure as the medium and outcome of the conduct that it recursively organises. The structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but are chronically implicated in its production and reproduction (Giddens, 1984). It is possible then, at a prosaic level, to claim that Giddens injects the notion of structures back into action theory which hitherto had 'actioned' it out. At the same time structuration articulates action within structural analysis. The importance of this for sociological inquiry is that it makes possible the production of accounts that are sensitive to both culture and structure.

In summary, 'the basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time' (Giddens, 1984, p.2). Time and space are integral to the theory of structuration. Giddens argues that social science research should be sensitive to the time-space constitution of social life.

The concept of the duality of structure, is fundamental to structuration theory and is implicated in the ramified senses that the terms 'conditions' and 'consequences' of action have. Social action is always expressed at some point in and through the contextualities of bodily presence. The move from the analysis of individual action(s) to an awareness of the duality of structure begins to 'thread outwards' in time and space and indicates how practices followed in a given range of contexts are embedded in the wider reaches of time and space.

Structuration and Empirical Research

It would be ideal if at this stage it was clear how structuration theory could inform empirical sociological research endeavours. The next simple step would then be to refine this to the particular case of youth research. Unfortunately there is not a

blueprint for undertaking research contained within the theory of structuration. This is a major problem with structuration theory.

Structuration is compatible with a range of sociological methodologies and theoretical concerns. Giddens argues that it is not the case that there is only one form of research which should be ubiquitously adopted (Giddens, 1984). The earliest explication of structuration appears in *New Rules of Sociological Method* and it is tempting to expect a manifesto for social research. This is in part due to the title which Giddens borrows from Durkheim's famous opus (Durkheim, 1966). To expect rules in the conventional sense is to misunderstand Giddens' anti-positivist stance. He adopts this title with a deep sense of irony. The rules are 'a skeletal statement of some of the themes of the study as a whole, and are merely designed to exemplify its differences from the famous sociological manifesto that Durkheim issued some eighty years ago.... The 'new rules' are a statement which does not in itself and of itself constitute a 'programme' of sociological study' (Giddens, 1976, p.159).

The rules are abstract in their nature and it is difficult to consider their theoretical relationship with possible empirical research projects. It is even more difficult to comprehend how the rules might be operationalised at the practical level of doing social research. Giddens elaborates on the relationship between research and structuration theory in *The Constitution of Society*. This is a more sustained and focused attempt but remains theoretical and at a high level of abstraction.

According to the theory of structuration two types of methodological 'bracketing' or categories are possible in sociological research. First, the analysis of 'strategic conduct', in which the focus is placed upon the modes in which agents draw upon the structured properties in which social relations are constituted. More specifically strategic conduct analysis is social analysis which places in suspension the conception of institutions as being socially reproduced. It concentrates upon how actors reflexively monitor what they do and how they draw upon rules and resources in the construction of social interaction. Second, 'institutional analysis' investigates how structural properties are chronically reproduced as features of social systems. Institutional analysis is social analysis which places in suspension the skills and awareness of agents. It treats institutions as chronically reproduced rules and resources. These two methodological brackets are congruent with the theoretical conception of the duality of structure.

In *The Constitution of Society* Giddens discusses a variety of forms of research to indicate some of the implications of structuration theory for empirical research. It is not his wish to suggest that there is only one form of research which should be ubiquitously adopted. He further asserts that this is why, to some extent at least, he concentrates upon studies that have been undertaken outside the immediate influence of the concepts which he elaborates. Giddens does not propose to analyse the relationship between structuration theory and specific research methods but seeks to look more generically. In doing so he hopes to demonstrate that such an

endeavour is both possible and worthwhile as it transcends the traditional debate between advocates of either qualitative or quantitative methods.

Giddens argues that 'thick description' is appropriate in certain studies (such as ethnographies), but less important when we study that which is more familiar, or where small units are aggregated (such as in the case of institutional analysis). He also argues that it is important that social research pays sensitive account of the complex skills that actors have and deploy in the co-ordination of behaviour within given contexts. Whilst Giddens asserts that these skills will be more or less 'bracketed out' when institutional analysis is undertaken it should be considered that this bracketing is purely methodological. To assume that sociology is totally bound up with institutional analysis is to confuse a methodological procedure with ontological reality. The micro/macro division in sociology and the advocacy of the research methods associated with either position mean that 'it is not difficult to see in the conflict between these positions a residue of the dualism of structure and action' (Giddens, 1984, p.330). Giddens clearly believes that once this point has been fully understood the false dualism between quantitative and qualitative methods dissolves.

Despite what amounts to a long and focused attempt in *The Constitution of Society*,[1] Giddens never offers any respite from the high level of abstraction. Giddens does explicate the relationship between the theory and empirical research more extensively there than elsewhere (even employing examples) but his discussion remains very abstract. I believe this to be purposeful and a product of Giddens' staunch anti-positivist stance. I consider that that the lack of clarity in Giddens' work on the relationship between structuration and empirical work is partly due to his desire that structuration should not be introduced in a direct fashion (see Giddens 1983 & Craib 1992). Cohen (1989) comments that what structuration theory offers is essentially an ontology of social life, and consequently a research programme in the traditional sense cannot be developed within this theory. What is evident, is that despite addressing the issue of empirical research explicitly Giddens does not disclose a manifesto for research in any orthodox sense. At times this is a source of frustration to the researcher attempting to apply or engage structuration theory in empirical endeavours.

Generally, critics of structuration argue that the theory is the abstract spinning of conceptual schemes which is relatively meaningless in its own terms and without value for empirical research (Stinchcombe, 1990). Thrift (1985) and Gregson (1989) are two prominent accounts of the problems associated with structuration theory and empirical research which adopt this general standpoint. Gregson (1989) claims that:

> *it would be hard to convince anyone engaged in empirical research of the intrinsic value of these points [structuration theory]. This is because there is nothing about them which enables them to be used actively in an empirical research context. Quite simply they lack the degree of specification required for empirical work (Gregson, 1989, p.240).*

In reply to this criticism Giddens (1989) claims that we should recognise the relative autonomy of theory and research:

> *theoretical thinking needs in substantial part to proceed in its own terms and cannot be expected to be linked at every point to empirical considerations. The more encompassing or generalized a set of theoretical notions is, the more this is the case. Empirical work, on the other hand, cannot proceed in the absence of abstract concepts or theoretical notions, but these are necessarily drawn upon selectively and cannot be ever-present. The category 'empirical work' is very large, moreover, and covers numerous different sorts of inquiries.... (Giddens, 1989, p.295).*

It would be crass to argue that the application of structuration theory in service of empirical work is straightforward. My argument is that some important theoretical advances have been made within structuration theory and that these can be recruited and employed in sociological research specifically as a remedy for the problem of the two traditions of youth research.

Primarily the duality of structure offers a coherent conception of how individual action can be located and understood in terms of the properties of social structures. At the same time social structures can more adequately be theorised as being both the medium and outcome of social action. In structuration the experience of the individual actor and the existence of any form of societal totality are superseded by the idea of social practices being ordered across space and time. This articulates the temporal and spatial nature of social life and facilitates manoeuvre between the analysis of strategic conduct and institutional analysis.

Structuration Theory and the Sociology of Youth

Having outlined structuration theory and discussed its relations with empirical work more generally, I will now turn to the specific issue of youth research. The promise of structuration theory in the case of youth research is that it safeguards against an uncritical relapse into undertaking research which straightforwardly falls within either of the two traditions. Specifying the inherent properties of a sociology of youth undertaken under the structuration umbrella, would be to fall into the trap of expecting rules from *New Rules of Sociological Method.* As I have explained the anti-positivist position that underpins structuration theory begets a non-committal methodological position.

Research utilizing structuration theory should not be specified by methodological fiat. The intellectually circumspect nature of structuration is welcome in so far as it provides a remedy for the problem of structure and agency but the problem still remains that no clear set of methodological procedures present themselves. Certainly a number of researchers are greatly disappointed since structuration seems to come very close to a rather conventional take it or leave it argument (Thrift, 1985). I believe that it is time to experiment with ideas about employing

structuration theory. The pertinent question is, what might a sociology of youth, that straddles the two traditions of youth research, look like given the theoretical concerns of structuration theory?

Stones (1991) contends that it is easier to conceive of either a project being informed by structuration that is concerned with macro social research (for example at the level of the nation state) or at the other extreme very micro analysis (such as interaction in a classroom), but between these two poles it is more unclear. I would argue that youth as a research area falls into this middle ground. Cohen (1989) and Stones (1991 & 1996) treat the problem of structuration and empirical research by suggesting that the methodological bracketing that Giddens develops be expanded to include systems analysis and strategic context analysis. Such an approach does nothing to enhance the utility of structuration in my view. What is required is not more abstract categories but attempts to elucidate how, in a practical sense, research might be undertaken.

What might we expect in terms of youth research informed by structuration theory? The research must proceed with an awareness of the weaknesses and strengths of the cultural studies paradigm. The concepts of structuration theory should be employed in a critical and sparing fashion. At the most general level, structuration theory will help researchers start to consider how strategic conduct is located in relation to institutional practices whilst being sensitive to the recursive nature of this relationship. In the theoretically informed ethnographies of the cultural studies tradition the bounded nature of action was not necessarily articulated. At the same time the chronic yet ambiguous nature of social structures and their corresponding endurance and transformation was also not expressed.

Contemporary youth research must incorporate the advances in understanding gained through the transitions approach. Youth research in the second tradition has largely been concerned with the investigation of the structural aspects of young people's lives and is bound up with institutional analysis. This approach must begin to take account of the recursive relations between social structures and individual or aggregate individual action.

Sarre, Phillips and Skellington (1989) argue that perhaps the crucial link between the theory of structuration and empirical research is an awareness of the notion that structures are not somewhere 'out there', but permeate every individual and institution as well as the relationships between them. Action incorporates structural rules and resources, even when it is novel and endowed with the possibility of changing structures. Normally, individual actions tend to reproduce structures by mobilising and effectively affirming them. In their view the essential thrust of the overall method is to progress from isolated items of data to a better understanding of:- the necessary structural relationships; the important and contingent aspects of the research area; the way individuals formulate and pursue strategies; the way these strategies interact within structures. Sociological analysis can enumerate

properties, establish collective features and, by showing associations between positions, practices and experiences, provide an indication of the kinds of strategies which explicitly or implicitly underlie actions.

Some Problems with Structuration Theory

It is difficult to convey the magnitude of the temptation to end this piece here. There would be a certain security in wrapping up with a glib and anodyne series of statements. In such a circumstance I might claim that structuration theory is commensurate with a range of sociological methods, that Giddens is a staunch anti-positivist and the concepts of structuration should not be applied in a direct fashion and so on. This could be sharply followed by the reiteration of the claim that structuration theory had something to offer youth research because it supersedes the dichotomy between structure and agency and this is the very tension underlying the two traditions of British youth research.

The reader and more importantly potential youth researchers might ask 'why then should I bother with structuration theory?', since Giddens himself reports that there is no obligation for anyone doing social research in a localised setting to take on board an array of abstract notions that would clutter up what could normally be described using everyday language (see Giddens, 1984, p.326-327).

An interesting spin on this theme is that Sica (1986) argues that Giddens' importance as a social theorist will depend on structuration's 'use value'. What is still unclear is the value added nature of employing structuration theory since there is not a simple recipe for doing research. Is structuration a practicable solution to the problem of two sociologies of youth or is it an impossible mission?

One of the main problems that I have in considering employing structuration theory in the service of youth research is that it falls within the middle ground of the micro and the macro. As Stones (1991) suggests it is easier to conceive of either a project being informed by structuration that is concerned with macro social research or at the other extreme very micro analysis. To unpack this a little more, I would argue that this is largely due to the rather vague notion of structure that is advanced within structuration theory. The idea of structures being 'systems of generative rules and resources' (Giddens, 1976, p.127) does extend established sociological notions of structure. However, the theory does not contain a determinate concept of rules other than considering that they are subject to chronic ambiguities of interpretation. The conception of rules being contested and the site of struggle does offer a key to understanding the continual process of the production and reproduction of social life however.

The idea that rules cannot be conceived of without resources provides an understanding of the media by which transformative capacity is employed in social interaction (Giddens, 1979). I think that Giddens is suggesting that rules have to have some tangible basis and I believe that this is appropriate. Here is a simple

example. Knowing the rules of chess whilst being essential for playing the game does not guarantee success. The best players are not people that know the rules better than others. In this example making the jump to how the rules relate to the wider activities is not especially difficult.

The subdivision of resources into allocative resources and authoritative resources is extremely abstract. Resources being the tangible media, both physical and non-physical by which rules can be realised is not difficult to grasp. The meaningfulness of the subdivision of resources is not clear with regard to empirical research however.

It is easier to consider how the utterly fluid notion of structures as sets of rules and resources makes sense at either a macro or micro level. Consider research at the level of the nation state. The theoretical conception of structures as set of rules and resources is resonant - an example being how the nation state can enforce rules by the legitimate and monopolistic control of violence (see Giddens, 1985). At the other extreme I can consider how in research on classroom interaction the theoretical conception of structures as sets of rules and resources is also resonant. An example of this might be how authority is exercised both implicitly and explicitly in face to face interactions between pupils and their teacher.

In the middle ground (for example undertaking a prosaic research project such as a study into young people's participation in part-time employment) the concept of structures being systems of generative rules and resources, and the subsequent definitions that follow, leave us with a conception of structure that I believe lacks the specification required for an adequate sociological analysis. Within structuration theory, agency is much more fully theorised (see Giddens, 1976 & 1984). The under theorising of structures I believe is due to Giddens advancing what is essentially a Weberian sociological account.

Conclusion

The problems and issues associated with structuration theory and empirical research not withstanding I believe that it has some 'use value' especially to bridge the gap between the two traditions of British youth research. These problems I believe might only be worked out after a series of practical attempts at undertaking research that is informed by structuration theory. There is a large outlay of erudition required to get to grips with the theoretical concepts that are generated within structuration theory, although I hope that I might have uncovered some of the pertinent themes and conveyed that this is worthwhile. Since structuration theory is compatible with a range of sociological research instruments it is conceivable that youth research can initially proceed from either of the two traditions. However, an awareness of the duality of structure offers a tool that can be deployed in attempts to theorise the dialectical nature of the social lives of young people in terms of social structures and youth cultures. The concepts of time and space uncovered by structuration make an appeal for an awareness of the located and the processual nature of young people's lives which hitherto has not been made explicit.

In conclusion I suggest that structuration theory presents a set of theoretical concepts that facilitate attempts to integrate the cultural and structural aspects of the two distinct British youth research traditions. My hope is that employing the theory of structuration in the service of empirical research projects within the sociology of youth will broaden the existing debates and enliven future sociological inquiries.

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See especially Chapter 6. 2

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George Heron

Electronic Pathways is a blessed relief from the hype and fantasy that usually characterises discussions of the role of IT in post-16 education. The most substantial section of the book consists of fourteen brief accounts of practical educational projects from across the English-speaking world that make extensive use of new technologies. Nearly all are about work in progress: often only recently commenced. Inevitably the quality of the reporting varies, but most are realistic 'warts and all' accounts concentrating as much on obstacles and failures as on benefits. Their descriptions bear no relation to the FE managers' favourite fantasy of the teacherless College netcasting complete courses to thousand of individuals, each in their own homes. In these examples IT is a tool in the hands of teachers and the crucial factor in success is the quality of the teaching not the sophistication of the technology. Conferencing to exchange ideas features prominently, including both video-conferencing and computer-mediated conferencing to enhance print-based distance learning. Often students meet in groups, as in Northern Ireland where groups across the sectarian divide have the facility for discussing issues with fellow-students elsewhere and of switching the machine off to chat amongst themselves. Accounts are generally well-referenced and a number of web-sites are listed, offering the possibility of access direct to the ongoing work of some of the projects.

Checklists of good practice and pitfalls summarise what can be learnt from the accounts and a final section sets out NIACE policy and identifies some EU initiatives in the field. Five articles at the beginning seek to identify theoretical issues raised by the use of IT. These are detached

from the practical accounts in that they are closer in their implicit model of IT use to the idea of individualised learners working at home. However they write realistically about the problems inherent in this: Jill Mannion Brunt stresses the proven need for personal support for new adult learners, John Field cautions against assuming an easy transition from the use of computers for info-tainment to their use for self-transforming education and Martin Buck and Paul Helm set out the challenges but also the potential for teachers who are willing to adapt.

A recurrent and heartening theme of the book is the need for the educational values offering support for personal self-development to control IT enhanced learning programmes not the technology itself. Readers with a general interest in adult learning will find a look at the theoretical section and a quick skim through the examples here valuable in demystifying the potential of IT. For anyone with the opportunity to introduce IT into an educational programme the book is essential reading if only in helping them avoid some of the more obvious pitfalls.

Lifelong Learning in England and Wales calls itself 'An Overview and Guide to issues arising from the European Year of Lifelong Learning' (1996 if you missed it). This is typical of a certain kind of NIACE promotional product: glossily presented, well-supported by photographs, written in simple English, very short on information and near desperate in its attempts to avoid any hint of controversy. This booklet lists a small number of selected initiatives under the two headings 'European Year Projects' and 'Maintaining Momentum' with no evaluation of them, no indication as to how or why these were selected and no references where further information can be sought other than phone numbers of a few national organisations. Some of them look like new ideas, others recycle what has been around throughout the 90s. Naturally the magic of IT features in some initiatives. The New Labour-Tory consensus around the separability of vocational education is accepted as a genuine consensus, embracing Local Authorities and the teaching profession as well and the jargon word 'partnership' trotted out to paint a picture of all working harmoniously together in the best of all possible worlds to correct the inexplicable low participation rate of British adults in formal education. The booklet is as unintelligent and bland as *Electronic Pathways* is informed and critical. I don't know why NIACE wasted their money producing it; don't waste your time reading it.

Ford Motor Company are with the educational professions and against the political consensus in their belief in the value of learning for its own sake. Their Employee Development Assistance Programme (EDAP) works on the philosophy that 'leaving aside job-specific training, there are benefits

for both employees and employers when employees participate in education related to personal goals arising from their own interests'. Andy Beattie is Educational Advisor to the scheme at Dagenham. *Working People and Lifelong Learning* is based on a small-scale research project for an MA. It is a well-written, well-researched and well-referenced record of success. 42% of manual workers have participated in education over a three year period, roughly three times the rate for the comparable section of the population as a whole and all who were interviewed said that EDAP was crucial to their participation. Beattie suggests that Trade Union involvement in the design of the programme was essential in overcoming any potential attitudinal opposition to the scheme. There was considerable latent interest in learning, financial support helped to release it, but assistance in overcoming institutional barriers was equally important. One interviewee in the project summed it up:

> *[Before] it was all work, work, work, and nothing was presented to you, nobody really bothered with you. That's the point isn't it? Somebody bothering with you... if somebody bothers with you, you think 'Yes, I'll go for it', but if nobody ever says anything, you just plod along in the usual way.*

Computers or not, that's what promotes participation in adult learning.

George Heron *writes and evaluates distance learning materials and campaigns on green issues. He is based in Manchester.*

Tony Gibson
Community, Resistance and Change:
The Power in our Hands: Neighbourhood Based World Shaking
John Carpenter Publishing
ISBN 1897766 28 9
£10 (pbk)

Margaret Curran

Community, Resistance and Change does not always make for light reading but do not be fooled by the graphics or upbeat tone of this book because although funny and easily read it addresses these universal themes with vigour and substance. At first, I thought I was in for an overdose of simplistic liberalism of the 'small is beautiful' variety and whilst there are some hints of this, it is essentially a cogent and intellectually sophisticated argument for the capabilities of the ordinary woman and man to be both collective

and creative. It represents a stunning challenge to those who believe that the politicians and the experts know best. The best antidote to cynicism I have come across for some time.

The basic structure of the text is designed for dipping and borrowing that could stimulate, educate or agitate depending on your particular needs at the time. It is clearly designed to proselytise rather than impress.

Organised around a number of critical themes - *Moving Spirits; Doers Instead of Onlookers; Us and Them; Enough is Enough!* (obviously Peter Mandleson was reading this) - Gibson knits together moving personal stories of innovative and committed action that created significant change. He cites case studies that have had lasting effects and demonstrated that real alternatives are possible. The book charts the reader through a process of personal dialogue with the author where he uncovers the progress of his own ideas. Overall it amounts to a substantial catalogue of practice that is highly stimulating and teeming full of ideas to be shared and appropriately applied.

Comprising a compendium of approaches that range from the alienation of young people in Jamaica; to the impact of war in China and Nigeria; to working class neighbourhoods in Britain; practical examples are given of real problems and local responses. Initiatives are dissected and analysed. The contribution of this book is to make the connections that in all these instances and many more, the essence of local activity is the spark of *moving spirits* - the individuals who collectivise their experience, who question the rules and creatively search for alternatives often in the face of overwhelming odds. This book tells the stories of these happenings and ultimately is convincing that: 'Small is not merely beautiful in Schumacher's words - a local initiative that makes local sense - but also a source of power that could be world shaking'.

It links the timeless concerns of the dispossessed and their claims for social justice with telling references to Methodism, Chartism and the early Co-operative Movements to the very immediate issues of the information superhighway. It is one of the few texts available that sees the opportunities that the information revolution presents.

> *In the woods threatened by the Newbury by-pass the protesters' tree houses are linked by CB Radio and mobile phones via their own PR Office to the world's media.*

As a tutor on a degree course in Community Education, this will be a 'must read' book for it combines the hows and the whys. It emphasises the ethics of belief in community and the efficacy of bottom-up approaches and injects passion into the debate that much political comment on poverty and disadvantage lacks.

But despite the central focus of this book, there doesn't seem to be enough consideration of the problems and conflicts that inhibit the development of community organisation and too often smother community concerns. There needs to be more exploration of the connection between community demands and the wider political system that provides the resources. The clarion call to alter mind sets and challenge prevailing attitudes is effective, but real and lasting change demands more. In the final analysis, groups will question the point of raising community voices if no one outside is listening.

This text does engage with this debate to some extent and argues that local initiatives can heighten: '... prospects for advancing people's own power to the point where the balance shifts' and whilst there is some sense of political realism in the appreciation of large scale economic interests, the overall analysis could have benefited from slightly less emphasis on people and more attention on processes and structures - how those people can be changed, influenced and controlled by them.

However, this criticism in no way diminishes the appropriateness of the text in assisting and stimulating those who want to work in this field (be warned there are a few humbling moments in store) but its use could be much broader. This can persuade resource providers about what can be achieved with very few initial resources. What could have been a rather earnest tract is in fact a primer for an approach on what actually does work and what genuinely gets results.

Perhaps we are moving into a time of modernisation where community and local are not just seen as cheap alternatives. As Tony Gibson argues, with reference to the words of an ANC activist, we need to shift from the '... streets of resistance to the streets of regeneration.' This work does justice to that aim. I hope the powers that be are listening.

Margaret Curran, *Tutor, BA Community Education,*
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REVIEWS

Jeylan T Mortimor and Michael D Finch
Adolescents, Work and Family:
An Intergenerational Developmental Analysis
Sage Publications
ISBN 0 8039 5125 6
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pp268

Don Blackburn

This book is one of a series produced by the US based National Council on Family Relations. The series is intended to reproduce and distribute accounts of research in the field of studying the family. The book is a collection of different analyses of data acquired from a sample from the longitudinal Youth Development Study, which began in the autumn of 1987 and continued through to the present. The studies were concerned to investigate the relationship between young people's experiences of work and various other elements in the lives of young people such as the extent to which they are regarded as adults, their contribution to the household economy, their self esteem and so forth. The studies are arranged in chapters, with a different research theme to each chapter. Chapter two offers a generational analysis of the amounts of household work carried out by young people in comparison with their parents at a similar age. One surprising finding was that young people appeared more likely than their parents to engage in household work, and also that the amount of work appeared to be significantly greater than their parents. This rather contrasts with the typical view that young people today are not as industrious as the previous generation.

The study also reinforced the outcome from other studies which indicate gender differences between the kinds of work carried out by young men and young women. Young women were much more likely to engage in caring for others within and outside the household and also to search out work of that kind. The differences on a generational basis were more marked between young men and their fathers and young women and their mothers. In other words, young women's work was much more likely to be like the work their mothers had at a similar age, than the young men in comparison with their fathers. This could be accounted for both in a reduction in gender segregation of contemporary work together with the significant shift in the structure of occupations. This was mainly away from agricultural work as a significant proportion of the fathers experience, towards work in the retail sector, which is the most common area of work for young people in the United States today.

Chapter four focuses on the relationship between the experience of work and the extent to which young people are regarded as adults by themselves and

their parents. The authors argue here that the factor which seems to be most associated with 'adulthood' is the extent to which young people contribute to the household economy. This underlines the economic basis of family relationships and undermines those perspectives which tend to see young people from a psychological perspective. This indicates that a materialist analysis may be more useful than a concern for the level of 'psychological adjustment' of young people, or alternatively, having a concern for their developmental readiness for adulthood. Chapter six is an illustration of the risks of these kinds of detailed analyses. It has attempted to investigate the relationship between young people's experience of autonomy at work and their value orientation. As a consequence it has drawn some unsurprising conclusions, such as the clear relationship between social class and levels of autonomy, as well as the class relationships between parents' occupations and young people's value systems. Overall the studies are interesting in that there are some surprises - such as the point that despite some claims, there is little evidence that young people are staying at home for longer than their parents.

Like many other texts in this vein from the United States, this book has many of the virtues and some of the vices of that tradition of detailed and in-depth attempts to investigate social issues. The first thing to be said is that the level of attention to detail is very high; something which appears to have significantly declined in many UK studies. The scale of the study and the range of data is much broader than could be found in a study in this country. Also on the positive side, the evidence which is evaluated does undermine some of the assumptions made about young people and their relationships with their families and other social institutions. For example, it is clear from chapter five that many disruptions to family life, such as geographical moves, changes in family composition or changes in parental work were not in themselves a serious threat to young people's relationships with parents. This suggests that many adult anxieties may be misplaced about the effect of such changes on young people. On the negative side of the studies, there is an occasional moment when the reader is tempted to ask 'so what?' when the outcomes of the research produce a banal or common sense outcome.

In conclusion, this is a worthwhile book which does contribute to furthering understanding of the relationship between work and young people's lives. In some ways this is a collection of indicative studies which require further research, and the authors do point out how the findings might be built upon. The authors also make a point when they argue that social research has 'almost completely overlooked the potential implications of adolescents work experience in the home or paid market' (p222). This perhaps is less true in the UK than in the United States, but it is true that work has often been seen as a problem for young people - interfering with educa-

tion and personal development. One of the key things that arises out of this is that young people are actually fairly positive about work!

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David Barrett (ed)
Child Prostitution in Britain
The Children's Society 1996
ISBN 1 899783 02 4 (pbk)
£12.95 plus £1.30 p&p from The Children's Society
pp192

Claudia Bernard

Child Prostitution in Britain is an important and timely text that not only aims to raise awareness of the problem, but ultimately aims to get child prostitution recognised as child sexual abuse. The essential pulse of this text is to examine the ways child protective agencies and the legal system respond to the phenomenon,and to consider the factors that contribute to obstacles in the way of those struggling to support children and young people. The contributors, all leading authorities in this area, draw on their diverse experiences and backgrounds to provide sharp analyses of child sexual abuse victimisation by prostitution. Topics covered include *The Policing of Child Prostitution; Child Prostitution : an Educational Perspective; Positive Awareness : Health Professionals' Response to Child Prostitution; Demystifying Child Prostitution : A Street View.* Each section summarises up-to-date research in the particular area to draw out the main implications for multi-disciplinary practice.

In an excellent introductory chapter, the editor, Barrett sets out the context of the book with an overview of research in the field. In doing so, he highlights the failure of the child protection system to respond effectively to these young people. Barrett carefully reviews the literature to elaborate on the pattern of abuse and control that facilitates entry into prostitution. The stance put forward here is that child prostitution appears, in practice, to be on the margins of the child protection system and that the exploitation of children as prostitutes should be redefined as child sexual abuse.

A particular strength of the text is the chapter by Louise giving a first-hand account of her own involvement in child prostitution. Louise's story illustrates very clearly young people's routes into prostitution. She named and

defined her experiences very powerfully, and in so doing highlighted the alienation involved in child prostitution. She described very poignantly the processes in operation that ensure that children and young people are not protected from abuse and exploitation.

Aitchison and O'Brien provide a thought-provoking chapter discussing the legal context of child prostitution. They examine the way civil and criminal law deals with children involved in prostitution and offer a critique of the underlying values, assumptions and biases engendered in the law. The message that comes through here is that whilst the law on child prostitution is very clear, its application is rather weak. Their central argument is that adult males who procure young women should be considered child sexual abusers, and should be brought before the criminal justice system. They contend that the 'emphasis should be on criminalising those who exploit the children, categorising them as abusers rather than criminalising the young people themselves' (p164).

Significantly, John Pitts' chapter which explores the links between poverty and child abuse is compelling, for its analyses of the social and ideological context of child prostitution. Pitts looks at the history of abuse and neglect and contends that an understanding of the experiences of young people requires a multi-layered analysis of the problem. Here Pitts provides analyses of a broad range of research to highlight the interconnectedness of class, oppression and power in shaping not only the construction of the problem but also responses to it.

Other strong points of the text are the contributions by practitioners working with young people involved in prostitution. For example, the chapter describing The Children's Society work with young people on the street and involved in prostitution. Important insights are provided into the dynamics affecting young people. What comes through very clearly in Trafford and Hayes thesis is the multiplicity of factors at play and the limitations of current frameworks to effectively respond to young people. The challenge posed here is how service providers can respond to young people without further stigmatising this already marginalised group of young people.

The concluding chapter brings together the key themes of the book and draws out the main messages. It makes a number of recommendations on future directions and offers alternative strategies and ideas to improve responses to children and young people. Most notably, the resounding message is that an adequately funded youth service would play a pivotal role in developing programmes for greater protection for children and young people, as would improvements in education, social services, the police and criminal justice system.

Overall, there are insights in *Child Prostitution in Britain* that make it essential reading for all those concerned with child welfare. It is a well written book on a topic of current interest. The authors, from their different perspectives, succinctly describe patterns of power and control used by pimps to coerce children and young people into prostitution. We can draw from the analyses and frameworks described in the book to inform practice in this complex area. This thought-provoking book will provide knowledge to deepen our understanding of the problem and will help practitioners develop a more sensitive and informed approach in this difficult realm of practice. It should be recommended reading for those working with young people in education, social services and youth services.

Claudia Bernard *teaches at Goldsmiths College, University of London.*

Roger Cox
Shaping Childhood: Themes of Uncertainty in the History of Adult-Child Relationships
Routledge
£14.99

Jeremy Walker

One memory from my own childhood is of being taught to make sure that the opening and closing paragraphs of my essays were good because this would divert attention away from the inadequacy of what went on between them. I'm afraid, though, that I was thrown by the very first sentence of Cox's strange and unsatisfying book. He tells us that 'the history of childhood does not have a particularly auspicious past'. My reaction to this was my reaction to most of the book - or at least the parts that Cox himself wrote since he relies heavily on other authors. It was - is this brilliant, dense and elliptical or banal and confused, and the work of someone who has clearly read a great deal but has been unable to digest and distil it into something useful and accessible?

The answer, I'm afraid, is that where there is freshness and clarity it invariably comes from secondary sources and where I found myself baffled and frustrated it was at Cox's awkward style and frankly over-ambitious attempts at aphoristic encapsulation of the material of others. He ends by returning to Wordsworth - and his chapter on 'The Child of Romanticism' was interesting and easily the best - and adding his own observation that

'it is responsibility enough to create images of childhood and visit them upon the next generation, without trying to make ourselves in the image of our own past childhood'. It may be that his tendency to make enigmatic, Delphic pronouncements comes from reading too much Foucault and Ariès, but in my experience the French, and French, do opacity much better than the English.

Indeed, he is too much in thrall to Ariès and other polemicists such as Rosalind Miles and the Americans, Marie Winn and Neil Postman. He credits Ariès with 'the great discovery that the concept of childhood is a modern invention' when it is quite clear, for example, that Aristotle, writing in the fourth century BC on the capacities and inclinations of children, had a clear notion of childhood. By the end of the book, however, he is uncritically accepting claims that both childhood and the concept of childhood have all but disappeared, and adds some highly questionable assumptions and opinions of his own about 'the depths of despair that increasingly surrounds the child in the family' and 'that vanishing institution, the nuclear family'. He subscribes too easily to other debilitating myths such as the currently popular one that 'discipline has gone with religion since there is, in secular society, no force beyond the self', oblivious, it would seem, to humanism and all the other non-theistic value-systems.

The temptation always was to fast-forward to the many fascinating and illuminating texts that other authors, rather than Cox himself, have unearthed. The Puritan preachers of New England saw children more or less as conduits for original sin, who 'go astray as soon as they are born' and 'no sooner step than they stray, no sooner lisp than they lie'. Satan 'gets them to be proud, profane, reviling and revengeful as they are' and mankind generally is 'full of rottenness, of sin... and guilty of heart whoredom, heart sodomy, heart blasphemy', from which 'filthiness' only 'God's love and mercy' could cleanse it. Echoes of the tone and stridency of much of this can still be heard in the pockets of extreme Protestantism which linger on in Northern Ireland.

Puritanism, Freud would probably say (and he gets only the briefest mention from Cox who manages to by-pass the whole of psychoanalytic theory), was a pathology which arose from an Oedipal conflict since its followers loved their children 'and subjected them to endless moral pressure (but) feared them and even hated them as agents of sin within the household and beat them mercilessly'. On the other hand, their desire for the 'spiritualisation of the family' and belief in a 'mixture of intense love and rigorous discipline' and in having 'a distinct view of how the world should be' sound like welcome ports in the storm of moral relativism and millennial anxiety that families have to navigate these days.

Cox does his best to trace the genealogy of the modern (or post-modern) view of children and childhood on through Locke, Rousseau, Dickens and the dodgy Victorian trio of Lewis Carroll, J M Barrie and the Reverent Francis Kilvert, who subscribed to the 'cult of the little girl' and wrote in his diary of 'flesh that was plump and smooth and in excellent whipping condition', Unfortunately, his own contribution is punctuated by grammatical sloppiness and the occasional glaring solecism: of a characteristically syrupy nineteenth century poem by a Mrs Wilson, he tells us that 'the diaspora of sentiment into hackneyed metaphor is complete'. There are lapses into some archaic - and at times arcane - language. Rousseau, we are told, 'has occasioned a certain puzzlement among critics' and there is a reference to 'the narcissism attendant upon post-war affluence'. More important, perhaps, is his failure to bring to life the essential differences between Locke and Rousseau, and to demonstrate how their rival and contrasting philosophies live on in the didactic and child-centred approaches to education which have competed for supremacy since the war.

I have to say, however, in spite of all this that I am grateful to Cox - as a parent rather than as someone in the business - for telling me of Rousseau's description of childhood as 'reason's sleep'. Even better is Postman's suggestion that Erasmus was the Judy Blume of his day and anyone who manages, as Cox does, to get Frank Sinatra and Lacan into the same paragraph is clearly not without talent. His research and breadth of reading though, is commendable but he might have done better to have confined himself to editing a collection of writings and, as he hasn't, his own editors should have helped him produce a tighter, less ambitious but more satisfying contribution to an important and topical subject.

Jeremy Walker *works in the Mental Health field in London.*

Graham Haydon
Teaching About Values: A New Approach
Cassell
ISBN: 0 304 33560 6
pp 159

Ted Harvey

Towards the end of the last government there was a short period when attention was focused on the duty of schools to teach 'right from wrong', quite what this meant in practice was never clarified - I suspect the impetus

came from the same stable as that which produced the mandatory daily act of worship in schools and would have been similarly flawed and ultimately unworkable had it ever become manifest as policy. It seems this book may have been written at least partly in response to such political initiatives and as such is a call for a much closer analysis and consideration of the issues than probably would have been the case had the issue received a sustained period of attention in that context. It may well still be useful in encouraging the present government to take a more considered view should the political spotlight move that way again.

This whole area is something of a minefield and the author does not claim to be comprehensive or to provide a definitive solution to the difficult issues involved, more modestly he hopes at least to stimulate further thought.

In an introductory section we are shown how the wider context of society, politics and education sets an agenda for the consideration of values; sections two and three examine the concepts of values and morality; and the final three explore the context and roles of teachers and the education system. During these chapters we find a close analysis and consideration of key issues such as compromise, tolerance, conflict, plurality, violence and persuasion.

It is difficult to summarise the content of this book - in fact this is one of its problems for me, it is hard to discern just what the 'New Approach' is. Basically the author takes a liberal and rationalist stance and certainly makes some telling observations concerning a variety of issues which are all too often unexplored and with unjustifiable assumptions in many current debates. He acknowledges the difficulties of discussing values in our pluralist society and tentatively offers stances which a teacher may reasonably adopt in trying to move forward in an educational context.

The cover claims that the book is 'written in language that is understandable to the non-philosopher ... aimed at teachers and student teachers...' and it certainly does avoid the worst excesses of philosophical writing and is relatively accessible, although I found it difficult to read more than a page or two at a time, this may have more to do with my antipathy to the enterprise (quite possibly a personal shortcoming) rather than the actual content.

However there is a problem here which may mean the work tends to fall between two stools - the 'heavyweight' audience of professional academic philosophy, and that for which it is intended. Despite its concessions to the less specialised reader, I can see very few teachers or student teachers either taking the time and trouble to read it or putting its messages into practice in their classrooms. That these practical implications are deliberately left unexplored is understandable but, I feel, regrettable.

Within its own genre then this is a perfectly reasonable (in every sense) and helpful book, but I have to question the validity of the genre itself in taking education forward. Although Graham Haydon brings in issues of society, politics and of course education at relevant points (the omission of any psychology is probably more significant) this is primarily a philosophical treatise and as such remains remote from the realities of classroom life.

In my view any effort to deal effectively with values in education will have to be part of a much wider enterprise involving a shift of perspective much more profound than any bolt-on strategy. In particular we need to see the development of a child's sense of values as taking place within the context of his or her holistic psychological development, that the acquisition of and responsible adherence to a set of values goes hand in hand with growth in self esteem, rather than being a purely cognitive process which seems to be the underlying assumption here.

For those of a philosophical bent this will provide a useful and interesting exploration of material which is certainly of contemporary relevance, people who need a more radical and holistic approach will have to look elsewhere.

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Andrew Dewdney, Claire Grey and Andy Minnion
and the residents of the Rufford Street Hostel
Down But not Out: Young People,
Photography and Images of Homelessness
Trentham Books 1998
ISBN: 0 948080 57 4
£16.95 (pbk)
pp 222

Tony Goode

Dominant codes of public imagery. Even the section entitled: 'Moving on an update from the hostel residents of 1989' gives us little more understanding of individuals and the process of the learning which might have been involved. Left with cameras during this update, for example, ex-residents used 'soft' porn conventions in their photographs of each other so that:

> *In the privacy of their own homes... the ex-residents had made images which would not have survived unchallenged in the morally policed atmosphere of the hostel photography session. p 119.*

An outcome further complicated by the objective in this project to empower the young photographers through the process of reflecting upon their own work situated within its wider social context, in order to create a critical dialogue.

> *Once imagery is located within a public form, it can be compared and contrasted with what is around it.... Hence it becomes possible to engage in criticism and analysis of dominant imagery from the point of view of a producer and the questions you ask of other imagery can be asked of your own...(p 157).*

None of this is, of course, intended to dismiss this project and its potential for educational change, but rather pinpoints the difficulties of evaluating a process based approach to art when you offer a majority of your data in the form of product and provide insufficient guidance to the reader in terms of how information is best 'read'.

Overall, by far the most interesting section of the book is an extremely useful and informative chapter entitled: 'A practical guide to photographic practice with young people.' This starts from the premise that:

> *Photography isn't the discreet object of study but is a tool for a broader critical process in which interests and subjects emerge from genuine interaction and communication between workers and students. (p 133).*

As an overview of the fundamentals of setting up arts based work with young people this is perceptive, realistic and worth the cover price alone.

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Paul Hoggett (Ed)
Contested Communities: Experiences, Struggles, Policies
The Policy Press (Bristol) 1997
ISBN: 1 86134 036 2
£15.95
pp 255

Mae Shaw

The graphic on the front of this book declares 'Enough is Enough' and that, together with the subtitle, whetted my appetite for a volume which engaged with the struggles of communities to challenge and change their

conditions. Whilst this is addressed in some of the chapters, the overall effect is of an academic book - borne out in the profiles of the authors. This is not necessarily a criticism of the content, but a comment on the gap between it and the sub-title.

This book is the product of a Conference: 'Ideas of Community' held in Bristol in 1995 and the editor describes the position of the authors as 'engaged researchers'. Whilst there is, indeed, an impression of commitment throughout the text, the book tackles the policy context much more convincingly than the experiences and struggles of communities. At a more general level, I wonder if conference proceedings always translate well into books. There is increasing pressure in higher education for measurable outcomes and the drive for publications does not always do justice to their original source. I have a feeling this may be true of this book. Having said that it has many good features and is particularly useful for the analytical frameworks offered in a number of chapters.

The starting point is that community conceals more that it reveals and that is demonstrated in the range of papers presented here. The problematic nature of community is reflected, as the book argues, in the way it attracts interest from across the political spectrum. The assumption this book makes is that community is deeply ambivalent and therefore needs to be engaged with in a critical way. This is refreshing in view of the pervasive, and often punitive, communitarianism which is evident in New Labour Policy. The introductory chapter is a substantive tour through sociological writings and positions locating the subject and framing the remainder of the text which is divided into four sections; *conceptual and analytical; empirical studies of experiences of 'community';* the *local state and 'community',* and *community as policy.* The coherence of some of these sections is not immediately obvious from the content. There is also a good deal of overlap in theorising 'community' between chapters, making this a book to dip into rather than read straight through. Some of the chapters concentrate on processes, whilst others analyse outcomes and some manage to tackle both. But few of the chapters engage reflexively with the ambivalence of professional interventions in communities.

The chapter which I found most interesting and useful in engaging with the contradictions of practice within the current policy context was the last one in the book - by Rob Atkinson and Stephen Coe. This is both theoretically coherent and practically convincing. Their dialectical approach leads to the notion of critical participation which engages people in the process on the basis of an understanding of power. I couldn't agree more with the authors in their preference for talking about power rather than '[hiding] behind anodyne concepts like

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"empowerment"'. In criticising the literature on community participation they go on: 'Many have discussed empowerment without examining what power is.... As a result empowerment may mean little more than symbolic incorporation and cynical entrapment' (p 207). Good stuff.

Whilst the book didn't quite live up to its promise, it is nevertheless a useful addition to the community work literature for its analytical frameworks, its extensive bibliography, and for the range of articles which address particular interests.

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Jane Thompson
Word in Edgeways: Radical Learning for Social Change
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education 1997
ISBN 1 86201 013 7
£14.95 (pbk)
pp 150

Mary Wolfe

It seems forgivable to suggest one simple division of the potential readership of this book into two camps - between those who pick it up because they know Jane Thompson's work and those who pick it up not knowing her. I am among the first group. So I particularly welcomed this compilation of ten extracts, articles, letters and speeches from her published work over the past seventeen years. Especially valuable is the reprinting of a number of extracts from those (regrettably out-of-print) earlier works and journal articles which had established her influential position as a key maker of socialist and feminist adult education theory. I came to the reading expecting, as it were, a cosy journey back to her well-known critiques of the Russell Report with its contemporaneous discovery of disadvantage by educational planners, of liberal (almost with a snort) adult education, of the simplistic correlation of access with participation. I expected to enjoy revisiting the writing of an author who, above all, is always an adult educator, ever anxious to record students' voices, to uncover the hidden ideological practices, to acknowledge and develop the theory.

For such a reader, this collection is no disappointment, indeed it is a treat and the extracts chosen are a worthy celebration of her work. The col-

lection, however, is far more than simply a reminder for those who know that she is worth knowing. The essays serve as a historical archive of the key issues and concerns which have exercised adult education practitioners in the North through the 1980s and 1990s. They challenge current political thinkers and activists to review current practice in its historical and economic context. They invite exploration from a wide range of practitioners who may not see themselves as adult educators but who are willing to entertain her claim that 'the language of liberalism and radicalism [...has now become...] re-appropriated into the vocabulary of the re-invigorated Right'.

Thompson's writing is often uncompromising. She writes from a straightforwardly clear political position. The book therefore risks remaining within its constituency of partisan readers. It does seem though, that her equally uncompromising focus - upon theory making, on frequently unfashionable concepts such as curriculum, on the shortcomings as much as the achievements of feminism - serve at least to ensure a reasonably bumpy ride for the most ardent of fans. Thus the voices of working class women students are not included simply to add a patina of political respectability. Each time, painstakingly, Thompson insists the reader reflects on the women's words, considers their validity, makes connections with other writers and initiatives.

Her style of writing is generally accessible, often, surprisingly, amusing. This is particularly true of those (later) extracts taken from speeches, letters and joint writing projects. On many occasions she is iconoclastic, as an irreverent fifth columnist in her contribution to the collection of essays (published by Nottingham University in 1996) to commemorate the passing of the Great Tradition of liberal adult education. Her words speak for themselves as she describes starting work at Southampton University, inheriting a project formed within a tradition established by those 'who learned their trade in Nottingham at the feet of Harold Wiltshire'. She recalls how local residents summed up the new community education initiative as simply something else 'to keep the buggers happy'.

The book will be valuable for students and researchers examining the context and recent history of educational initiatives. For the most part, her approach is characteristically pedagogical. She offers a reflection on practice which is always theory-soaked. She draws each article to a close with a focus upon future action. She presumes a dialogue with the reader, which obviates the danger of a deadening historical irrelevance. Clearly, there have been significant, almost fundamental changes in the style, organisation and funding of non-statutory education provision since 1983. Yet, despite changes in the figures for participation in formal adult and higher education, despite the changing acronyms as quangos come and go, her concerns

remain transferable and relevant. How to make sense of the contradictions inherent in adult and community education, how to work with diversity, the complex relationship between voluntary and statutory provision. Above all, in its insistence on apparently still valid principles underpinning any educational practices, she offers us some timely reminders. Thus she encourages a reassessment of the nature of dialogue, reminding us that the subject matter needs to be learner-driven. In the early eighties, she witnessed feminist educators struggling with a dialogue which, in their eyes, failed to acknowledge oppression - the seeming bad faith of working class students. The questions raised remain relevant as informal education and community education workers confront the new citizenship, a youth work curriculum and market-led influences.

Of course, readers can always claim that her word in edgeways be directed at Blunkett and Dearing; the difficulty is that she insists it may equally be addressed at local educators such as themselves, the inevitable architects of theory and practice.

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Marjorie Mayo
Imagining Tomorrow: Adult Education for Transformation
The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education 1997
ISBN 1 86201 006 4
£14.95 (pbk)
pp 172

Mary Wolfe

In this wide-ranging book, Mayo argues 'the specific potential for community and workplace adult education' as a strategy for transformation. Her approach to transformation, informed by the writings of Gramsci, Gelpi and Freire as much as by community action and education campaigns from across the world, reflects a clear and forthright rejection of what she terms post modernist style agnosticism. Her writing, as much as the action she represents, is by no means agnostic. On the contrary, the book is clearly committed, passionate and perhaps an all the more challenging read for that.

Predictably, perhaps, Mayo's approach to the transformational capacity of adult education initially leads her back to a consideration of earlier examples drawn from the histories of the Labour movement in Britain, from the

Swedish Folk Schools and the Antigonish and Highlander movements in Canada and the USA. Her writing is richly referenced and offers us a clear introduction to key events and to significant contemporary writers. Indeed, throughout the book she is careful to establish and recognise the initiatives she offers for scrutiny within their economic, historical and cultural context: routinely exploring the apparent influence of context upon action and understanding. She is characteristically clear here, providing the historical base from which she moves to consider more recent campaigns and issues. Given the writer's own enthusiastic fondness for her subject, I was almost inevitably left wanting more. But the work is densely packed with further references and the writing meets its purpose well of establishing the historical context needed for her later explorations. For tutors, adult educators or community workers this is a valuable resource in drawing together some of the milestones of previous work.

The book includes reflections upon examples of adult education in the South (India, Tanzania, Cuba, Nicaragua) and across the British Isles (Oxford, Derry, Liverpool and Sheffield). Regrettably missing from most of her careful research and exploration are the voices of the local learners and organisers. Much of the source material is drawn from either contemporary organisational recordings such as formal minutes or from published accounts. I wanted to hear more from the subjects of the transformation, more of the mess and complexities which, although implicit in her accounts of the divisions and diversities in campaigns, seemed slightly airbrushed out of the published record. This seems a particularly significant point given that, mercifully, Mayo has not offered us a purely academic reference book. At times, she offers us a 'how to' manual - an outline checklist for local participant action research profiling the community's economy; the 'But Why?' questions developed in Zimbabwe to challenge community health problems. And yet despite, or because of, the richness of the source material, the passionate acknowledgement of the historical traditions and the inclusion of comparatively small but significant local work, I regretted the frequent absence of the learners' voices.

Structurally, much of the book is accessible, engaging and constructed to allow the reader a clear way through Mayo's thinking and argument. As a tutor, it's a book I've already directed students towards as an example of how to provide a framework of obvious and coherent connections to your reader. A small, personal, grumble to the publishers is the use of end-of-chapter references: I was left without a sense of how a particular reference had connected to her different arguments across a number of chapters and frequently found my reading interrupted by the search for the end of that particular chapter to chase a reference.

In her closing chapters, Mayo turns to a critique of identity politics, reviewing the politics of feminism, anti-racism and ageism (in the latter drawing on Jeffs and Smith's work on youth). She challenges the tendency towards simplistic individualism she identifies in some earlier work - and questions the tensions around the transformational potential of identity politics, calling upon the Burnage report and the use of anti-racist strategies by organisations. Here, again, her writing is engaging and thought-provoking, calling into question the politics of the rainbow coalition or the single issue campaign particularly in her approach to anti-racism and ageism. (And it might have been equally fruitful to have explored some of those tensions in the context of earlier feminist strategies and programmes.) As usual, critiques lead her to an exploration of the response from local educators and activists. She approaches questions of counter-culture through largely arts-based cultural work - notably film and theatre projects. Is this the tomorrow of the title - the response to the reported contemporary crisis of belief or certainty? If so, it is persuasively reconnected by Mayo to the early works of Freire and Gramsci, to anti-colonial political and economic initiatives, to the politics of the personal as much as to organised campaigns.

In summary, the book works well in treading a potentially difficult balance between the breadth of its ambition and its limited length and area of concern. Paradoxically, I think it is useful precisely because of this tension: this is an introductory overview which I think will find a useful place on a number of bookshelves. It draws together professional concerns including health education, community work, development studies and adult education and gives all of us a way into areas of the new as well as an overview of the familiar. It is very readable, drawing upon campaign experience and reports as well as established theorists in the field. Inevitably, I think, there were areas I wanted included which Mayo seemed to ignore but in the end I considered this a strength of the work. She encourages a review of each of our own pet campaigns within a framework of transformation which I found both illuminating and convincing.

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REVIEWS

Frank Reeves (Ed)
Further Education as Economic Regeneration: The Starting Point
Bilston Community College and Education Now Books 1997
ISBN 1 871526 35 3
£9.95 (pbk)
pp 208

Jon Bryan

This book is published as further education (FE) undergoes a dramatic period of change. Its role used to be one of providing courses (primarily for 16-19 year olds) that were not provided by schools or any other educational institution. It was also a bridge between compulsory and Higher Education that was attractive to those students who wanted a different type of educational experience than that generally offered by schools. This role is now changing and, as this book discusses, FE may well have a completely different purpose from the one that many of us who work in colleges have become used to.

The whole of the education system is indeed in a state of flux. The last government never seemed to stop passing Education Acts that continually changed the role of teachers and lecturers, and altered the experience of those being taught. Education used to be seen as a way of preparing people for life in the outside adult world, by providing people with the ability to think, communicate and be more than just a 'cog in the machine'. Whilst it was seen as necessary to provide people with the skills that would be important for the workplace, it was generally not seen as the solution to any economic problems. This was sought elsewhere in society. For example, in the 1940s through nationalisation and in the 1980s through privatisation and entrepreneurial skills. In the 1990s and beyond, 'Education, education and education' is the way forward, according to New Labour and Tony Blair.

This book sees education as playing in important role in the economy and looks at the role that further education in particular can play in economic regeneration. Defined as 'the process of renewal and reinvigoration of the relations of production, distribution and the consumption of goods and services', the authors ask what role FE can have in this and looks at the initiatives that the authors have been involved in to this end.

Reading this book, some interesting questions arise:

What should be the role of those involved in FE?

To what extent can FE influence the economy and lead to regeneration?

What link should education and educationalists have with commercialism? Should the curriculum be vocational or academic?

Sadly, these are all questions that are not raised or even discussed in this book. The editor (and seemingly the authors) appears to have resolved their answers to these questions, and there is no real attempt to engage in this type of debate. Frank Reeves, in his introduction, actually states that the intention of this book is not to 'attempt to address the more fundamental questions whether and in what way national economic performance is related to educational level', but instead refers the reader to another book that offers answers to this discussion.

James Callaghan's widely referenced 1976 speech at Ruskin College is largely accepted as a crucial moment in this debate. As Reeves points out, 'Callaghan had spotted a remarkable social feature: an emphatic discontinuity between education and a wider society defined by and dependent on business and industry'. As Prime Minister at the time, Callaghan intended to act on this by shifting the education curriculum to meet the needs of British Industry.

There have been many criticisms of the consequences of this 'new vocationalism', and a large number of educationalists challenged the way that the Conservative Government used this approach as a justification for policies such as the Youth Training Scheme. The editor distances himself and Bilston Community College from this type of approach, and argues that:

> *The New vocationalism advocated at Bilston, has little in common with the divisive policies pursued by the previous government, and everything to do with the economic empowerment of local citizens.*

Vocational education, the editor argues, is important not just for the economy, but because it helps to challenge the old, elitist division between vocational and academic education. Reeves claims that this division has been 'responsible for reproducing the stark distinction between managers/professionals versed in theory, and workers with practical skills'. A way of over-coming this old educational framework, then, it is to see FE as vital for the economy and the importance of vocational education becomes more apparent. For 'mass democratic educational participation' to be successful and to put vocational education onto the same footing as traditionally academic education, Reeves argues that it must have links with 'the wealth-creating mechanisms of society'.

In other words, the division between say A Levels and Vocational Qualifications (BTEC, GNVQ) has been partly responsible for reproducing a class division in society. Reeves argues it is wrong to see education in this elitist way. For too long, education has had very few links with business and industry, and the courses have not prepared people adequately for the world of work. The emphasis on vocational education and training at colleges like Bilston will help to solve both of these dilemmas.

It is this two-pronged analysis and assault on academic education ('for its own sake') that unites the various authors and explains why the chapters

vary from Liz Millman's chapter on the importance of teaching basic skills to adults to Adele Allbrook's section on how a partnership with a Jamaican training and consultancy organisation are working together to reduce social problems and educate and train the marginalised sections of society.

This book is interesting insofar as it seeks to outline a new role for FE in society. Educationalists, it would seem, are more likely to be seen as trainers as we approach the new millennium. This fits in with New Labour's New Deal Programme and the authors seem to be largely in tune with this new thinking. However, this book fails on a number of levels as it is uncritical of many of the changes over the last decade that have seen the role of FE change dramatically. If this book represents the way forward for FE, young people will be trained for work, but not really educated.

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Save the Children
Empowering Children and Young People
ISBN: 1 899120 47 5
£15.00 (pbk)
pp 95

Mary John
A Charge Against Society: The Child's Right to Protection
Jessica Kingsley Press
ISBN: 1 85302 4112
£16.95 (pbk)
pp 276

Christine Nugent

Empowering Children and Young People is a training manual aimed at helping all those who work with this age group to develop a practice which encourages genuine decision making, so that children and young people may take control of their own lives. It is proud to point out that it is not a theoretical text on empowerment but rather a pragmatic attempt to achieve more egalitarian power relationships in work with children and young people. In particular it aims to promote action on Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'the right of all children capable of expressing a view to express that view on all matters of concern to them, and to have that view taken seriously.' (p 3).

The manual is divided into three sections, each one with checklists and exercises designed to be photocopied as handouts. Part 1 is addressed to professionals and focuses on the issues they need to work through in order to promote opportunities for children and young people to participate in decision making in their organisation and working environments at both unit, local and national levels. Part 2 examines the various ways in which children and young people can become active in decision making in their own lives. Part 3 looks at examples of good practice in both national and international contexts. The manual will be a valuable resource for those interested in developing effective participative practice with young people, those who wish to do more than pay lip service to the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, it does not always avoid the danger of treating young people as a homogeneous group where the significance of differences such as gender, race, class, disability, religion and sexual orientation are ignored or down-played. Although the manual does acknowledge the need to tackle racism (p 34) and also makes passing reference to the importance of survivor groups for sexually abused girls and young women (p 38), the impact of differences *between* children on group dynamics and participation is not explored. Given that the focus of the text is adult power vis-a-vis children, this is perhaps understandable and the manual does note the importance of equal opportunities when considering representation on panels and fora (p 70). The book will provide a useful manual for those working in a range of settings including residential care, community work and schools. Its accessibility will make it particularly valuable.

The collection edited by Mary John is the third volume in the Children in Charge series. The focus of this volume is child protection (previous volumes focused on participation and provision) and the topics are explored within the framework of the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular those articles which assert the child's right to be protected from psychological, emotional, physical and sexual maltreatment. Contributions are wide ranging, from a study of street children in Brazil to research on domestic violence and parental access in the UK, to the rights of a dying child in a paediatric oncology unit to make decisions about treatments. Indeed the range and depth of contributions is one of the strengths of this book.

This book is divided into five sections. In Part I Mary John provides an overview of the text by exploring the tension between the desire to protect children from harm and the desire to encourage their autonomy and growth. In this context peer led initiatives, which strengthen children's resilience and their ability to protect themselves, are contrasted with more paternalistic approaches which encourage the child's dependency.

Part II looks at intra-psychic approaches to the concept of resilience and ways of helping the child overcome the damaging effects of abuse and adversity. Structural approaches are also examined, recognising that children are abused by the very systems set up to protect and care for them, such as health education and social welfare. In an important contribution Judy Cashmore reminds us that abuse of children extends beyond the family and that we need to extend our focus to broader institutional arenas and acknowledge that the state may damage children by its intervention into family life as well as by a failure to provide appropriate services to meet children's needs. Cashmore emphasises that one of the key factors which allows systems abuse to continue is the way adults tend to see children as objects of concern rather than as persons in their own right with rights to a voice.

Part III examines damage to childhood caused by political upheavals and war and includes a discussion of child soldiers and consequent welfare projects designed to keep children out of armed conflict. However, many more children die as a result of poverty, disease and malnutrition and death in labour and these issues are discussed in chapters on child labour in Mexico and the extermination of street children in Brazil.

The theme of the marginalisation of children's interests continues in a discussion of the need to protect child witnesses in the UK court systems from undergoing harrowing Court experiences in the name of justice. Etta Mitchell's chapter raises concern that the treatment of children in UK court systems continues to be haphazard because of a lack of effective monitoring of national guidelines.

With the exception of Sheila Townsend's problematic chapter on working with mothers of children who have been sexually abused, all the contributors are concerned to foreground the child's rights to protection. For example in the context of domestic violence, Hester and Pearson advocate that the child's rights to protection outweigh parental rights of access. In contrast Townsend appears to elide the child's rights to protection into a too ready accommodation of adult interests, and in addition does not engage with recent feminist debates in this complex area.

However, overall this book draws together a useful collection of research and practice based articles which will be of benefit to all those struggling to achieve better practice in child protection in both local, national and international contexts.

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REVIEWS

Pat Sikes and Fazaal Rizvi (Eds)
Researching Race and Social Justice in Education: Essay in Honour of Barry Troyna
Trentham Press
ISBN: 1 85856 083 7
£14.95 (pbk)
pp 150

Keith Popple

Barry Troyna was with little doubt one of the foremost British writers and researchers in the field of race and social justice in education. For countless teachers, researchers, students, policy makers, practitioners and students his lucid and enthusiastic approach to the field was attractive and meaningful primarily because of his drive for social justice. Although he wrote as a social scientist, it was clear to see where Barry was coming from and the point he wished to make. For him the world was clearly unjust and often cruel, leading him to focus his work both to highlight discrimination and to advocate realistic and humanistic change.

In February 1996 Barry Troyna's life was tragically ended when the terminal cancer he had long been fighting eventually took its toll. His friends and colleagues had discussed with him a possible volume to both mark his life and, as importantly, to contribute to the debate he had passionately championed during his short but productive life. The outcome is this moving and fitting tribute.

The diverse and varied chapters reflect the field in which Barry Troyna worked and his commitment to its theory and practice. Some of the contributions are more personal than others. For example the short chapter by Carol Vincent are the reflections of a former PhD student of his. In it the author discusses some of the issues Vincent and her supervisor struggled with. The chapter by Gaby Weiner titled 'The other side of writing: publishing and social justice' also has a personal emphasis as she reflects on Barry Troyna's work as editor of the *British Educational Research Journal*. In the contribution Weiner talks of Barry's decision to take on the editorship as part of a romantic vision of the power of the press. It was she feels a way of him acting as a gatekeeper in the world of ideas and Weiner is able to record that under Barry Troyna's editorship there was an increase in articles relating to social justice. However, both of them became aware of the problems of editing a refereed journal.

Another more personal tribute is that by Sandra Shipton who was head teacher at the school where Barry Troyna was a governor and for a time Chair of the governors. In this contribution Shipton talks of his energy and commitment to the school which meant more than attending governors

meetings. Instead he was to be seen working alongside children in the classroom or representing the school at functions, or fighting for improved funding, and engaging in a range of activities aimed at raising the profile of the school and the work he believed in.

A more formal contribution is that from John Rex titled 'Multiculturalism and Antiracism Reconsidered'. Rex has long been an advocate of the multicultural approach in education which has endured a problematic relationship with those who see the need for a greater emphasis upon antiracism. The down side of the debate has been an uncomfortable polarisation of positions between the two views. Barry Troyna and colleagues on the one hand demonstrated the vacuousness of much of the multicultural argument. Rex and others on the other hand were suspicious of the political posturing of the antiracist position. Rex tries to unravel this, not very successfully in my mind, but his contribution is however helpful in the contemporary climate when ideas of both approaches are being debated (yet again).

Overall this book manages to provide a warm kindly tribute to Barry Troyna whilst contributing a little to his field of work. As someone who has put together a similar type of volume for a dear departed friend and colleague I am aware of the value such an exercise is for those who remain with a sense of loss. Royalties from the volume go to the Radio-therapy Unit at Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry where Barry Troyna was cared for and died.

***Keith Popple**, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Plymouth.*

Neil Davidson
Boys will be...?
London: Working With Men
ISBN: 1 900468 02 6
£12.95 (pbk)
pp 140

Ken McCulloch

This is a timely revision of a book on men and sex first published in 1990. 'It is about encouraging men, both young and adult, to start talking about sex' as the author's introduction tells us. More specifically it should be described as a handbook for teachers and youth workers

embarking on sex education with groups of boys or young men. Arriving in my hands just before the death of Helen Brook, founder of the Brook Advisory Centre for Young People it seemed like a sign of the times. Written by a man and intended to focus attention on young men and their sexuality as problematic, it reflects a range of contemporary preoccupations with masculinity and power as well as with diverse sexualities and concerns about sexual health including HIV and AIDS. Not being familiar with the earlier edition of this book, published in 1990, I could not tell whether the revisions address failings, explore new ground or integrate work done in the intervening period. The updating does not seem to be comprehensive; I was struck by the somewhat dated reference (p 90) to 'Don Johnson from Miami Vice' as a cool male image figure. Admittedly this reference is part of an account of the author's practice but as such it is clearly signalled as recent history rather than strictly contemporary practice.

This is quite clearly a book with a very particular point of view about men and sex. Readers familiar with the journal 'Working With Men' from the eponymous organisation will instantly recognise both the design style and the characteristic stance. The existence of 'a crisis that currently surrounds men and sexuality' is asserted rather than argued, and the problem of conceptualising male adolescence is addressed in a way which to my reading did little to expose the problematics of the issue. The 'current model of masculinity' is examined in terms which at one point make it sound rather like a way of dressing or a set of relatively superficial behaviours rather than a complex and pervasive social construct. It would be easy to dismiss a book like this as part of the proselytising output of a group of sensitive new-age guys with no very serious analysis to support their position; easy but much too simple and quite unfair. This is a very serious book which tries very hard to offer useful advice and ideas for work in a deeply problematic and important area, and is at least partially successful.

The book is in two parts' Before You Start' and 'Doing the Work'. Chapter one explores the question 'why sex education?' in a thoughtful and coherent way, notwithstanding the criticisms already expressed. As an attempt to convince the average schoolteacher or youthworker that some thought should be given to particular and appropriate ways of exploring sex as an educational focus in work with young men it may well prove successful. Similarly, chapter two raises some important questions about masculinity and the social construction of gender. The third chapter is a bit of an oddity. Edited extracts from responses to a questionnaire the author sent to a group of men are simply grouped under the question headings with no attempt to explain or contextualise. The argument that the data from an investigation of this kind 'speaks for itself' is often heard but is unconvincing in this as in most cases. It would have been much better either to have made rather more of this material or to have left it out altogether.

This initial quarter or so of the text is however merely a warm-up act for the main event. Chapter four is titled 'sex education with boys - a positive approach' and offers exactly what it promises. A wide range of highly practical issues are addressed and the advice and suggestions given are convincing, realistic and well balanced. Likewise, Part two contains some interesting, amusing and powerful accounts and suggestions for specific activities and themes. Neil Davidson has given us some powerful accounts of his own practice that rarely neglect the embarrassing and problematic moments as well as analysing things that seemed to go well. The book concludes (although why this material was not included in 'before you start' is hard to understand) with some ideas for training adult men to engage in sex education work, and a useful but not, as it seemed to me absolutely comprehensive list of additional resources.

In the light of recent public discussion of the need for better sex education for boys this is a timely publication. One might almost be tempted to say that it was ahead of its time. Any educator looking around for information and advice on how to approach work with young men and boys on sex and sexuality issues would be doing well if this was the first thing they came across. It is packed with useful and encouraging suggestions and makes the whole topic of sex and sex education approachable and even potentially rewarding for the practitioner as much as the participants. Not the perfect, or the only source one could consider but an important contribution to the developing literature in this area. Any school, youth project or agency starting, or thinking about developing sex education with boys should have this book on their shelf.

Ken McCulloch *is a Senior Lecturer in Community Education at Moray House Institute, Edinburgh.*

REVIEWS

W More & D Nicholls
Managing Aggression & Violence - a model for Youth and Community Centres of legal compliance safe working practices and good personal safety habits for staff
Pepar Publications
ISBN: 0 948680 54 7
pp 80

FP Hutchinson
Educating Beyond Violent Futures
Routledge
ISBN: 0 415 13280 0
pp 273

The Metropolitan Toronto School Board
Challenging Ourselves: Towards Gender Equity and Violence-Free Relationships - A Handbook of Practical Activities
Jessica Kingsley Publishers
ISBN: 1 85302 445 7
pp 104

Merle Davies

Managing Aggression and Violence is a CYWU publication which provides practical advice for youth and community workers. This ring bound book is an easy guide to the legal obligations and safe working practices for staff based in Youth and Community Centres. The guide is divided into 4 sections. The first, 'Getting to Grips with the Subject', considers the changes in our society and the rise in violent crimes against public servants. It discusses the ways in which workers can assess danger and the options available to them, such as trying to diffuse a situation before it turns violent.

The second section, 'Legal Obligations and Requirements', is a practical chapter which gives the reader basic information on the law. It is helpful in that it breaks down into statutory law and common law practice and explains in easy language who is responsible for doing what. More importantly it gives easy to follow guidelines on completing risk assessments and provides work sheets to enable risk assessments on job safety to be carried out. It also provides a working example of a policy statement on aggression and violence at work and examples of incident report forms and forms to report an injury or dangerous occurrence in the work place.

In 'Managing the Safety Process', the guide focuses on Youth Centres and Projects safety procedures as well as personal safety. There are some common-sense guidelines for working practice such as informing line managers of where workers are, if for example they are undertaking a home visit they give a time when they should be back at the Centre and phone the Centre if there is a delay. The writers go on to discuss establishing a

safety culture and developing personal safety habits, all of which are common-sense and may appear to be taken as read in some instances, however they do remind the reader of the need to constantly update and readdress safety issues to ensure good practice. The final section, 'Centre Development Programme', provides 8 practical activities which can be used in training by employers/centre managers with staff, or can be used by the individual to consider their own working practice. Overall the guide is a practical working document which would be of benefit to Centre managers.

The second book, *Educating Beyond Violent Futures* is written by a lecturer at the University of Western Sydney and is very jargonistic. Whilst having received glowing international reviews, I increasingly became irritated by the author turning a book on education and the education of young adults into, what appeared to be, a purely intellectual exercise. Had he not been trying to impress with his command of the English language I felt sure that the content could have been covered in a quarter of the space. Some good points are hidden in the text as the author considers the benefits of the 'hidden' curriculum and discusses giving young people positive images and not drowning them in 'negative macho computer games'. He makes a couple of good points about listening to young people and sharing their images and fears about the future. The major impact this book had for me was the vision of the future as expressed by a couple of Australian young people who envisage a bleak scenario of rioting and survival of the fittest. This corresponded to a vision a group of British young people shared with me on a recent Agenda 21 residential and it was interesting as well as sad to see it reflected by young people on the other side of the World. All in all a tedious book which could have been simplified.

Challenging Ourselves - Towards Gender Equity and Violence Free Relationships is, as it states, a handbook of practical activities for professionals working with young people in an educational setting. It has been written by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board and translates well into the British culture, it could easily be used by both teachers and youth workers. It is aimed at those working with young people in the age bracket 12-18 and has three main units moving from issues of the self and gender images through to interpersonal relationships and then progressing to more involved issues around violence in the family and teenage relationships which includes an excellent and thought provoking piece on 'dating violence'. The final part concentrates on conflict resolution and the global concerns of human resolution. The book also considers ways of introducing each unit and evaluating what young people have learnt and how their values have changed by taking part in the exercises. A good basic handbook which provides ideas on how to tackle the ongoing problem of sexual equality and violence within our society.

Merle Davies *is Principal Youth Officer for the London Borough of Bexley*

REVIEWS

Short Cuts

Suzanne Speak, Stuart Cameron and Rose Gilroy
Young Single Fathers: Participation in Fatherhood - Barriers and Bridges
Family Policy Studies Centre 1997
ISBN: 1 901455 10 6
£9.95 pp 38
Available from Family Policy Studies Centre, 231 Baker Street, London NW1 6XE

Joan Smith, Sheila Gilford and Ann O'Sullivan
The Family Background of Homeless Young People
Family Policy Studies Centre 1998
ISBN: 1 901455 06 8
£9.95 pp 59
Available from Family Policy Studies Centre, 231 Baker Street, London NW1 6XE

Peri 6, Ben Jupp, Helen Perry and Kristen Laskey
The Substance of Youth: The Role of Drugs in Young People's Lives Today
Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1998
ISBN: 1 85935 038 0
£11.95 pp 58
Available from JRF, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York Y03 6LP

Chris Shute
Edward Holmes and 'The Tragedy of Education'
Educational Heretics Press 1998
ISBN: 1 900219 12 3
£7.95
Available from Educational Heretics Press 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ

Tony Jeffs

The study by Speak et al of young single male parents helps to fill what has long been a yawning gap in terms of research. Here is a space in our knowledge long occupied by prejudice and negative stereotypes. Indeed few contemporary demons exist more likely to attract wholesale odium than the 'irresponsible' young male who fathers a child but does not live with the mother. This report looks at the strategies used by some young single non-residential fathers to establish and maintain 'a similar degree of involvement in their children's lives as their married, cohabiting or separated counterparts'. 40 young men were interviewed for the study. Of these 38 had fairly regular contact with their child. This varied from daily or several times per week (4), weekly contact (27), to contact on a monthly or less frequent basis (7). All the young men come from disadvantaged backgrounds so they hardly constitute a fair cross-section, nevertheless despite the financial problems they face, the report paints an encouraging picture. They care as strongly and passionately about the well-being of their child as any other men. Indeed many make significant sacrifices to sustain a meaningful relationship. This study is a welcome antidote to the usual journalistic discourse on the topic.

Within recent years there has been no shortage of studies on youth homelessness. Much of it has unfortunately tended to cover the same ground and amounted to the re-telling of familiar stories. What makes the contribution of Smith et al valuable is that it really does offer the jaded palate something new. Their research involved undertaking two parallel studies. The main one was based on interviews with 56 young homeless people aged 16 to 25. Where possible these were complemented by interviews with their mother or father/stepfather, or both. In addition a second study involved interviews with family members, young and old, from two local authority estates to see if there was anything distinctive about the families of the young people who became homeless. The study found that young homeless rarely matched the feckless image so often attributed to them. Time and again they saw themselves as being 'forced out'. It also showed how parents, for whatever motive, employed the 'threat of eviction' as a mechanism of control. This is a detailed and complex study but never less than accessible. What it clearly shows is that a variety of factors create homelessness and therefore no single solution or preventative programme will do much to address the problem. Smith et al do however offer a range of policy options which deserve serious attention.

The Substance of Youth is another nail, albeit a small one, in the coffin being prepared for what currently passes for a governmental strategy on drugs. Yet another piece of research which makes a mockery of the 'war on drugs' and the activities of our new sound-bite drugs czar. It confirms what most of those working with young people will at least tell you in private - that Britain is not in the grip of a 'drug culture'. That recreational drug users who comprise a very significant proportion of the youth population have remarkably similar views, values and opinions from those of non-users. To quote from the report 'most young people who drugs are as sociable, sensible, and morally aware as non-users and are thoughtful and discriminating in their ideas about the use of drugs and their place in their lives and cultures' (p. 45).

Edward Holmes as Chief Inspector of Schools was the man responsible for supervising the first national curriculum over a 100 years ago. What he saw during the course of hundreds of school visits convinced him that the National Curriculum, and the constant testing required to impose it, was debasing education and denying young people a worthwhile school experience. He knew better alternatives existed and spent the rest of his life campaigning for the root and branch reform of the school system. This short account of Holmes' life and ideas provides a wonderful introduction to his work. Sadly his criticisms apply with almost equal force today which is all the more reason for reading them.

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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All articles must be typed with double spacing on white paper and authors should send three copies. ***We also encourage the submission of the final text on computer disk*** (3.5 inch) saved in 'text'/ASCII format (please enclose adequate instructions for our typesetters). Attention must be paid to our statement concerning equal opportunities and offensive language; contributors should adopt the house style of the journal laid out below:

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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 & Policy*, vol.2, no.4, pp. 17-24.

And for a report:
The Thompson Report (1982) Experience and Participation, cmnd 8686, London, HMSO.

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