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VERY YOUNG MOTHERHOOD

Whose Problem?

JOAN AARVOLD AND CAROL BUSWELL

Motherhood is still a lauded ambition for women in general, but not for females defined as adolescent. The fact that adolescence is a social construct is an accepted social science view, yet even social scientists continue to stigmatise young mothers both in their research and their assumptions on the basis of that particular socially constructed attribute. In making this point Stevens (1996) comments that 'Scholars agree that adolescent childbearing results in negative outcomes' (p 278). Indeed, school age mothers are one of the most stereotyped social groups in contemporary British society (Aarvold, 1998). In the United States the process is underway whereby increased funds are promised to individual States if a reduction in illegitimacy rates can be demonstrated and policies requiring lone parents to work and to reduce their welfare benefits are currently being introduced in the UK. These measures are based on three fallacies: firstly, that there is an agreed 'problem' and that it is easily defined; secondly, that the 'problem' can be 'solved' and thirdly that punitive, fiscal measures combined with education provide the most efficacious solutions. This paper challenges the 'problem' approach and, drawing on the views of very young mothers presents an alternative perspective rooted in the supportive processes of the family and household.

An unquestioned problem

Teenage motherhood is considered to be an official 'problem' in Britain and America. Ruddick (1993) comments that in national debates, the adolescent mother is presented as a symbol of sexual and social disorder, a product of the intergenerational cycles of poverty and despair. Griffin (1993) reminds us that the accepted wisdom, perpetrated by mainstream researchers, has been to pathologise working class families (especially black families). Unwed teenage pregnancy and parenthood is seen to be another manifestation of such dysfunctional units, where delinquency, unemployment and truancy are common place. It would seem, from the political rhetoric, that single motherhood, particularly in the very young, is not only symptomatic of deep social ills, it is actually causing them. Young, lone mothers are held responsible for rising welfare costs, increases in juvenile crime and poor educational standards (Dennis & Erdos 1992). As would be expected from such an analysis numerous initiatives have been introduced to rid society of the scourge in both Britain and the United States. The Social Exclusion Unit of Britain's New Labour Government is working with other departments to develop an integrated strategy to 'cut rates of teenage pregnancy, particularly underage pregnancy' (Peatfield, 1998). The evidence is, however, that rates between 16-19

year olds have been decreasing and, in the under 16s, have remained steady for over twenty years (NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, 1997).

Allen and Bourke Dowling(1998) and Wilcox et al (1996) report that there is little evidence to suggest that cash-assistance and other welfare benefits to young single mothers have been anything but very minor factors in the substantial increase in illegitimate births. Despite this knowledge, policies continue to be formulated on this premise. A report published by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (1998) accords Britain, out of 50 countries, the highest percentage of adolescent births outside marriage. Indeed, one newspaper headline reads 'UK top for single teenage mothers' (Guardian, May 15th 1998). It is difficult to know whether references to 'outside marriage' and 'teenage' are meant to capture the public's attention or if the concern stems from the fact that babies are being born to young women who have, it is assumed, behaved irresponsibly. In response to the former proposition, it is an established fact that increasing numbers of *all* births occur outside marriage (Wilcox et al 1996). Other studies (Alan Guttmacher Institute 1998, Wellings et al, 1995) also inform us that the vast majority of young people have had sexual intercourse whilst in their teens. That a very small minority of young teenage girls become pregnant and go on to become parents and that most, despite often limited resources, raise their children adequately, is seldom reported

Explanations of the problem

The literature is dense with explanations of the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and motherhood and the acceptance of certain explanations is, obviously, the prerequisite for policy formulations. A liberal approach, which sees lack of sexual or contraceptive knowledge as the main explanation for teenage pregnancy and motherhood, construes more effective and/or earlier sex education as the policy solution (Wilson et al 1992, Mellanby et al 1993, Wellings et al, 1995). That sex education is often absent, minimal or irrelevant is certainly supported by our discussions with the young women in this study. To see an improvement in policies and practices in this field as the way to eliminate young motherhood clearly fails to consider the possibility that it may have more to do with social and interpersonal relations than factual knowledge, or lack of it. Interpersonal *gender* relations are an important feature of sexual relations, especially of teenagers (Holland et al 1992, Gilfoyle 1992, McCormick & Jesser 1983) and *social relations* within the family are an important part of the decision to continue with a pregnancy and become a mother. The liberal approach, in highlighting 'knowledge', fails to take account of these social and interpersonal aspects of sexual relations and assumes that a girl's factual knowledge is the only determinant of the outcome.

There is, now, a more radical perspective, which eschews both the problem-oriented and the liberal approach by viewing teen-age pregnancy positively and seeing girls as active agents in their own lives (e.g. Phoenix 1991, Griffin 1993). The orientation of the bulk of the literature is also criticised by Platt (1995) for its lack of debate about the social construction of the 'problem' itself and by McIntyre and Cunningham-Burley (1993) for its focus on the difficulties of teenage mothers rather than the positive elements.

All these approaches, however, focus either on the girl as an individual or on the wider social context - both of which, according to perspective, can be seen as the explanatory variable. The intermediate level - of the household and family - has previously been highlighted mainly as a 'dysfunctional' feature of the process of young motherhood (see Landy 1983). The approach taken in this paper is not simply that the family is important to the girls' decision to have a baby but that, more importantly, it forms the support system for both mother and child. In this sense the child is often born to an existing family unit which supports it, and the mother, both financially and emotionally. If there is a 'problem', then, it is one that is born by this group rather than by 'society'.

This paper attempts to present an alternative picture; one which seeks to place very young motherhood within a different script from that most commonly reported; 'kinscripts' of the family unit are the focus. Thirty-one young women attending an educational unit for school-age mothers filled in questionnaires about their families and their feelings about being pregnant and having a baby. During three follow-up focus group sessions, eleven young mothers (all of whom became pregnant when they were under 16) and 4 pregnant girls (all under 16) engaged in very frank discussions about their lives. Whilst the authors acknowledge that the girls' experience within the supportive educational unit may well have influenced their views, the girls themselves were very outspoken about the positive effects of being in a caring, non-judgmental environment outside the home.

The moral problem

Research has shown that knowledge of birth control practices is not generally deficient in many young people (Phoenix 1990). The notion that rates in teenage pregnancy can be reduced by educative methods alone is clearly questionable (NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination 1997). However, in attempting to achieve a reduction of the 'problem' of very young mothers, the primary focus has been given to health education (Irvine et al 1997). The rationale has been couched in terms of, on the one hand, not having sex at a young age (being morally responsible) or, on the other, (if engaging in irresponsible behaviour), using contraception which, it is presumed, is both appropriate and available. Sexual morality of adolescent

women is thus redefined as depending on their contraceptive practices and responsibility. The nineteenth century emphasis on 'immorality' has been reconstituted as a financial problem, where services to single mothers and children are seen as costs rather than entitlements, (Dennis & Erdos 1992).

Welfare has become a dirty word on both sides of the Atlantic, although the major problem in social welfare has been seen as dependency rather than poverty (Griffin 1993). The current solution to the 'problem' has two strands. The first is to provide more factual sex education which is known to have very limited effects on teenage pregnancy rates (Gordon 1996). The second is to reduce benefits to lone young mothers, which is meant to act as some kind of deterrent but which actually makes poor people even poorer (Wilcox et al 1996).

A problem for others

The young mothers and mothers-to-be in our study had a great deal to say about their pregnancies and babies, their schools, families and friends and the responses of the wider community. Their view of the 'problem' is very different from that perpetuated by those in official positions. Although none of the girls saw *themselves* as problems they were aware of, and sensitive to, the views and opinions held by others. They had experienced both verbal and non-verbal negative reactions:

Julie: *People look at me and think 'She looks young, what is she doing pregnant?' and you get these weird looks off of people*

Angela: *I have been in town and people have been giving me dirty looks...thinking the age I am and with me having M.*

Maria: *When you go to town and you've got the baby and that with you and you're getting on the bus, you've got the baby in your hands and you're trying to get on, people are just looking at you, saying 'you divvy...'*

The girls are upset and angry about such responses but they also feel deeply hurt by the absence of positive reactions when their pregnancies become public:

Debra: *Not one person said 'Congratulations' to me*

There is little doubt in the girls' minds about the ways they are perceived within society:

Suzie: *They (people in general) judge people too quickly - it's like they judge the cover not the book*

These feelings of being misjudged add to the difficulties for the young mother, who strives to be a good - enough parent. The young women in our study were only too aware of the seemingly disproportionate surveillance:

Karen: *I am pressured in a lot of ways, like people telling me what to do and I want the best for my daughter. I want to do what I want to do for her and not what other people want me to do, so it is pretty hard...*

Ironically, within the UK system, girls who become pregnant whilst still at school are more likely to receive additional health, social and educative support through the various services developed specifically to meet their needs. Such facilities are seldom available to their slightly older childbearing peers (Ruddick 1993). However, within the care system health professionals see very young motherhood as problematic. Some of these concerns are based on the prevailing medical view that early pregnancy is dangerous. With adequate care during pregnancy and birth though, very young mothers face no greater likelihood of serious complications than older women (Konje et al 1992). Despite robust health, though, young mothers perceive themselves to be judged negatively by some health professionals. They feel that they were not considered competent:

Maria: *...a health visitor...the first time I went to the clinic...‘You shouldn’t have changed her milk, you should not have done this...or that’ ...being nasty to me....*

that they are judged as incapable of making a decision:

Rosie: *...my doctor...didn’t even ask me what I wanted to do. She made an appointment for an abortionshe was arguing with me mam and she was blaming me mam and said she should make me have an abortion...*

that professionals would not respect confidences:

Lisa: *...they (girls wanting contraception) don’t want to go and ask the doctor because the doctor will tell their mam*

and that they were treated as though they were children:

Lindsey: *...you want to get out (of hospital)...you don’t want to sit there with them looking down at youshe made me go to bed at half past eight, I was not allowed to watch TV or anything...*

Andrea: *the nurses do not like you because you are young*

The problem family

The whole family, especially the girl’s mother, has been implicated in both the individual and the cultural explanations of the problem. According to past research this woman is both dominant and dependent on her daughter for nurturance (see Landy et al 1983). The girls’ families are also accepted as being large and non-contracepting (Wilson 1980). Landy et al’s work (1983) actually refers to teenage

pregnancy as a 'family syndrome' further emphasising the problem concept. Their study of families led the researchers to report that they tended to be 'mother-ridden' and daughters invariably had poor relationships with their fathers. It is easy to see how the family-blaming logic has become an acceptable and legitimate base from which to launch offensives. The socio-economic and cultural contexts in which young motherhood is not uncommon have only recently gained credibility in studies of teenage parenting (Bourke Dowling and Allen, 1998).

The reactions of mothers in working-class black families in America to their young daughter's pregnancy has been shown to be characterised by anxiety and stress (Kaplan 1996). They were deeply disappointed, having hoped for a better life for their daughters than they had been able to achieve for themselves. Our study, more than 20 years later, also suggests that the girl's mother is *not* colluding in circumstances of which she approves, as her daughter's pregnancy is a crisis that clearly upsets the equilibrium of the whole family.

The young women we listened to came mainly from two-parent families of average size. These families, in fact, seem to approximate to the 'ideal type' of family which is, nowadays, quite difficult to find. Almost all the girls were supported by their families both financially and emotionally, causing one to question the negative, prevailing family stereotype. Their pregnancies, however, brought a mixture of reactions which were construed as problems by the girls. There was disappointment and anger in their families:

Lorraine: *My nana and granda had always wanted high things for me....to go to college ...'She (young mother) has ruined her life'*

Karen: *She (mam) told me to get an abortion the next day*

Vicki: *It was me grandad that took it worst, my granda tried to chin D (boyfriend)*

Once the pregnancy was accepted, the families were faced with problems of a practical nature. Moving house was considered in response to the increase in family size and numerous changes were reported being made in existing homes to make them safe for babies. Families, it appeared, were prepared to rally round, to meet the challenges of a new, but not initially welcome, addition to their lives.

Deconstructing the problem

The concept of *kinscript* (Stack and Burton 1993) maintains that families have their own ideologies which encompass 'kin-work' and 'kin-time'. The former serves to regenerate families and reinforces shared values; the latter includes shared understandings of when, and in what sequence, life events should occur and demarcates *rites de passage* within families. The migration of black families from the American

rural south illustrated the relationship between kin-work and kin-time. Women had their children at a young age in order to go to the North and send money back to the family. The children were cared for by the grandmother. Once the children became teenagers, the mother would return home and the cycle would repeat itself. The kinscripts of black Americans served an economic purpose. A feature of subcultures in general is that they are in some ways functional for the adherents and constitute a framework from within which individuals and groups cope with, and make sense of their world.

The kinscript of working-class British families since prior to industrialisation has incorporated a notion of kin-work which allowed self-help and mutual support within the household. Fewer years of schooling also necessitated early wage-earning around which concepts of maturity were framed. It is argued here that some working-class families and groups maintain similar kinscripts because similar functions still have to be performed within the household.

Clearly, early childbearing, for young girls in modern, Western societies is not an economically beneficial activity as was the case for black Americans. It is also a source of stigma. There are, however, functional elements to the process of young motherhood. When a young mother and her baby live with, or close to her parents, as her youth normally dictates, the family is *regenerated* under the auspices of the elders. This is in direct contrast to the experience of many older mothers who are alone and often unsupported. Links between the generations become important and the pattern allows the older generation to help care for the baby. The importance of these functions has to be considered in the context of a society which gives little or no support to lone parents. This necessitates the continuation, even in contemporary society, of subcultural norms and family kinscripts which emphasise the importance of caring for family members. Stack and Burton (1993) themselves note that scripted family life courses require co-operative action among kin.

Maturity as part of the script

The kinscript expects maturity towards the obligations which arise. Maturity is usually defined as autonomy rather than responsibility or interdependence, yet responsibility for others and sensitivity to their needs often conflicts with independent action. This is particularly pertinent when considering the behaviours of young mothers following the births of their babies. Maturity has been shown to be a classed concept (McMahon 1995) and, we would argue, is also - in this context - a gendered one. Our data support the idea that whilst middle-class women may attempt to achieve maturity before having a child, working-class women see maturity as being achieved through childbirth. If the middle-class see 'readiness' for motherhood in terms of self-development (college education, career) and material security (own

home, steady income), the working-class, as evidenced from our data, may see it in terms of a readiness to take on responsibilities as indicated by McMahon (1995):

Lorraine: *...I would be going out with me pals, getting drunk...but now I've had him it has totally calmed me down...I don't drink when I've got him, I only drink if I know he's out overnight so it has calmed me down quite a lot*

Joanne: *I used to blow all me money on bits and bobs but now it all gets spent on the bairn, every last penny....*

Motherhood is a challenge and a stage on the way to personal development. Becoming a 'mature' member of the original family, in return for support, is part of the script.

Angela: *Yes I seem to have got closer to me mam when I had M...*

Rosie: *...I think we do more things now, go more places more often together and that*

Lindsey: *It has changed because before I was pregnant I used to argue with her every day*

Lisa: *...I have a better relationship with me mam now since I fell pregnant'*

Hudson and Ineichen (1991), in their study of young mothers, also comment on the 'growing up fast' aspect of having a baby at a young age. Early motherhood is no different from motherhood in respect of the decision making and responsibility involved. However, critical debates and subsequent policies have centred on the descriptors - 'teenage', 'adolescent', 'child' - rather than the noun - 'mother'.

The girls' attitude towards education, after becoming mothers, was also deemed more 'mature':

Lorraine: *If I had not had him I would not have gone to school because I used to stay off school...*

Lyn: *He has made my life a lot more full - I would have just been sitting here doing nowt*

Ruddick (1993) writes that adolescent pregnancy 'saved' some young girls from what would have been a 'downward path, going nowhere' (p137). Sharpe (1987) also comments on the way in which the young mothers in her study felt that they had grown up and become more responsible. These reported perceptions of 'a better life', as illustrated by our data, could reflect a young mother's need to defend her situation and to speak with pride amidst an abundance of damning reports. They could also be very genuine sentiments, which reflect the elements of 'coming to

maturity' and accepting responsibility within a kinscript where young motherhood is both normative and traditional (Pearce 1993).

Acceptance as part of the script

Becoming a mother was perceived as a fulfilling and positive achievement. Contrary to reports that portray most teenagers as having unrealistic views on parenting, the young mothers in this current study were well aware of the difficulties and stresses involved. What was also apparent was their acceptance, not only of their 'lot' but also of their need for support from their families. A clear theme of 'not complaining' was evident in our data. Acceptance and stoicism are other powerful aspects of the script for these families.

Lorraine: *You can still achieve what you want to achieve but - it's just going to take time and it's going to be harder*

Maria: *Even though you've got a bairn, you've got to work around it*

Lyn: *I didn't just have him for the happy times I had him for the whole time, the teething...*

One girl was speaking for many mothers as she reflected on her own situation:

Angela: *I think it's pretty hard, it's quite stressful for a teenager to have a baby*

Another mother's view encapsulated both the maturity and the stoical aspect of the script:

Joanne: *It doesn't matter what age you are, if you are going to do something you should take the responsibility anyway, it's just some people do not...*

Survival and progress depend on daily processes which, combined, can be described as 'coping'. There is pride in being able to do this and it is something that young mothers positively value.

Vicki: *I think when you have a bairn you know that you have to cope, so you have no choice.*

Debra: *Even adults do things wrong with their kids. I know thirty-year olds who've had their kids taken off them, yet I think I'm doing quite well for meself.*

Family care as part of the script

Pregnancy is not, according to our data, anticipated or colluded with, but when it happens the family moves into the traditional script of coping and caring. There is no evidence to suggest that babies born to very young, unmarried mothers are shrugged off as part of a careless refusal to plan for the future (Sullivan 1993). The event becomes incorporated into the family process; a process which is seen as a

continuous one in these families rather than the attenuated system often seen in middle-class culture. There were nurturing as well as enabling elements within the family with a new baby:

Angela: *Me mam helps me loads, Me mam says he's got two mams because she helps that much*

Rosie: *I will look after it but she (girl's mother) will be there if I need her to help me.*

Angela: *...She (girl's mother) says "I'll be there if you need me but I think you should take M into school (special unit) He's your responsibility, because you've got M*

Lindsey: *If she's really crying my mam lets her go so far and then she'll take over.*

Inevitably as the girls' own confidence in mothering increased, tensions developed over childrearing practices:

Vicki: *I cope sometimes without my mam but now seeing he's getting just a little bit older I would rather cope by meself*

Lindsey: *For instance me foster mam, she is looking after A the way she would look after hers, and I want to look after A the way I want to look after her*

The young mothers in our study were amazingly content with their meagre allowances; one girl said that the amount she received (around £17.10 per week, as an under 16 year old, living with her parents) was 'about right'. This, though, has to be considered in the light of the fact that the girls' families are providing a subsidy in the same sense as parents of young people on training schemes have been seen to do (Buswell 1992). The financial costs of young motherhood bear heavily on their own parents who, statistically, are likely to be among the least affluent in our society.

Vicki: *I hand over me (allowance) book and she (mother) gives me money for when I go out.*

Lindsey: *I pay her (mother) £20 a week and she buys me clothes and everything. She buys things like soap powder - the washer is always on and she still buys me clothes. Sometimes I'll sign the book so me mam can go and get the money but I'll say 'Take your board out before you give it to me.' But when I get the money she doesn't take her board out.*

Debra: *I'm still getting me clothes off me mam.*

Fiona: *If I was not with me mam I would find it even more difficult because I never pay board.*

That families do rally round and support the young mother is to be welcomed. The current benefits system actually encourages young mothers (over 16) to place themselves in health-demoting environments, such as high-rise flats in run-down areas, as they have to move out of the family home to qualify for even the lowest level of benefits (Wilson 1995). Material gain for these young mothers comes at the expense of social support.

Self respect as part of the script

The majority of the girls in this study were no longer in relationships with the father of their baby. The support of their families, of course, can assist them in rejecting a life with the baby's father. An important feature of this rejection, though, is that it occurs when the boys are considered too immature or unstable to fulfil the girls' ideas of a functional, respectable family unit; this is one aspect of the gendered nature of 'responsibility' for young people. Girls, therefore, follow a stigmatised course of action in order to sustain the welfare, as they see it, of their child and to maintain their own self-respect. This is done within a framework which, as indicated also regards maturity, care and acceptance as part of the kinscript.

- Karen: *I had a lot of trouble with baby's dad before I was pregnant; he used to hit me. He punched me one day in the back and I knew I was pregnant and I never told him and I have had nothing to do with him since.*
- Maria: *I don't want anything to do with him. I just don't want to ever see him. I don't want to hear from him. I don't want no money from him...I just want to get on with my life with the baby...He's on drugs all the time; he's never got any money; he beats his girlfriends up. I'm not going to sit there and stand for that...the baby's got me and that's all she needs.*
- Angela: *He's changed. They just change like that when you tell them you're pregnant...even if you're still in a relationship they go out and come in whatever time they feel like it and muck you about when you've had the bairn.*
- Rosie: *He wants to get back with me and he wants to be a dad. But at first he didn't and I can't get back with him because he might...like in nine months time he'll want nothing to do with me.*
- Joanne: *He wants me to get back with him and move into his mam's house. But I don't want to get back with him and I wouldn't leave me mam. He threatens if I don't get back with him - that's how immature he is, he's only fourteen - he threatens he'll take me to court for custody - but he knows he wouldn't get it anyway.*

In their report, Bourke Dowling and Allen (1998) highlight the prevailing culture that accepts that young men can abandon their responsibility for their babies in spite of having taken no steps to prevent the pregnancy in the first place. From our interviews it was evident that the baby's father, for variety of reasons, was seldom included as part of the family script.

Conclusion

Programmes of intervention based solely on information about contraception have not affected the pregnancy rates of young women (NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination 1997). Although timely and appropriate sex education and contraceptive provision must be part of the wider picture, on their own they will not bring about the changes being demanded. Only when alternative, equally attractive, socially and culturally relevant options are available and accessible to adolescents will there be any significant change in the numbers of young girls choosing motherhood. However, the position taken in this paper is one that locates young motherhood in a much deeper socio-cultural paradigm, which is both enduring and rarely susceptible to passing political dogma. Policy makers and educators, though, seem unable to comprehend this. They refuse to acknowledge the importance of the fact that becoming a young mother, in some communities, is a form of family work which is incorporated into the process of family regeneration, where families themselves take responsibility and bear most of the financial costs.

There is a contradiction between the fact that single female-headed households are now acceptable, although they have long existed in some working-class and ethnic minority communities (Walters 1988), and the increased moral panic over the issue. The rates of teenage pregnancy, in any society, mirror pregnancy rates in other age groups (Jacobson 1995). So, in one sense, young mothers are related to, in terms of behaviour, all other mothers at that time and in that place. In reports on adolescent mothers the reliable supports and positive influences which promote parenting are overlooked. Instead, families are presented as failures which require 'training' and state allowances and benefits are seen as over-generous and thus perpetuating the problem. At present, special educational units, of the kind the girls in this study attended, are threatened with closure and many community groups helping young mothers face annual trials to renegotiate funding to continue their work.

Understanding the context in which birth to many young mothers takes place shows that policies aimed at reducing these kinds of services are counter-productive at a period in the girls' lives when they want to extend their horizons for the sake of their child's future.

Policy formulation and implementation have been directed at very young mothers and their children on the assumption that there is a problem to be solved rather than a process to be understood. It is suggested here that kinscripts are fundamental to families' roles and functions and, in this instance, they allow both the positive incorporation and care of the child and the personal development of the young mothers themselves. These kinscripts benefit society and the State by providing for emotional, practical and financial care of young mothers and their children and yet no recognition, in policy terms, is accorded to the process.

Our data show a sample of young mothers and mothers-to be who appear to be mature, responsible and caring; based, as many of them are, within a caring and supportive family of origin. There are no policies to support the way in which care and responsibility are actually being carried out to the benefit of both the child and the wider society. Recognition and support for the context in which care is actually occurring might enable young mothers, with their developing sense of responsibility and concern about the future, to work towards increased life chances through education, training and employment to ensure a better future for themselves and their children.

The 'children having children' perspective (FPA 1996), which is favoured by professionals and policy makers and transmitted by the media, precludes debate which affirms and empowers young women to assume responsibility within their own particular kinscript. The perspective also fails to recognise and support the role of the family of origin. *Individual* ideology is the basis of most conservative, liberal and radical approaches to this subject. There is a need, however, to understand and accept the processes of family support and the underlying kinscripts which locate any difficulties in the 'private' arena of the households in spite of assumptions which maintain that it is the 'public' arena which provides the solutions. There is now a need to direct the focus of policy towards the level of the household when it is the context in which a young mother and her child are supported.

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NEW DEAL OR WORKFARE REGIME?

JOHN PLAYER

This investigation was prompted by my experience as a Community Development Worker in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh. In particular the research was incited by work with benefit claimants around the issue of the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), the 'Stricter Benefit Regime', introduced by the previous Employment Secretary, Michael Portillo. Of interest to me was the reaction of the Employment Services (ES) to the perceived threat of an organised Claimants Union in the area and the Community Education Service's (CES) co-operation with the ES.

At a theoretical level, the article that a colleague and myself distributed to Adult Education students studying on a course 'Advocacy and the JSA', entitled '*Hounding delinquents: the introduction of the Jobseekers Allowance*' (Novak 1997) left a significant impression on me and, hopefully the students on the course. This text introduced to me the notion of 'Discipline and Punish' in relation to those recipients of the Welfare State and to the post-structuralist ideas and insights of Michel Foucault. These insights, which include concepts of power/knowledge, the body, surveillance and discipline, became more apparent in my practice. Concepts which demanded greater reflection and elaboration because our work with claimants suggested that there existed an 'inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself.' (Foucault, 1980: 155). This succinct, if gender specific, observation was manifest in claimants' very real fear of advocating on behalf of others having internalised the 'inspecting gaze' from the ES. This inspecting gaze was applied to myself when the manager of the local ES suggested at a Wester Hailes Partnership meeting that both myself and one of the activists were users of an Anarchist WWWeb site known as 'Groundswell'. This surveillance type information emanated, according to unsubstantiated sources, from the records of the Special Branch.

The personal impetus or motivation for such a focus on the 'New Deal' or 'Welfare to Work' programmes and the incentives involved in it came from something less dramatic than fear of surveillance from the Special Branch. Rather it came out of a confusion based on an incredulity at the rapid change in the British Labour Party's policy, at both a local and national level, in relation to job-creation or training type projects. This rapid change in welfare and employment policy was personified for me in the shape of Dan Finn, the respected researcher and welfare rights expert who had advised both the organised community in Wester Hailes and myself over the issue of 'Project Work', the Conservative Government's 'Workfare' initiative.

Dan Finn at the time was emphatic in his criticism of 'Project Work', especially its compulsory element. Since becoming an advisor to the present Labour Government's 'New Deal' Task Force he has articulated an alternative position. In relation to the 'New Deal' he argues a position based on a notion of 'contractarianism', which stresses conditionality. Dan Finn kindly outlined his position at a 'Concept' seminar for community education practitioners entitled 'The New Deal - possibilities and problems' in May 1998. At this seminar Dan Finn put forward a spirited, informed and pragmatic defence of the Government's Welfare to Work policies which certainly inspired myself to look more closely at the issue. This closer look then will begin with an examination of what the New Deal represents and contains.

The 'New Deal' How it Works

The New Deal was launched UK nation-wide in April 1998 and, it has been argued, that it is the government's 'flagship' policy to combat youth unemployment. The New Deal, according to Milne (1998) is the 'big idea' of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown. In fact, the Chancellor urged all parts of civil society 'to play its part in this *national crusade*' in his July 1997 Budget Statement. The New Deal for the unemployed and other groups excluded from the Labour market constitutes what is claimed to be a radical shift in Government Policy. According to Donnelly et al (1998), the New Deal programmes form part of a wider strategy commonly described as 'Welfare to Work'. As if to emphasise Milne's point, Donnelly et al are also adamant that this is one of the Government's 'big ideas'. The New Deal formed a key part of Labour's election manifesto and, as Donnelly et al (1998: iv) argue, it is far more than just a set of new schemes for the unemployed. Donnelly et al, as representatives of the influential Unemployment Unit and Youthaid, are of the view that the Government's Welfare to Work approach does not aim to tackle poverty by simply increasing expenditure on social security. They and supporters of the Government would argue that in fact the opposite is the case as it is based on a belief that social justice is better served by 'recreating individual economic self-sufficiency than by expanding the scope of social security.'

The commitment to this 'big idea' aimed at 'recreating individual self sufficiency' and increasing the 'employability' of New Deal clients is underpinned by the notable amount of expenditure the Government has allocated to the New Deal. It is especially significant because it represents the Government's only substantial expenditure increase in a context of freezing public spending to the austere levels set by Sir Kenneth Clarke the former Conservative Chancellor. In fact, according to Fairley (1998), the New Deal is financed with over £5bn of 'new money' raised by a windfall tax on the former public utilities, and, as Fairley goes on to argue, it is centrally designed and driven. The programme for unemployed people aged 18-24; the largest

and the first New Deal will cost from the date of implementation, a four-year programme, £2,620million. This £2.6 bn programme for unemployed 18-24 year olds initially offered four options of waged employment, education and training, work in the voluntary sector and work experience in improving the environment. In response to criticism from Black Voluntary Sector Organisations, the Government has increased the number of options on offer, adding a 'self-employment' fifth option.

In order to decide upon which of the five options to choose young people will enter the 'Gateway' which, according to Fairley (1998), is the major policy innovation contained within the New Deal. Four months is the maximum length of time a young person should spend on the Gateway before moving into their New Deal option. While Donnelly et al (1998) maintain that the Employment Services will provide most of the Gateway, Fairley (1998) argues that the Adult Guidance Service will play a key supporting role, and, as a result may secure more consistent funding across Scotland. Fairley (1998: 93) also points out that specialist help will be sought if necessary from the probation service or in cases of alcohol or drug dependency and separate funding has been made available for this recently through the Scottish Futures Fund. During the Gateway the young person will remain on Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) and will be required to maintain their availability for work and active jobsearch. Donnelly et al (1998: 14) highlight the fact that as a result of this procedure the young person will have to continue to sign on and will be governed by all the JSA jobseeking rule and the range of sanctions.

The Subtext: Sanctions and Compulsion

Chancellor Brown, after outlining the initial four options offered to young people between 18-24 years old, made it clear in his first budget on 2 July 1997 that:

There will be no fifth option - to stay at home on full benefit. So when they sign on for benefit they will be signing up for work. Benefits will be cut if young people refuse to take up the opportunities.

Thus, young people who refuse to take part in the New Deal, or who leave early, will face the loss of benefits. Fairley (1998: 95) points out that sanctions will be applied progressively for fortnightly periods and for most young people will be at 100 per cent. Benefits will be restored when a young person re-enters the New Deal. Moreover, Donnelly (1998) is keen to point out that for participants of the New Deal there are further restrictions to hardship payments for people who are sanctioned. Donnelly (1998) is arguing that the New Deal amendment regulations, adopted by Government late 1997, make the already extremely tough system of the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) even more harsh. Under the New Deal, there will be no hardship payments at all for those participants who are not covered by the

Government's list of vulnerable groups. According to Donnelly (1998) this list is fairly restrictive. As already pointed out, it has been argued by Fairley (1998) that Labour has built on the sanctions regime introduced by the Conservative's Job Seeker's Act and that Labour has both made the sanctions more severe, and brought more young people into the net.

However, with both Fairley and Donnelly's concerns about the sanctions element of the New Deal making the existing benefits system even more harsh and severe in mind, it is worth noting that 'up to the end of June, no young person had their benefits cut for refusing to go on an option.' (Working Brief October 1998). The London based Directors of Working Brief, Balibir Chatrik in particular, would argue that these first figures on sanctions underline the way in which the Employment Service is interpreting Gordon Brown's 'No Fifth Option' of staying on the Job Seekers Allowance. In fact, Chatrik (1998) is very much of the opinion that 'the Compulsion issue is a red herring, the main issue is the quality of the options. Uneven quality could scupper the New Deal' she recently argued. Moreover, Chatrik is very concerned about the tendency of some commentators such as Taylor (1997) to conflate the compulsion element of the New Deal with aspects of the former Conservative Minister's, Michael Portillo, 'Stricter Benefit Regime', the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Certainly, Chatrik stresses that the New Deal cannot be compared with Project Work, the compulsory employment and training initiative introduced latterly by the previous Conservative government. Thus, for Chatrik, the correct strategy for ensuring that 'unemployed people make the appropriate and right choices in the New Deal' is 'critical engagement with the New Government' rather than chasing up 'the red herring' of the compulsion issue. Nevertheless, the all-party Scottish Affairs Committee, which moved rapidly to consider the New Deal, did not share Chatrik's opinion that compulsion within the New Deal is a mere 'red herring'. For the Committee came out against compulsion in the New Deal and asked the Government to reconsider this policy (1998, Vol.1). Fairley (1998) is therefore suggesting that, on key issues of policy for the unemployed and for tackling 'social exclusion', there may be an emerging Scottish consensus which differs from mainstream thinking south of the border.

Origins: a 'transatlantic' dialogue

The irony that Blair borrows from the US policy experience every bit as much as Thatcher is no longer novel. Commentators (Excell 1998, Mathews and Becker 1998) draw attention to the relationship between the Welfare to Work policies in the UK and to the recent major welfare reforms initiated by the federal government in the United States. These reforms, according to Excell (1998), impose strict work obligations and time limits on claimants. These commentators also argue that the

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act 1996, which replaced the AFDC (Aid for Families with Dependent Children) with the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), roughly equivalent to UK benefits such as Income Support, is the biggest change to US benefits for decades. However, they also argue that although the 1996 Act in the US leaves a lot of leeway to individual states, such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Alabama, Mississippi, this does not apply to the tougher work requirements for claimants. For a state to receive TANF funding, it must penalise welfare claimants who fail to take part in work activities within 2 years of starting on welfare. However, according to Mathews and Becker (1998), about 20 states have passed legislation reducing this maximum time limit before sanctions and penalties might come into force with 11 of those states requiring welfare recipients to go to work immediately. Exell (1998), in particular, argues that Wisconsin has taken the 1996 Act's permission to experiment and develop welfare in a unique way. Wisconsin introduced its programme Wisconsin Works (or W-2 as it is called) in the summer of 1996 and it is particularly important for British commentators and policy advisors because the entire focus is on welfare to work. That is, every element of the programme is focused on getting claimants off welfare and onto work.

As with the New Deal in the UK, the fundamental principle of Wisconsin Works is that instead of receiving benefits, claimants are offered a subsidised job and places in work programmes. Again analogous with the original New Deal, W-2 has four options and similarly, the US debate about the provisions for sanctioning claimants who turn down options without 'good cause' may mirror similar debates in Scotland and the UK. Certainly, Mathews and Becker (1998), in their praise of both the Wisconsin and Oregon welfare-to-work success stories, highlight that in Oregon one of the key reasons for the successful reduction in welfare spending was that about 33% of people who applied for welfare between February and July of 1996 left the programme voluntarily or refused to co-operate and are therefore in the process of losing their benefit. The same authors are highly critical of some states, such as Hawaii, who permit eligible persons to receive benefits the first day they enter a welfare office and states which fail to emphasise the need to go to work immediately and adhere to the more liberal reading of the 1996 Act and allow for a 2 year period before penalising claimants for not taking part in work activities. On the other hand, Exell (1998) is particularly concerned that, in the Wisconsin Works model, participants are directed to one of the options of Wisconsin's welfare-to-work programme as soon as they make a claim. Exell does not think that this is appropriate and argues that the UK New Deal model is superior because younger claimants do not have to enter the programme until they have

been unemployed for six months and then they begin with the 'Gateway'. As already stated, Fairley (1998) is of the opinion that the 'Gateway' is the major policy innovation contained within the New Deal.

Ideological and discursive underpinnings

Mathews and Becker (1998) are helpful when evaluating what they perceive to be the apparent ingredients for successful welfare-to-work reform in the US when they highlight the need for states to lay stress on personal and individual responsibility. They are helpful because they allow an insight into the philosophical and ideological underpinnings or underlabourings of the welfare-to-work programmes in the US, the UK New Deal and, very tentatively, the current Blair project. This emphasis on personal responsibility resonates with some New Labour thinking especially with regards to the notion of communitarianism associated with the works of Amitai Etzioni, Alaister McIntyre and John MacMurray, the Scottish philosopher who influenced Tony Blair. According to Driver and Martell (1997), New Labour see communitarianism as challenging a rights-based culture, which has ignored duties and responsibilities and led to a dependency on the welfare state. Dwyer (1998) goes deeper with a deconstruction that argues that the communitarian agenda of Etzioni, in particular, echoes similar sentiments to those of Selbourne who unequivocally stresses that a proliferation of 'dutile rights' has led to a malaise that strikes at the heart of modern citizenship and threatens social cohesion. Thus, as Dwyer points out, against a backdrop of social crisis, Etzioni is urging the acknowledgement of a movement, which places great emphasis on responsibility and duty rather than rights. Dwyer maintains that throughout Etzioni's account the ordering of certain priorities is constant. These priorities are self help, family help and local help, with lip service being paid to the ethic of helping disadvantaged members of society. Fundamental to Etzioni's argument is that at a national level any form of state funded welfare or entitlement is extremely restricted. Thus, Etzioni's meta-ethical communitarian proposals may provide the necessary theoretical basis to underpin the contemporary debate about reforming British welfare in which the state should play a reduced role in welfare provision. Moreover, this emphasis upon duties and personal responsibilities provides the ideological cement or the discursive formations of 'common sense' required to provide governance for a 'workfare regime'.

The reduction of the state's role in order to contain or reduce the financial costs of welfare is certainly inferred by Fairley (1998) who points out that the main strategic objective of the New Deal is to help young people to move from dependency on welfare and into work, and so help reduce the spiralling costs of welfare. Further, when making it clear that there will be no 'fifth option' of avoiding New Deal and staying on welfare, Chancellor Brown in his first budget statement on 2 July 1997

laid particular emphasis on the 'new responsibilities' that came with the 'new opportunities' inherent in this programme. The Government sees the stress upon providing opportunity and insisting upon co-operation as a component part of its balancing of rights and responsibilities. These themes of balancing rights and responsibilities is evident within the notion of communitarianism and in pursuing a 'Third Way' in politics.

As if to mirror the transatlantic dialogue on key policy issues which affect the unemployed and for tackling 'social exclusion', such as Wisconsin Works alluded to above, the resurgence of communitarian political thought has become a major intellectual development in the United States. Sites (1998) argues that communitarian theories, centred on concepts of civic virtue and moral obligation, attribute the central failings of modern democratic society to a weakening of traditional and associational ties. Theorists urge a 'revivification of civil society' (Sites 1998) through the rebuilding of the forms of community and association that necessarily undergird a democratic culture, from families, churches and neighbourhood groups to self help movements and volunteer assistance organisations. Sites suggests that communitarian conceptions of community building, to the extent that they rule out the political articulation of rights-based demands, provide a weak theoretical foundation for community development.

Furthermore, this transatlantic dialogue is apparent for Fairley (1998) when he attempts to outline the educational function of the New Deal. Fairley argues that the Government is influenced by the American liberal economist, Lawrence Mead. This influence is evinced by the Government's belief that a significant group of long term unemployed will not choose to take up employment or training opportunities, and that motivation depends in the provision of the appropriate 'incentives' to take part. The 'incentive' that seems to be the most problematic and contentious (Fairley 1998, Jarvis 1997) is the threat to withdraw benefit. This policy is particularly contentious because it has led some commentators, such as Dwyer (1998), to conclude that the incentive of 'sanctions' to benefit would suggest that policy makers believe claimants to be irresponsible, self interested 'knaves' who choose to live on benefits and abuse the public welfare system. In other words, according to Dwyer (1998), the assumption, which seems to inform the 'Welfare to Work' programmes appears to be that everyone is assumed to be indolent until they prove otherwise.

Both the educative and communitarian aspects of the New Deal are exemplified by the description of the regime of benefits sanctions as a teaching agent by the former Labour Minister, Frank Field. Thus the benefit sanctions will indicate 'how people should behave and what their responsibilities are.' (Finn 1998) In this sense, as Fairley (1998) succinctly argues, the New Deal is piloting a new concept

of balancing rights and responsibilities, which Labour wishes to place at the heart of a modernised welfare state and, as Dwyer points out, also at the heart of a new notion of British Citizenship based on duty rather than rights. Fairley is at his most lucid and insightful when he draws attention to the irony of testing out this complex and radical new concept of balancing rights and responsibilities on disadvantaged and excluded young people.

Political discourse and projects

According to Driver and Martell (1997), Labour's communitarianism has two principal objectives; firstly, to provide an alternative to conservative neo-liberalism and secondly to distance the party from its social democratic past. Driver and Martell argue that communitarianism offers Labour modernizers a political vocabulary, which eschews market individualism, but not capitalism and which, embraces collective action but not class or the state. In relation to the New Deal, Labour's communitarianism challenges what they see as a state dominated approach to welfare. This approach to welfare, they feel, has been too universal, expensive and bureaucratic. Importantly, according to the communitarians, it has not allowed sufficient space for individual choice.

The political vocabulary which Labour modernizers have derived from the Etzionian notion of communitarianism is, I would argue, articulated in the pursuit of a 'Third Way' in politics. In an attempt to offer an alternative philosophy to social democracy and the new right political agenda often associated with Margaret Thatcher, a Fabian pamphlet by Tony Blair entitled 'The Third Way' has been published in more than 40 countries (Mulgan, 1998). According to Mulgan, for New Labour the purpose of this international debate about the Third Way is to synthesise the various traditions of the centre-left, social democracy, liberalism and progressivism, into a body of ideas which are sufficiently coherent and hard-edged to guide governments into the 21st Century.

The new watchwords of the Third Way, argues Le Grand (1998) are the components of communitarianism: community, opportunity, responsibility and accountability. For Le Grand the belief in individual responsibility, which underlines the former Minister, Frank Field's educative aspect of the New Deal, is implicit in the harder attitude emanating from the Home Office towards criminal and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Further, it is evident in the emphasis on parents' responsibilities for their children's misdemeanours. Le Grand also suggests that this strong belief in individual responsibility inherent in the political underpinnings of the Third Way, seems to underlie the drive for changes to the welfare state, impelled not only by costs but also by a desire to reduce dependency and to encourage individuals to take more responsibility for their own actions.

Hall (1998) is also at pains to emphasise that the Third Way is 'hot on responsibilities of individuals'. Echoing his consistent criticism of pluralism as a theoretical paradigm, he also points out that while the 'Third Way' does acknowledge accelerating social inequality it refuses to recognise that there might be structural interests preventing the achievement of wealth and life chances. For Hall the discourse of the Third Way is disconcertingly devoid of any sustained reference to power.

Regimes of Truth: Regimes of Workfare

For a more sustained and coherent analysis of structural and 'restructuring' interests at the level of political economy it might be appropriate to briefly touch upon the work of Jessop (1994, 1995). According to O'Brien and Penna (1998), the most developed attempt at theorising the ongoing restructuring of the welfare state, of which Welfare to Work proposals such as the New Deal must be seen as a component part, is contained in Jessop's theoretical analysis of a shift from a 'Keynesian Welfare Regime' to 'Schumpeterian Workfare Regime'. According to Jessop, we are witnessing a tendential shift in the form of welfare regimes in advanced capitalist countries. Jessop is proposing that this epochal shift comprises a response to four sets of changes in international political-economic relations. These are, the rise of new technologies; growing internationalisation; a paradigm shift from Fordism to post-Fordism; and the regionalisation of global and national economies. (O'Brien and Penna 1998; 152) What Jessop describes as a destatisation of politics, or the rise of governance mechanisms alongside the state marks this 'epochal shift'. Jessop is essentially arguing that the welfare state should be understood not so much as a set of social service institutions but rather as an instrument of governance of the state. The purpose of such governance for the 'Schumpeterian Workfare State' is geared towards enhancing competitiveness within the context of an internationalised economic framework, subordinating social policy to the demands of the market and supporting labour and product flexibility rather than stability and security. These instruments of governance are, according to Elliot and Atkinson (1998), part of a process of the tightening of state control over the individual developed in conjunction with a relaxation of state control over capital.

This 'workfare regime' represents a new regime of disciplinary power and is analogous to the Foucauldian notion of the Panopticon. Foucault's (1975) research programme is helpful to claimants and welfare professionals because it provides a contrast between sovereign power and the new form of power, disciplinary power, which surpassed it. As O'Brien and Penna (1998: 115) point out, the ideal figure of disciplinary power, the 'model' that exhibits most clearly its means of operation, is the Panopticon, the prison designed by the eighteenth century reformer Jeremy Bentham, although the design was never in fact constructed. The Panopticon

embodied a number of simple organisational principles which resonates with the administration of the 'New Deal' and the Jobseeker's Allowance. These include the direct visibility of the inmates to a central supervisor and a continuous process of recording and monitoring in order to chronicle the inmate's institutional career. Novack (1997: 104) highlights the fact that under the Jobseeker's Act, implemented in October 1996 and retained by the 'New Labour' government, all claimants are required to sign a detailed Jobseeker's Agreement. In addition to the requirement for claimants to specify in detail their availability for work, and at what kinds of job and levels of pay, they now also have to indicate the number of employers they will write to, telephone and visit every week; the number of times they will visit the Jobcentre, the newspapers they will consult for vacancies and the employment agencies they will register with. Failure to agree to and sign this Agreement, or subsequently to meet its goals, will result in a suspension from benefit.

This new form of disciplinary power does without torture because it operates with a range of techniques, examinations, observations and mini-penal systems all captured in the image or metaphor of the Panopticon. The crucial element of the Panopticon, according to Hillyard and Watson (1994), is that even if no one is observing, the power operates as if surveillance were perpetual and total. Bentham, who designed the Panopticon, also devised mechanisms for controlling the controllers. Those working with claimants, in educational and/or welfare services, must have experienced what Rosendale (1998) has described as 'a new managerial culture in local authorities which amounts to a crystallisation of Thatcherism' with the increasing control and surveillance that this entails. Or as Foucault commented:

In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather, this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power as well as those who are subjected to it. (Foucault, 1980: 156)

Foucault is clearly suggesting that as subjects we are at the same time both the target of disciplinary power and its articulation. Power relations, according to this explanation, are everywhere.

The unprecedented powers given to Client Advisors in the administration of both the Jobseeker's Allowance and the New Deal to direct the behaviour, and even the appearance, of claimants and to impose harsh 'sanctions' on benefits operates with a range of techniques, examinations, observations and mini-penal systems which are all captured in the disturbing image of the Panopticon.

While it is important to remain tentative about the pessimism of such 'post-structuralist' theoretical insights based on the work of Michel Foucault they, perhaps, represent

a more coherent analysis of the development of contemporary society with its emphasis on disciplinary power than the communitarian philosophies which underpin much of the current attempt at a hegemonic 'fix' known as the 'Third Way'.

Conclusion

The impetus or motivation for such a focus on the New Deal or Welfare to Work programmes and the incentives and deterrents involved with it arose out of confusion. This confusion was based on incredulity at the rapid change in the British Labour Party's policy described by Dwyer (1998), both at local and national level. Previously, at a national level, Labour Party commentaries had been critical of 'workfare schemes', in particular 'Project Work' referring to it as 'the blunt Tory strategy of compulsion.' (Labour Party, 1994: 28) At a local level there existed the 'knowledge in the then Lothian Regional Council that 'participation in all schemes must be voluntary.' (Rosendale 1998) This knowledge informed by praxis, led Rosendale (1998) to make the astute comment that 'it has been the practice of Community Education over the last 20 years that has developed the idea that compulsion is not appropriate. Now suddenly it's a non-issue.' It is my contention that this 'knowledge' has been effectively subjugated at a local and national level. The mechanism or technology of power applied to stifle the popular debate on the issue of compulsion and harsh sanctions in the New Deal has been the Foucauldian notion of a discursive formation. That is, the formation, described by Edwards and Usher (1994) as 'what can be said, which is based on what cannot be said, on what is marginalised, silenced and repressed'.

The underlying reason for the implementation of this sophisticated mechanism of power is, as Jessop (1994, 1995) argues, to go towards enabling the transition from a 'Keynesian Welfare Regime' to a 'Schumpeterian Workfare Regime'. Intrinsic to Jessop's argument is that the welfare state, of which educational and training institutions are a component part, must be understood as an instrument of governance of the state. Squires (1990) and Novack (1997) whose studies examine the focus of state intervention into poverty and deviance by exploring the ways in which welfare has been deployed to advance disciplinary modes of social control have elaborated this argument. With particular reference to the New Deal and its 'discipline and punish' (Foucault 1975) aspects, Gray (1998) has argued that 'workfare is one of the first priorities of New Labour's attempt to discipline the non-working class'. This disciplinary function also has an educative aspect, with the sanctions being described by the former Labour Minister, Frank Field, as a teaching agent. The irony of testing out this punitive pedagogy on disadvantaged and excluded young people has not escaped the insightful Fairley (1998). Perhaps a more progressive pedagogical and community development intervention would allow for focus on

alternatives based upon rights, rather than duty and conditionality, such as a universal unconditional citizen's income or a guaranteed minimum income as proposed by Gray (1993) and Aglietti (1998) respectively. Thus, this intervention would be a component part of a political process of mobilisation aimed at advancing demands based firmly upon rights.

Such alternative prescriptions becoming evermore pressing with Alistair Darling, Social Security Secretary, recently articulating the meta-ethical communitarian value base of New Labour while hailing the weighty Welfare Reform and Pensions Bill, arguing that 'There is no unconditional right to benefit' (Guardian 11/2/99). A rival libertarian socialist vision of the future to that of Alistair Darling's, would unequivocally advocate that the type of citizen's income put forth by Gray (1988) entails an unconditional right to benefit.

Finally, I would argue, along with Purdy (1994), that the transition to such a 'Basic Income Democracy' is unlikely to succeed, or even begin, without the support of a broad social and political alliance. Underpinning this political alliance would be the declaration that a self-governing society would not compel people to work and this would be made possible by paying everyone an unconditional basic income by virtue of their status as citizens. This egalitarian vision of citizenship has its own genealogy. One of the leading proponents of a cooperationalist or providential case for distributing some proportion of the social product as a universal grant was G.D.H. Cole, admirer of William Morris, theoretician of Guild Socialism and organic intellectual of the British labour movement. As an intellectual and educator, Cole gave voice to the subjugated histories and knowledges of the people on the downside of the liberal modernising project. He articulated the histories of the British Co-operative Movement and as a Guild Socialist advocated the giving of national dividends to all citizens, as unconditional basic incomes. Surely this is the type of legacy we want to present to the new Scottish Parliament and beyond, a generous legacy that ensures that being a citizen of the new Scotland guarantees the right to an unconditional, universal basic income.

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ORGANISING YOUNG PEOPLE:

New Unionism's Challenges for Youth and Community Workers

MARJORIE MAYO

The Youth Service has a long and controversial history of concern with the social integration of the young, with the inculcation of appropriate 'social and spiritual values' (Jeffs, 1979. 4). In the early days, the aim was holistic - to improve the moral as well as the physical health of the industrial urban proletariat overall - however this was conceptualised and operationalised in practice, from varying competing perspectives. But over the years, the Youth Service came to focus more specifically upon working with young people during their leisure time. Although there were youth work organisations which did have a history of concern with employment questions, over time the world of work came increasingly to be envisaged as a separate sphere - beyond the scope of the Youth Service per se in fact (France and Wiles, 1997). In the past, entering the labour force was considered to be a form of socialisation in its own right, one of the key gateways to adult status. In the relatively buoyant employment context of the post-war years, it has been argued, this was all seen as relatively unproblematic. The state did not need to play a major role at this time. (France and Wiles, 1997). The world of work would take over, once young people had successfully made the transition from school to work. This then left the Youth Service to concentrate upon social education via leisure activities, a trend which was re-inforced in the sixties and seventies, with the endorsement of the Albemarle Report (1960).

Writing in the harsher employment context of the eighties, Williamson pointed out that, as a result of this relative lack of focus upon workplace issues in the post war period, 'the Youth Service had barely been considered to be an appropriate forum within which to address the issue of youth unemployment despite the fact that this was 'clearly one of the major problems facing young people' at that time (Williamson, 1988. 155). He went on to argue that given the scale of the problems which young people were facing, the issue was not whether, but how youth workers should relate to workplace issues, including the specific dilemmas around how to respond to special employment schemes, without exploiting the young people concerned.

A decade later, the case is even more compelling. Young people continue to be particularly susceptible to unemployment with young black and ethnic minority males suffering most severely. And whilst unemployment fell overall in the mid nineties, when they do find work young people continue to be disproportionately likely to be employed in 'flexible' jobs, jobs which are characterised by low levels of pay and high levels of insecurity. The contemporary context for young people's

entry into the labour market therefore poses even greater challenges. The risks of exclusion from the labour market have been compounded by increasing risks from other forms of social exclusion which particularly affect young people, including increasing school exclusions and exclusions from eligibility to welfare benefits, risks which combine to threaten potentially 'dangerous futures' ('dangerous' that is, for the young people concerned if not for society more generally). These are issues which urgently need to be addressed, it has been argued, if the Youth Service is to survive (France and Wiles, 1997).

This article starts from Williamson's position - that the key question is not *whether* but *how* youth and community workers need to relate to workplace issues and dilemmas. To what extent are they working to socialise young people within the framework of dominant workplace norms and values or alternatively to empower young people to challenge these, in situations in which they are exploited and oppressed? There are choices here, just as there have been choices in the past. As Jeffs and Smith have argued, there is a long radical tradition in youth and community work as well as a more controlling tradition, and whilst youth workers have to work within the context of current constraints, swimming 'in a sea of capitalism' they 'need not be consumed by it'. (Jeffs and Smith, 1990. 226.)

Young people face increasing problems as they approach the world of work. Paradoxically, this is precisely the context in which the trade unions, which have organised around the protection of workers' pay and conditions, including young workers' pay and conditions in the past, have been experiencing increasing difficulties themselves as a result of industrial restructuring. Organised jobs have been disappearing and casualised work has become more prevalent, and especially so for young workers. These more fragmented work settings have been correspondingly problematic for the trade unions to reach at all, let alone to organise effectively. This makes it all the more relevant for youth and community workers to consider the roles which they might constructively play, in this context working in partnership with trade unions, to explore new ways of reaching young people through their communities as well as through their workplaces.

This article summarises the findings of a research project, carried out in South-East London in collaboration with the Trades Union Congress 'New Unionism' project, to explore the potential for developing strategies to achieve this objective. From this study, it emerged that there were potentially important ways in which youth and community workers could contribute, developing community-based strategies to complement workplace strategies and training based strategies. But the study also raised questions about the need for change, if trade unions are to be, and to be seen to be effective, both by the young people themselves and by those who

work with them in community settings. As the article concludes, this suggests that youth and community workers' role here needs to involve the promotion of dialogue between trade unions and young people, rather than simply the transmission of information, one-way, (downwards), to young people. This would also be consistent with an empowering approach to youth and community work.

The Current Context for Young People Approaching the World of Work

Fewer young people between the ages of 16 and 24 were in employment in the mid nineties, partly for demographic reasons, partly because more young people were in education and training (although Britain still lags behind European competitors in terms of participation in education and training) and partly because there were fewer jobs available for them as a result of long term structural changes in the economy (Coleman, 1997). Young males have been particularly affected by the loss of jobs in manufacturing. Young black and ethnic minority males have been disproportionately seriously affected by unemployment. And those young people who do find work, have been increasingly likely to be employed in the service sector, working part time, and/or 'flexibly' (Hickman, 1997).

The fragmentation of labour market experience, which White and McRae (1989) identified in their study of young people suffering from long term unemployment in the eighties, has become an increasing feature of employment for young people more generally. The problems associated with flexible working include low-pay in insecure employment, typically without access to some of the benefits associated with more secure employment, such as career training, sickness and holiday pay and occupational pensions. Flexible working conditions have increasingly been applied to new entrants to professional as well as manual occupations, as casualisation has spread (with 43% of academic staff on temporary rather than permanent contracts, for example).

The Government's New Deal for young people offers those who have been unemployed, for six months or more, five options - for employment, education or training, voluntary sector work, work on an environmental project, or self-employment for a six or twelve month period. However welcome such opportunities may be for some of the young people concerned, New Deal does not extend beyond offering work experience and training in the short term. At the end of the six or twelve months, young people still face the problems associated with a more fragmented labour market. Although the introduction of the minimum wage represents an attempt to tackle the problem of low pay, even this will be of reduced benefit, because of the lower rate proposed for young people. It has been suggested, in response to questions about the adequacy of government responses to youth unemployment via training and work experience type projects more generally, that

a cynic might reply that 'young people's typical experience of unemployment and sub-employment do provide an adequate preparation for the flexible and insecure jobs which are all that the labour market is likely to provide in the late 1990s and beyond' (Brown, 1996/7. 37) - a scenario which the author himself refused to find acceptable for the future for young people.

Trade Union Responses- the New Unionism

Faced with declining membership from the end of the seventies, the TUC has been increasingly concerned with the problem of recruitment. Young people entering the labour market have been traditionally a key source of new recruits, but young people were proving particularly hard to organise.

In 1996 the TUC commissioned a research study to explore the reasons for this situation. Over a thousand 16-24 year olds were interviewed. The report 'Testament of Youth' summarises the findings of this MORI survey, together with the results of an NOP survey. (Trades Union Congress, 1996). As other studies have also demonstrated, despite the difficulties of finding jobs, young people emerged as being strongly committed to entering the world of work. In fact 'they care passionately about doing a worthwhile job' (TUC, 1996.1). Understandably, however young people expressed concern about unemployment, and a number specifically expressed concern about job insecurity. Low pay was a major problem (36% of those interviewed in the survey earned less than £100 per week at the time) along with unfair treatment, more generally. Young people wanted to be treated fairly and with respect, and they were also interested in the chance to develop new skills through training. These were all central concerns in terms of trade union agendas.

The majority of the young people who were interviewed believed that trade unions were essential to protect workers' interests and the overwhelming majority had generally favourable attitudes towards trade unions. But although they were not hostile, the vast majority of young people (86%) did feel ill-informed about trade unions.

Clearly, this represented a major challenge for the trade union movement - to go out and inform young people, as the first step towards organising them. This was the background for the launch of the New Unionism initiative. With echoes of the 'new unionism' which spread amongst previously unorganised workers in the late nineteenth century the New Unionism has drawn upon a range of experiences to reach and to recruit the hard to organise, especially young people in 'flexible' employment situations. Young organisers have been recruited and trained in the Trade Union Academy, which was established in 1997, to go out and do this

work, on the principle that 'like' can be effective in recruiting 'like'. More recently, the Government's 'Fairness at Work' proposals should promote a climate which is more favourable to workplace organisation. Although this shift has been welcomed, the New Unionism initiative continues to be based upon the premise that at the end of the day it is actually down to the trade union movement to do the organising work itself.

Whilst much stood to be achieved by approaching young people via the workplace, this would still leave a number of problems to be addressed. How were those who were not in the workplace to be reached? What about those who were only intermittently in and out of the workplace, not to mention those who were in workplaces where no trade union organiser would ever be allowed across the threshold? This was where the potential for reaching and informing young people, via the community, emerged as an aspect which also needed to be explored. As the findings of the South East London study illustrate, there is considerable potential for reaching and informing young people about trade unions, via community-based contacts, as well as via workplace and training-based contacts. There are potentially important roles for youth and community workers here. However, as the study also illustrates, this all needs to be set within the framework of wider and longer term strategies for change, if joining and becoming active in trade unions is to be visibly effective for young people facing the problems associated with an increasingly fragmented world of work.

Reaching Young People through the Community: The South East London Study

The South East London project, 'New Unionism: Mobilising Local and Community Based Resources', set out to explore community-based ways of communicating with young people about workplace issues and the role of trade unions, and to test these findings with focus groups of young workers and young people approaching the world of work themselves. North Lewisham, the area which was selected for the study, had experienced major economic and employment restructuring in the recent past, with the loss of traditional manufacturing and dock-related employment, and the development of new patterns of employment (with a number of regeneration initiatives close to the Millennium site). Unsurprisingly, given these structural changes, there were also major problems of youth unemployment (Lewisham had an unemployment rate of nearly 12%, when the project was being planned in 1997, and 23% of the unemployed were between 16 and 24 years old.) Young black people were particularly vulnerable to unemployment.

Whilst the area had so many of the problems which young people were encountering when they faced the world of work, there were also major strengths to build upon. These included a wide range of organisations and agencies with potential interest

in and commitment to working with the trade union movement to reach young workers and young people approaching the world of work. These organisations included local colleges and training agencies, and a range of public sector, voluntary sector and community based organisations and agencies, including a range of black and ethnic minority organisations.

Thirty five of the organisations and agencies which were identified as being in contact with young people were interviewed. These interviews covered both statutory and voluntary/community sectors, including:

- *local colleges and training organisations (including TEC)*
- *the local borough council*
- *information and advice agencies*
- *youth recreation and sports clubs*
- *community centres and*
- *faith-based organisations.*

Three employer organisations (employers of young trainees and workers) were also contacted to compare and contrast their perspectives. Together, this relatively small number of organisations and agencies were in contact with thousands of young people at work and/or approaching the world of work. Even taking account of double counting (those who had been in contact with more than one agency/organisation) the number of young people who were potentially contactable through these other organisations and agencies was still significant.

Interviewing the thirty five organisations and agencies was, itself, part of the process of making contacts and developing potential partnerships. For example, one of the colleges expressed active support, agreeing in principle to circulate relevant materials to students, and facilitating focus group discussions with young trainee workers who were attending the college as students. Thus, on the basis of these first contacts, through a relatively limited number of interviews, significant numbers of young people were already being reached, although at varying levels of intensity.

The views of young people themselves were explored via four focus group discussions. Two of these focus groups were with young workers studying at a local college, a group of young men, trainee construction workers on painting and decorating, carpentry and joinery courses, and a group of young women, trainee care workers on access to nursing and nursery nursing courses. In addition, there were focus groups with a group of young black people, and with a group of young women,

organised via community-based contacts with youth and community workers. These young people included both employees/trainees as well as a number of young people who were more distanced from the world of work.

The focus groups were facilitated by experienced youth workers who organised them to be active - interactive and enjoyable sessions. These sessions included the use of TUC materials, including a video, to promote discussion. Once again, this was an important aspect of the process, promoting an active dialogue between the facilitators and the young people concerned. The young people were asked to evaluate these focus group sessions afterwards, and their responses were very positive. They had found them both enjoyable and informative.

Which were the key agencies?

In terms of numbers, the colleges and training agencies were the key organisations. Between them they had over twenty thousand students, including significant numbers of young women and men from local communities. In addition, the colleges and training agencies were training a number of community professionals who would be working with young people once they qualified (as teachers, youth and community workers and care workers). The colleges' contacts with young people tended to be sustained over a considerable time period too.

The Careers Service and other information and advice agencies were also in contact with large numbers (some 1,500 young people were in contact with the Careers Service every month), but typically this contact tended to be less intensive. In the case of the Careers Service, for example, contact might be limited to a one-off interview per young person. Information and advice services similarly tended to have limited contact with young people. Whilst there might be key opportunities for passing on information and advice through these contacts, there might be less scope for developing longer term work, and considerably less scope for promoting dialogue.

Although the numbers of young people who were identified as being in contact with youth and community workers and leisure and sports workers were relatively more restricted (although still significant) in contrast these contacts tended to be more intensive. Overall some two thousand young people were in contact with youth and community work projects and leisure and sports organisations in the area (including activities associated with a local football club). In addition, a further hundred or so young people were in contact with faith-based organisations (churches and mosques). Typically, these contacts were relatively regular and sustained over time. A youth project might be in contact with no more than between twenty to fifty young people at the lowest end of the numbers spectrum, but this contact may be maintained regularly, and relatively intensively, over a number of years.

As it will be suggested below, there are key implications here. Information and advice agencies may be in a position to pass on specific information about trade unions and the world of work to large numbers of young people, on a once-off basis. Youth and community workers, in contrast but in a complementary way, may have far more potential for building trade union awareness amongst young people, over a longer time-period. And youth and community workers may be far more appropriately placed to develop constructive dialogues between young people and the trade union movement.

Young Peoples' Issues in relation to the World of Work

The research identified widespread agreement about the key issues which young people were facing. There was almost unanimous agreement that young people lacked training and employment opportunities. Taken together with the findings of the report 'Young People and Employment' (Trades Union Congress, 1996) powerful patterns emerged. Young people expressed concern about precisely the type of issues which trade unions address in the workplace, and in their wider campaigning. The issues which were raised most frequently were as follows:

- *Lack of inadequate education/lack of qualifications/lack of skills;*
- *Lack of jobs and training opportunities;*
- *Low pay/poor quality/insecurity of the jobs which are available;*
- *Discrimination (including racial discrimination, discrimination against young gays and lesbians, discrimination against young people with a criminal record, young people leaving care and people with disabilities);*
- *Lack of affordable childcare; and*
- *(Lack of) rights at work more generally.*

Other problems which were raised as issues affecting young people's entrance to the world of work, included low self confidence, low levels of literacy and/or numeracy, low expectations of how young people should be treated at work and low expectations about the chances of finding employment in the first place. In addition there were references to family problems including poverty and the benefit trap. Finally there were references to the lack of general advice and support available, including a lack of trade union support, when young people did raise problems at work.

Competing Explanations.

Whilst there was widespread agreement about what the key problems were, there were significantly different emphases about the nature and causes of these problems. There has been a history of competing perspectives about these issues, just as there

have been competing perspectives on youth and youth work more generally. Broadly, the three employers tended to focus upon young peoples' own inadequacies - their lack of education and skills, and their lack of preparation and/or motivation for the world of work. In contrast, the young people themselves and those who worked most closely with them (including the colleges as well as the voluntary and community based agencies) tended to focus more upon the underlying structural factors - including the poor quality of so many of the jobs which were on offer. Comments from the interviews provide some illustrations.

For example, one employer commented upon young people's lack of routine, starting with 'not being able to get up in the morning'. They lacked initiative and they were rebellious (about wearing uniforms, for instance). Another employer similarly commented on young peoples' lack of experience in presenting themselves, and their general lack of ambition. Other comments about young people's attitudes referred to their 'inappropriate expectations' and their questioning when expected to do menial tasks such as making tea or clearing up.

Advice agencies and community and youth work agencies working with young people, on the other hand, referred to problems such as:

- *unfair dismissal*
- *problems over redundancy*
- *low pay*
- *inadequate health and safety provision/industrial injuries*
- *lack of rights to holiday pay and maternity leave*
- *young people's more general lack of knowledge about rights at work.*

One of the community projects also referred to the problems arising from the lack of political and trade union culture in the area (which affected young peoples' knowledge of and ability to take up their rights at work).

The young people themselves had some strong criticisms to make. Here too, there are powerful parallels with the findings of the TUC report on 'Young People and Employment' (Trades Union Congress, 1996). Young people were concerned about low pay, lack of security, lack of effective training and poor treatment by management. One commented, for example, that although he had valued the Job Club as a way of improving his chances of finding work and/or training, when he did find training this had been problematic. He reflected that 'some of these training schemes are a joke ... all he (the employer) did was used me to do all the dirty

work. Fill the skips or whatever. It was like that for a year'. The way in which this young man had actually learned anything was 'by watching and I don't think that's the best way', he concluded.

'Some employers,' these young people commented 'take advantage of young people' on training schemes. 'Young people on training schemes get a raw deal.' One of the young black women went on to provide an illustration of the ways in which these problems had been compounded, in her experience, through racism. 'The boss didn't like the idea of certain black people there' especially black people who 'don't take no stick' - she commented, 'so he sacked me'. Although this young woman had taken up her case for wrongful dismissal via the Citizens Advice bureau, she lost the case.

The young women also gave examples of some of the problems which they had faced, as a result of discrimination - in their case because of their gender. This was in addition to the problems which they were already facing due to the lack of affordable child care and the difficulties of combining work and study with their domestic responsibilities. 'When I had a baby' commented one young woman, 'they pushed me out' as a result of problems arising over childcare issues.

'Women with children are discriminated against in almost every field of work' commented another, giving an example of her own experience going for a job interview and being asked 'Are you planning any more children?' 'When you are in your child bearing years' she concluded 'they don't want to employ you in case you have a baby, and then later they won't employ you because you are too old.'

The young people in the focus group discussions also provided illustrations of problems associated with health and safety at work. For example, one young woman, working in a hairdressers, complained that staff had suffered skin complaints from the chemicals they used. No protective gloves were provided - workers had to provide their own. There were no proper meal breaks either, and the staff room was cramped and dirty, with infestations of mice and rats, so that staff preferred not to eat in there, in the brief breaks which they did have. In the focus group discussion, none of the young women knew how to take such problems up, apart from complaining directly to management. They lacked basic information about their rights (such as these rights were) and they were unaware of potential sources of support, including support via the trade union movement.

What could trade unions be doing to address young peoples' issues?

Clearly young people did feel in need of information and advice. And trade unionists already have a wealth of experience to build on, in providing this information and advice via schools, colleges and training agencies. The young people themselves

were in agreement about the potential scope for this, expressing considerable interest in finding out more about trade unions as a potential source of advice and support in relation to workplace issues.

From the interviews and focus groups a number of specific suggestions emerged, including suggestions for involving students unions in organising information and advice sessions about rights at work and the role of trade unions. Information and advice agencies were identified as key contact points too. The Careers Service emerged as being important here, because of the number of young people seen, and so did the range of other agencies which were being used by young people themselves, by their families and by those who work with young people, such as teachers and youth workers. This category included leisure centres, as well as information and advice agencies and community based resource centres.

In addition, the research identified suggestions for the provision of advice in other ways (eg. via telephone help lines). The young people themselves suggested this latter possibility, to meet the need for advice in tackling grievances and getting a fair deal at work, anonymously if necessary. The suggestion of a telephone helpline was seen as a good idea, although as a first way into advice and support, rather than as a substitute for talking problems through with someone knowledgeable and supportive, face to face.

The research also identified a potential role for trade unions in providing training for advice workers, in relation to employment issues. This could be part of a wider programme to provide back-up to those who work with young people, including both training and briefing materials. One specific suggestion was that the TUC and the relevant trade unions could provide briefing packs for youth and community workers and advice workers, building upon the model already provided by the TUC's schools' pack.

The research also clearly identified the fact that the problem is not simply one of providing young people with information and advice about their rights at work and the role of the trade union movement in securing these rights. Young people also needed to be convinced about the value of trade unions. Trade unions need to be - and need to be seen by young people to be - effective in terms of taking up their problems at work. And this, in turn, requires that trade unions listen to and engage in genuine dialogue with young people. This emerged as vitally important both for the successful recruitment of young members, and for the retention of these new members once they have been recruited, in the future.

The research provided considerable evidence to support these conclusions. Nearly half of those interviewed considered that if the trade unions are to be successful in

recruiting young workers, then they need to be visibly active organising and campaigning bodies. One of the training-related agencies, for example, commented that trade unions need to be promoting political education, 'creating a new political culture', more favourable to trade unionism. The following represents a sample of these comments.

Trade unions should be more actively 'campaigning for a decent minimum wage and child care' ... commented one project worker. 'They need to get in touch with people on the estate' commented another worker, who was working with young people, including young black people who were relatively distanced from the world of work. 'To most people, the TUC is no different to government, business, the council (ie. large and unresponsive organisations from which they feel alienated). They need to build up from the grass roots through long term work.'

Trade unions need to become more accessible through increased involvement and support in local community issues and campaigns. 'Trade unions mustn't break down' this commentator continued 'because they are too important' Trade unions 'have to focus on real debates that matter to young people. The TUC can be an educational institute for the community but they need to look for more long term outcomes not just thinking about short term members.'

It was suggested that if trade unions want to build their links in the community, they need to focus upon their connections with workers in the voluntary sector, for example information and advice workers, housing workers and youth and community workers. This was important for the voluntary sector workers concerned (typically trade union members, in any case) and because this was a way of 'forging links with the community.'

There was a suggestion that the trade unions could actually sponsor outreach youth and community work with young people as a way of getting actively involved with young people at the grass roots around the issues of most concern to them. As one of the focus group discussions concluded; 'Trade unions need to prove what they can do for young people, not just talk about it. Then people will know where they can get help and join up.' As another respondent reflected; 'Trade unions must examine their purpose and get back to really helping their members. They need to take more risks and not be scared of upsetting the bosses.' Trade unions need to get rid of jargon and become more accessible by employing younger people. Trade unions should keep focusing on the basics, it was argued, sending 'young people from the TUC into work places and talk(ing) about issues like pay and hours of work.' These latter comments, of course provided strong endorsement of the New Unionism's approach to training young organisers via the Trade Union Academy.

New Unionism's particular challenges for Youth and Community Workers

Youth and community workers have potentially key roles as adults who are trusted by young people, as they approach and attempt to engage with an increasingly problematic world of work. Colleges and training agencies could provide information about rights at work and the role of trade unions to greater numbers. Youth and community workers could also reach significant numbers of young people to provide them with information and advice in the short term. In the longer term youth and community workers could contribute to the task of developing strategies for change, building active organising cultures within localities, working with younger age groups and with young people who are relatively distanced from the world of work, as well as with those who are already in or around the margins of paid employment. There are key opportunities here for youth and community workers and for the trade unions which represent them, working in partnership with local and regional trade union structures.

As South London research project has also demonstrated, youth and community workers have the potential for promoting processes of dialogue between young people and the trade unions which seek to represent them. As it has already been suggested, youth and community workers have long contested the view that their task is simply to socialise young people into the dominant norms, values and structures of society. If young people are to participate in empowering ways, to challenge and change the situations in which they are exploited and oppressed, they also need to be listened to with respect - which is a key theme of the 'New Unionism'.

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PLAYING ITS PART IN 'JOINED-UP' SOLUTIONS:

Youth work on social housing estates.

BOB COLES, JUDE ENGLAND AND JULIE RUGG

In the flurry of debate which took place following the 1997 general election, much was made of the importance of youth work engaging in multi-agency working, 'partnerships' with others and of targeting provision towards those in greatest need (France and Wiles, 1997; Holmes, 1997; Wylie, 1997). These too have become the themes of successive reports by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) set up by the New Labour Government (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Significantly, youth-related issues have figured strongly amongst its priorities in the first two years of its existence. Even where the topic of investigation was far reaching in scope, as with the third of its investigations into neighbourhood renewal, youth work issues remained clearly in its sights. It is perhaps significant that, following the report *Bringing Britain Together*, amongst the 18 Policy Action Teams which it set up, the one which is examining youth issues is being led by the Social Exclusion Unit itself rather than the Department for Employment and Education (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998c). It is also significant that another theme of SEU reports is to stress the importance of solutions to problems which can be shown to work and be clearly supported by *evidence* of success. Increasingly, government seems determined to invest only in 'evidence based solutions' rather than simply throwing money at popular causes. In the case of youth work, however, the SEU report is highly critical of poorly defined partnerships, the patchy nature of provision and the lack of systematic studies of success or failure. It comments:

No institution is clearly in the lead; co-ordination may be poor; quality and coverage of services varies enormously from place to place; and much of what is tried is not based on evidence of what actually works.'
(Social Exclusion Unit, 1998c, p71).

What is less clear is whether those involved in youth work are either willing or able to meet the opportunities and challenges the government is laying before them.

This paper is based upon research, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which explored youth work on 10 social housing estates across England, Scotland and Wales. The focus of the study was on work being undertaken with 10-16 year olds and it should be recognised at the outset that this age restriction effectively leaves out a range of important issues covered in youth work eg. concerning youth transitions, unemployment, homelessness. The focus of the study was upon multi-agency co-operation and partnership. In selecting the estates for inclusion in the study we sought a mixture of different kinds of estates (inner city and peripheral,

different kinds of housing stock, and variation in ethnic composition). In addition, we wished to include estates on which different kinds of youth projects were operating. Some were targeted at specific 'youth problems'; youth crime, educational disaffection and exclusions from school, for instance. Others were more generic in offering a range of different activities for young people, although some of these were clearly based on 'developmental' youth work agendas (National Youth Agency, 1995; Wylie, 1997). Some were funded, at least in part, by national initiatives such as the 'Youth Action Scheme' (France and Wiles, 1996; France and Wiles, 1997) whilst others were largely funded by the voluntary sector, including Housing Associations. It was not the intention of the project to produce general statistical findings about all youth work on estates but to explore a range of different patterns of engagement in multi-agency working and the advantages and difficulties of these approaches.

The research involved the use of three main data sources. Firstly, we used two large data sets to see what these could tell us about the economic and social circumstances of 10-16 year olds living on social housing estates and about their needs and aspirations. The first of these was the *Survey of English Housing* (SEH) which collects data from 20,000 households annually. The second was the *British Household Panel Survey* (BHPS) which, as well as collecting data from all adults in a household, collects data from around 2,000 10-15 year olds through questions and answers delivered via a small 'walkman' recorder, which respondents keep as a reward for participation. Both these sources enabled us to compare the circumstances of young people living in social housing with those in other forms of tenure. The second main source of data was over 80 in-depth interviews with a range of professional workers working on the 10 selected estates. Respondents included youth workers, housing officers, the police, representatives of residents, health workers and others engaged in partnerships with the youth projects. Thirdly, and following the analysis of the first two sources of data, we brought a range of professional workers from 8 of the 10 estates together in a 'focus group' to discuss our preliminary findings and to debate issues surrounding their involvement in youth-related, multi-agency working. In this article we draw from these three sources firstly to describe the facts and fictions about young people living in social housing. Secondly we describe the range of different approaches to youth work and the advantages and limitations of these. Finally, we focus attention on multi-agency working and the challenge to youth workers of having their work integrated into more holistic approaches and within a funding culture which demands 'evidence-based' solutions to 'joined-up problems'.

Facts and fictions; 'joined-up' problems and 'moral panics'

There is now a large body of evidence about the income gap between the rich and poor and the huge differences between the economic and social circumstances of young people living in social housing and those living in owner occupied properties (Hills, 1996; Hills, 1998; Lee et al., 1995; Power and Tunstall, 1995; Power and Tunstall, 1997). Firstly, average incomes for social housing tenants are around £126 per week, less than half the income of people in owner occupation - a gap that has been growing over the past 10 years. At least part of this is based on the employment experiences of adults. Our analysis of the *Survey of English Housing 1995-6*, indicates that the vast majority (84%) of young people living in owner occupation have a head of household in full-time work. In contrast, more than half (54%) of 10-15 year olds living in social housing are in households where there is no adult in employment. For these young people, unemployment amongst adults has become the norm, and even where a parent has a job, this is likely to be part-time, insecure and poorly paid (Coles et al., 1998). A second major factor relates to household compositions. Young people living in social housing are far more likely to live in lone parent families; 36% of them do so compared with fewer than 10% living in owner occupied properties. This is not to castigate all one parent families but merely to recognise that many are poor and surrounded by difficult living circumstances (Bradshaw and Millar, 1991). Furthermore, the parent(s) of young people in social housing are much more likely to have benefits as their sole source of income. Young people living in social housing are also more likely to be members of large families, 8% live in families with three or more children compared to 1% of young people whose parent(s) own their own home.

Thirdly, those living in social housing are far more likely to be dissatisfied with the areas in which they live expressing major grumbles about levels of crime, vandalism, graffiti and the anti-social behaviour of neighbours and poor patterns of leisure provision. Interestingly, BHPS data show no tenure differences in terms of dissatisfaction with local schools but other evidence does point to stark differences in terms of truancy, school exclusions, qualifications gained at 16, and post-16 participation in education or training (Pearce and Hillman, 1998; SEU, 1998a and c). The fourth significant feature of social housing areas, therefore, is that they are clearly areas in which various forms of educational disadvantage and disaffection is widespread. Our analysis of the *Survey of English Housing*, for instance, shows that only 6% of girls and 14% of boys living in owner occupied properties expect to leave school at the age of 16. In social housing a third of boys and a quarter of girls expect to leave education at the age of 16 (Coles et al., 1998). There is also an increasing worry about young sixteen and seventeen year olds who are not in any form of employment, training or education, nationally estimated to be around 180,000 (or

10% of the age group) (Convery, 1997). This group, sometimes known as 'status zero' (Williamson, 1997), is being targeted by an inquiry by the SEU in 1999. Analysis of the more recent 1996-7 *SEH* suggests that, again, this spatially clusters in social housing where around a quarter of the age group are not in any form of education, training or employment. In social housing estates, this group is twice as likely to involve boys rather than girls, and they are more than fifteen times more likely to live in lone parent families (Coles et al. 1999).

Analysis of the BHPS also helps highlight severe problems being faced by girls rather than boys. More than one in five (21%) girls living in social housing worried a lot about bullying at school, more than twice the proportion of those living in owner occupied properties and boys living in any tenure type. This survey also asked a series of questions about self-esteem; whether young people felt 'useless', 'no good', 'likeable' or whether they thought they had 'good qualities'. Using all these measures together we divided up the whole sample into 'quartiles', with those who had lowest self-esteem and feelings of self-worth in the bottom 'quartile'. Within this group, girls outnumbered boys by more than two to one and nearly half of all 10-16 year old girls living in social housing were to be found in this lowest 'quartile'.

These precise statistics of disadvantage were not known to many of the professional workers we interviewed on the estates. They were, however, very aware that young people on the estates were seen by residents as, at least part of, 'the problem' of estates. What they and residents were most concerned about was young people 'hanging around'. Statistically, young people are a larger minority of the 'residents' on social housing estates; 28% of all residents in social housing are under 16. To many of our interviewees 'residents' were simply 'tenants' thus ignoring the fact that young people were also 'residents', albeit with residents with distinctive needs. Rather young people were often defined as an uncontrolled nuisance and a danger to the community. 'Hanging around' was often seen to be associated with vandalism, crime and widespread drug abuse. We were told stories on most of the estates about how it was the drug capital of whatever region in which it was located. Yet analysis of the BHPS suggests that smoking, drinking alcohol, drug use, or even knowing friends who use drugs are no more likely on social housing estates than anywhere else. Perhaps such behaviours are more visible and more noticed because they are more expected. To be sure, there is clear evidence of crime and vandalism including arson to be found on social housing estates. One estate had experienced a series of arson attacks which was eventually traced to a single, highly disturbed individual. Yet at the time of the fires, one worker confessed to seeing 'anyone in a shell suit' as a potential arsonist. This is just one example of

where the activities of a small minority can be used to stigmatise the majority. On all the estates we studied the police and housing officers reported that they were often called upon to act to prevent young people 'hanging around', even though there was no evidence that they were guilty of any offence. Following the *Crime and Disorder Act, 1998*, encouragement is being given to the police to operate curfews to clear young people from the streets. Interviewees told us of estates where expensive attempts had been made to make areas in which young people congregated 'unavailable' by fencing off open spaces or stairwells where they gathered. Yet one development worker commented: *'If you are hell-bent on some kind of ethnic cleansing...then you're just going to shoot yourself in the foot'*. As we have argued already, young people are a large minority of all residents on estates, are likely also to be future tenants and cannot simply be expected to disappear. Punitive policing is hardly a good preparation for trying to involve them later in constructive partnership for neighbourhood renewal.

In the past, particularly in working class communities, children were expected to find their entertainment in each other's company, playing games in the street. Unfortunately, this sort of behaviour has increasingly become criminalised. For many young people hanging around is not only a default activity, only resorted to when other options are not accessible: it can be a pleasurable activity in itself. As one detached youth work concluded:

One of the beauties of being a young person on the streets is the freedom from adult interference. It is their 'space' and is, for some, an escape from stressful families.

This review of different data sources points to young people in social housing living in circumstances of multiple deprivation; poverty, unemployment, families under stress, disaffection with education and low achievement, neighbourhoods in which rates of crime and vandalism are high and hopes and ambitions low. Within such communities young people are often seen as part of the 'problem' of estates. Yet, although many young people do 'hang about', this is often because they want to; there is little constructive for them to do or little that they can afford to do. Often treated as a nuisance by others in the community, some may well be driven to externalize their resentment in anti-social behaviour or, especially in the case of girls, internalize it in terms of low self esteem and feelings of self worth. Yet spatially concentrated patterns of disadvantage can also provide opportunities for spatially concentrated attempts to reverse that disadvantage through youth work. We turn next to different approaches to youth work on the ten estates covered by the research.

Part of the 'joined-up' solutions: youth projects on the estates

In selecting the ten case study estates we were conscious of the fact that there was a huge range of different projects differing significantly in the levels of funding they commanded, the types of sponsorship and management which supported them, the aims and objectives they had, and the degree to which they were co-ordinated with other activities on the estates. Some projects covered by the research were overtly focussed on specific 'youth problems' such as educational disaffection (truancy, school exclusions and under achievement) or youth crime. Reducing educational disaffection or crime was part and parcel of their aims and objectives. Other projects were more obviously concerned with creating opportunities for personal development, play and constructive leisure activities, especially during school holidays. Yet, whilst some youth project workers argued for the value of such activities in their own right, there was also a recognition that an important by-product was a reduction in disaffection and crime. Youth workers, housing managers and the police all recognised that to provide no organised activities for young people during the summer especially, was a recipe for an outbreak of vandalism and crime together with associated social nuisance to other residents and an increase in the level of complaints with which they had to deal. In an era in which the funding of statutory youth work has become precarious, professionals in all sectors had to be innovatory and imaginative in packaging what they wanted to do in the rhetoric required by a range of funding opportunities.

Many projects also had, within their initial aims, the task of getting young people themselves involved in the identification of their own needs. The aim of such consultation was to encourage young people to feel ownership of their own project and this was often seen by youth workers as an essential aspect in designing effective youth provision. Additionally, on many of the case study estates the process of consultation in itself was considered an important developmental activity and thought to be associated with high levels of usage and minimal vandalism, at least in the short to medium term. Continued use of a facility over a longer term was also thought to depend on an ongoing process of consultation with potential new users who were replacing their older peers.

This research is based on initiatives that contained differing degrees of emphasis on interlinked elements of youth work which are discussed here under three main headings; centre-based work, developmental work and detached youth work (Coles et al., 1998). Within some projects, these elements were linked through what we have called an overall 'youth strategy'. Our summary of the different youth projects begins with a description of what is meant by this and the advantages and limitations of such approaches.

Overall Youth Strategies

Three of the case study estates were included in the study because youth work had taken place as part of what might be termed an overarching 'youth strategy'. Ostensibly the strategies were not directly comparable but all had the same aim of addressing, in an holistic way, the needs of all children and young people on an estate, by using some combination of different elements of youth work. The strategies generally acknowledged that even within the 10-16 year old group covered by this research, different needs are evident at different ages. As a consequence, the strategies encompassed development of, and the securing of funding for, a range of different types of activities for specific groups. The approaches tended to be multiple-agency, with the strategy co-ordinator (from a different type of organisation in each case) drawing in professionals from the local authority, the community and from voluntary sector agencies. A strategic approach to youth work carried advantages and disadvantages. The first advantage appeared to be the flexibility of the funding arrangements. Expenditure on the three strategies varied considerably: for example, on one estate the Youth Strategy entailed revenue funding for a community development worker for over a year. On another, the leadership role was, in effect, a sideline task of the Community Safety Officer. On a third, the Children and Young People's Project had expanded throughout the 1990s to cover a wider age range but it had always involved at least three full-time workers and a number of others employed on a part-time basis. Some of the workers had been brought up on the estate and progressed from 'client' to part-time to full-time worker. The number of workers employed on this project was, however, unusually high. Ensuring that youth work is undertaken 'strategically' on a given estate can sometimes be as simple as ensuring that one worker or one agency has responsibility for regularly pulling together interested parties to discuss the development of provision and act as a focus point for funding bids. A second advantage of a more strategic approach to youth work is that it can acknowledge and deal with the need to cater for everyone within the age group simultaneously. Working with one group only can often create jealousies. For example, one development worker commented:

If you start providing one sort of play facility which is for the younger end, the older end will come and vandalise it. It's trying to get the right mix because there's a wide range of ages on the estate.

In addition, children and young people can move from one stage of provision to another as they get older. A third advantage to a more strategic way of working is that once funding is attracted, other funding seems easier to obtain. Two of the projects indicated that finance for specific tasks within their strategy was very easy to come by, since funders could be shown that the work would not be conducted

in isolation, but had a greater chance of having an impact by being included as part of a wider, more comprehensive, spread of services. There was one main disadvantage to strategic working. Where youth projects are only a small part of an overall 'estate strategy', this runs the risk of the youth work component being hijacked by other agencies with wider, non-youth agendas. In these circumstances, youth work agencies may become marginalised, lose interest or lose funding.

Centre-based projects

The research included some youth work that was largely focussed on centre-based projects such as a youth club or a 'kick-about' facility. In the cases we studied, detached youth workers were also used to involve children and young people in consultation on the early stages of the project, and the youth club continued to use detached workers to encourage use. These projects initially required major capital outlay, which in one case came from an Estate Action landscape budget, and in another from funds acquired through an Estate Security Initiative. The projects operated in contrasting ways, and had a varied degree of success. Perhaps the principal advantage of centre based work is the existence of space on the estate that children and young people can legitimately consider to be 'theirs' either all or part of the time. Drawing groups of young people to a centre might offset complaints that these groups would otherwise create nuisance elsewhere on the estate. A centre can in addition prove to be a physical arena for continued consultation with children and young people, and a base from which outside agencies can engage with this group.

There were some disadvantages to centre-based work. This sort of work requires considerable capital outlay, unless a suitable building is already available on the estate. Potential conflict between bids for capital and revenue funding could also become an issue. A project based around an all-weather pitch in particular illustrates the difficulty of raising sufficient revenue funding to ensure the maximum use of the capital investment in that the high level of expenditure itself proved to be inhibiting. The pitch was considered simply too expensive to risk leaving open for children and young people to use unsupervised. Many of the estates had youth facilities that had only limited opening hours because there was no funding for staff. Other disadvantages related to who used the facility. Many youth workers commented that centre-based activity often attracts the heavy involvement of a clique of children and young people, which then excludes others from being involved. This tendency is underlined by the sense of 'territoriality' that exists on many estates. For example, a community centre on one estate was effectively closed to many children and young people in its area, because the estate was split by a road which acted as a mental boundary. This further emphasizes the importance of detached youth work as a way of drawing otherwise excluded groups into using the facility.

Perhaps one last comment needs to be made about centre-based youth work. Encouragement has been given to schools to expand their relationships with the local community as part of 'School-Plus' initiatives (Ball, 1998; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998c). However, it is possible to argue that children and young people with a history of truanting and disaffection from education will be unlikely to want to use school facilities in the evenings or at weekends (Davies, 1986). The value of such approaches was not possible to judge in the context of this research, since none of the centre-based activities that were the focus of attention on the estates selected were located in schools. However, one case did highlight other problems. One estate had obtained significant external funds to up-grade old, and build new, facilities at a local primary school. However, it was also recognised that sometimes areas around such facilities can become the cause of complaints about large numbers of young people gathering there at night and the school could be subjected to vandalism and graffiti. Responsibility for dealing with this issue had not been clearly established at the time of the fieldwork, but issues of responsibility (including financial responsibility) were still proving to be problematic.

Developmental and Detached Youth Work

Many of the projects had principally 'developmental' aims (Coles et al., 1998; Wylie, 1997). Some were centre-based but many also involved detached youth workers. One senior youth officer worker argued that detached youth work should be regarded as 'the roots' of the youth work 'tree', with the 'trunk' the programme of youth work with 'branches' of different types of activities for different groups. The work of developmental youth projects ranged along a continuum from targeting specific groups of young people who were identified as, in some way, vulnerable or at risk. For instance, one project dealt specifically with individuals referred from the local education authority who had a history of disaffection and school exclusion. At the other extreme, other projects aimed to cover as many children and young people on the estate as possible. Successful work can target particular groups, and in dealing with the cause of problems, (poor self-confidence, limited expectations and low self esteem) seek to provide long-term solutions rather than being diversionary and short-termist. On one estate, one of our interviewees noted the creation of an 'elite' of initially problematic young people who had responded well to an intensive investment of time and resources. Because the youth workers encourage the children and young people themselves to take the initiative in deciding activities, there was also less chance that specific groups (for example, girls and young women) became marginalised. Much developmental youth work encouraged children and young people to be more respectful of the environment in which they live, and to understand that they have a stake in the way an estate looks and is managed. Overall, the success of development work was rated high amongst the examples

explored, with professionals noting a more mature attitude amongst the group being served. Such claims, however, did raise questions about whether such 'outcomes' would satisfy funding regimes demanding 'hard-nosed' statistical evidence of 'success'.

There were some reported disadvantages of targeting as hinted above. Jealousies may be created as resources and staffing are targeted on the 'bad kids', leaving the 'good kids' with restricted facilities. A youth club manager on one estate noted that, '6000 had been spent on meeting the expressed needs of a small group of very problematic teenagers' who had in her words become '*empowered to take the piss*'. At the same time, the traditional youth club on the estate had survived with only very restricted resources despite regular attendances of upwards of 40 children and young people each session. The heavy expenditure on a small group created bad feeling. Secondly, it should be recognised that developmental work is highly skilled and its is unfeasible to rely upon untrained volunteers to undertake this sort of task. Thirdly, heavily targeted development work can also be risky. It is not a speedy 'quick fix' solution to meeting the needs of children and young people. Many of the projects examined required patterns of working over several months if not years, since it took time to gain the trust of groups involved. During this time, the project may be seriously disrupted if trusted youth workers move on to other jobs, and relationships have to be built between the young people and new staff members

Multi-agency working

On the estates covered by this research there was widespread recognition of the advantages of working together in multi-agency partnerships and some commonality in what were regarded as the main advantages. There was a recognition that, whilst such approaches require agencies to be committed to treating all partners as genuine equals, there also needs to be clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and often one agency or individual recognised as responsible for setting up and servicing liaison and making certain things happened. Many recognised that multi-agency partnerships ran the risk of being only a 'talking shop'. More positively a partnership approach could help prevent damaging in-fighting for limited funding, and often the pooling of grants could mean that projects could be more ambitious in scope. Multi-agency projects could also argue that they could build more comprehensive provision and draw on a range of complementary skills. Sometimes this enhanced bids for funding. Yet, as is reported elsewhere, multi-agency working is sometimes complex and requires flexibility and tolerance on the part of the constituent agencies and workers (Coles et al., 1998; Wilson and Charlton, 1997).

Types of multi-agency working differed significantly amongst the ten estates covered by the research. Sometimes they were more characterised as informal 'networking'

between front-line workers who covered the same area rather than any grand plan for all agencies to formally sign up to an area strategy. Those who were most commonly involved in such networking included the youth service, voluntary sector agencies, community development workers, housing managers and the local police. Yet even these alliances had to be handled carefully as they could involve a clash of interests. Somewhat surprisingly to us, on the estates we studied, the police and youth workers often had a good working relationship. On the one hand, the police had increasingly recognised that they could not use youth workers as substitute policing agencies and, on one estate, had promised that they would not enter a youth club, under normal circumstances, since they did not want to compromise the position of youth workers or alienate members. On the other hand, detached youth workers were often important conduits of information between the agencies and young people themselves about perceived sources of conflict within the community. In one instance, where sets of older residents were becoming afraid of fires being lit by young people on cold winter evenings, the young people responded by arranging a 'pie and pea supper' for those they had worried, thus defusing what could have become an escalating area of conflict.

There were also some notable gaps within the networks of professional workers. On the one estate where the youth project had a specific 'educational disaffection' focus, the network of workers involved was narrow and seemed to have a specific educational focus. However, despite the fact that truancy and school exclusions were seen as some of the key problems being faced by those managing all the estates, educational welfare officers were rarely closely involved in community partnerships. Similarly, although it was recognised that many of the children and young people involved in youth projects were also experiencing a range of family-related problems, social workers were rarely involved in networking with other workers. Sometimes issues of confidentiality were thought to be barriers to sharing intelligence and co-ordinating efforts. On one estate, the Children and Young People's project was informed when new families were moved on to the estate, and when specific and sensitive care and support was needed, but this sharing of intelligence was unusual. Both educational welfare workers and social workers also seemed to have a borough-wide, 'crisis management' and 'case load' approach which did not match up well to others such as youth workers, housing officers and the police, who had specific 'zonal' responsibilities.

On some estates, multi-agency working did involve more formal meetings. Sometimes these had a specific youth work focus, but formal meetings were also more likely to take place where youth work was part of an overall community strategy for estate regeneration or community safety. Often such meetings were

deemed necessary either to prepare funding bids, to monitor progress or to manage resources. Other research has reported that involving young people themselves in such meetings is difficult (Fitzpatrick, Hastings and Kintrea, 1998). This research also found instances in which young people were not treated particularly well by community partnership meetings; they were kept waiting, subjected to practices and procedures that were not explained to them and so became bored, alienated and disruptive. Yet consultation with young people was seen as one of the essential tactics used within successful projects. Some projects had conducted surveys at the start and on one estate, the police had helped fund youth work assistants for a period of four months to help young people administer the survey (albeit that this was mainly related to crime issues). A third tactic was to use detached youth workers to discuss and negotiate with young people future patterns of provision. One danger in this, however, is that the workers need to be skilful enough not to appear to make promises they cannot keep.

There were significant differences in the levels of funding which had been achieved by the different projects on the ten estates. On several, major capital investment had been made in the building of youth centres, sports facilities or building for multi-purpose use, of which youth work was an important element. On other estates the investments made had been directed towards the recruitment of staff to carry out youth or community development work. Getting the balance right between capital and revenue funding is crucial. We have already commented on the fact that some of the investment in capital projects remained under-utilised because revenue funding was not available to secure its proper supervision. Many of the more successful projects covered by this research involved a range of provision, including the use of detached youth workers. Successful detached youth work relies upon establishing relationships of trust with young people in the community and sometimes an 'act of faith' in treating all young people with respect and trusting that young people will live up to this. Increasingly other agencies, such as the Careers Service, are being required to focus its work on groups of the most disaffected young people, often the same group with which detached youth work has been working in the past. If one of the aims of multi-agency working is to make use of complementary skills and expertise, perhaps other groups of workers might be wise to build upon the roots established by detached youth work projects rather than acting independently. Yet detached youth work is often dependent upon short-term, insecure, contracts and good workers may be tempted away by a more secure job. Despite the numerous advantages of multi-agency working, most of our respondents recognised that the difference between success and failure lay with particular individuals. One worker commented,

They've had some determined individuals that have carried the community along. I think if you don't have those individuals you're going to struggle

and another:

You need someone with personality, someone with information, someone with passion.

If and when those people moved on all forms of youth work on the estate can flounder.

Finally, many, but by no means all of the projects covered by this research, had attempted to confront the delicate issue as to how the 'success' of a project could be established. In evaluating success different professional groups obviously have their own priorities. Crime-related projects want to see a project result in reductions in recorded crime. Educational disaffection projects want to establish the numbers of young people re-integrated into education and training. Happiness for a housing manager is an estate where there is no vandalism, no 'voids' (empty houses), and no complaints from tenants. Indeed surveys of tenant satisfaction are one important means through which 'holistic solutions' to the problems on estates can be gauged. Where youth workers are involved in collecting data to evaluate their success, however, they were less likely to rely upon measures of 'output' or 'outcome'. What is more common is some sort of 'through-put' measures (i.e. statistics about numbers of attendances or the numbers being contacted in detached youth work). But this begs the question of what value has been added through attendance or contact. Some of this wariness about measuring 'outcomes' is understandable; some of the objectives of youth work are indeed very difficult to quantify and measure. Furthermore, although projects may be doing good work with some groups of young people with whom they have contact, others who are not involved, may continue to be responsible for 'negative outcomes' on the estate and, in such circumstances, it seems unfair to castigate youth work as being ineffective. Yet more 'effective targeting' and 'evidence-based solutions' are increasingly demanded as part and parcel of 'joined up solutions' and in the future youth work may have to be more open to external evaluation and responsive to demands made by funders for this if it wishes to play its part in multi-agency projects.

Conclusions

There are increasing signs from central government that it is being more proactive than governments in the past in recognising the value of a more holistic approach to youth policy issues. The work of the Social Exclusion Unit has been of crucial importance in this in arguing for more 'joined up solutions' to 'joined up problems'.

The SEU has also been instrumental in highlighting the challenge for policy makers and practitioners of the spatial concentration of multiple disadvantage on social housing estates. Whilst this presents new opportunities for those engaged in youth work, it may also require them to be more willing to subject their activities to more rigorous evaluation if it is to make the case for 'youth work' as a key component in multi-agency partnerships. This article has drawn on research based on ten case studies of multi-agency work with young people on social housing estates throughout Britain. It has reviewed the advantages and limitations of different patterns of working and some of the challenges to be faced in multi-agency working. During the course of the research it was difficult not to be impressed by the sheer dedication of many youth workers who, despite often being on short-term and insecure contracts, persevered in their work with difficult clients despite slender resources and little recognition and reward. Yet the new climate of intervention requires much more than effort, endurance and commitment. If youth work is to take its rightful place alongside other agencies working with the most disadvantaged, it must also tackle one of its most intractable problems. It must show that it is willing to co-operate with others, many of whom may be sceptical of its value and effect and it must be willing to embrace new methodologies which can clearly demonstrate that it provided valued 'outcomes' and value for money.

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CIVIL RIGHTS IN SCHOOLS:

The Implications for Youth Policy

PRISCILLA ALDERSON

When the British government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, it undertook to publicise the Convention 'to adults and children alike' (42)¹ and to implement all its 54 articles in national law, policy and practice. During 1996-1998 Sean Arnold and I conducted a survey which enquired how well known the Convention is in British schools. Very little research has been conducted about young people's views of their rights, how they define and regard them, and how practical or relevant they consider that concepts of rights are in their daily lives. Melton and Limber (1992) report one study, but within a very developmental age-based framework. This article describes the background about the Convention, and then our survey in schools, and presents and discusses the findings. Many replies are all reported together here rather densely, in order to give a broad picture of young people's detailed understanding of the complex matter of their civil rights at school. The final section discusses interpretations of the survey findings, adults' and young people's views about participation rights in schools, and how greater understanding and use of the UN Convention could make a crucial contribution to more just and well-grounded youth policies.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 has been ratified by every nation except Somalia and the United States, and is by far the most widely supported international document. The Convention, and at times this paper, refers to everyone aged up to 18 as children: this is not to disrespect teenagers, but to emphasise respect for all young people without age barriers; many children's rights include babies (Alderson, 1999).

All rights are relative, not absolute, and are subject to safeguards. The Convention repeatedly states that 'the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' (1,3,21). Rights in the Convention are affected by the evolving capacities of the child', the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents'(5) and the national law (31). Rights cannot be exercised in ways which would harm the child or other people. They must 'respect the rights and reputations of others', as well as 'national security and public order, health and morals' (13). The Convention sees rights not as endorsing selfish greedy individualism, but as increasing mutual respect. Any individual's claim to a right also confirms respect for everyone else's equal claim, dignity and worth; rights are collective and not individual concepts. The Convention includes aspiration rights as a means of furthering children's interests and concern for them, besides promoting

'social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity' (preamble).

Children's rights can broadly be divided into three kinds. There are *provision* rights to education, health care, and other goods and services. *Protection* rights defend against abuse, neglect and discrimination. The so-called *participation* rights, which our survey concentrated on, include rights to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, and the key ones are:

To the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child; the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (12);

The right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice (13).

Provision and protection rights can easily be discussed under traditional headings of needs, welfare and best interests, when adults tend to be assumed to be the experts. In a sense, for example in the right to 'compulsory education'(28), provision and protection rights contradict the original so-called first-generation meanings of rights which Locke and Kant developed as concepts of autonomy, self-determination and non-interference with the person's physical and mental integrity. Provision and protection rights can legitimate adult control over children which often helps but sometimes harm them. The UN Convention's moderate participation rights are the nearest ones to the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration (1948) and the European Convention (1948) of Human Rights. In autumn 1998, the latter became incorporated into English law. Yet in such clauses as the right of everyone to work and to vote, it is not clear if children are seen as human beings or not (Alderson, forthcoming). The Convention on the Rights of the Child does not go as far as English law in the *Gillick* case (1985), in that the Convention only grants children rights to share in decisions affecting them (12) but not to be the *main or sole decider* (as discussed in Alderson and Montgomery 1996).

Rights and education

Educational commentators on children's rights tend to support provision and protection rights, but to criticise or ignore participation rights. The Commonwealth Teachers' Report in 1997 on *Education and human rights* mentions only provision and protection rights for children in its eight sections. In marked contrast, section four speaks of teachers' rights, with 'every other citizen', to vote, contest elections, join political organisations and trade unions, speak and write on political issues

and be free from victimisation. Teachers (but not students) 'should be involved through consultation and negotiation in forming educational policies at every level' (NUT, 1997). Educationalists tend to stress the child's right to education (28), to overlook all the other rights (for example, Thomas 1998), and with others in psychology, philosophy and law to be sceptical or cautious about children's participation rights (for example, Eekelaar, 1986; Scarre, 1988; Buchanan and Brock 1989). In contrast, writers who review education from a rights perspective tend to be more critical about the way some schools deny provision, protection and especially participation rights (Freeman, 1983; Newell, 1991; Lansdown and Newell, 1994; Franklin, 1995; Jeffs, 1995; Lansdown, 1995; John, 1996; Hammarberg, 1997; Trafford, 1997; Verhellen, 1997; PEG, 1998; Alderson and Goodey, 1998; Cockburn, 1998; Griffith, 1998; Hannon, 1998).

The survey

During 1996-1999, the Economic and Social Research Council mounted its first research programme on Children 5-16 which emphasises children's own perspectives and the schools survey was one of the 22 selected projects. We wrote to 168 local education authorities. Using information from them and other bodies such as the Children's Rights Office and School Councils UK, we approached 250 selected schools in the UK and Northern Ireland, asking primary school deputy heads and secondary school PHSE specialists to take part in the survey. Fifty eight teachers replied to the teachers' survey, and 49 agreed to conduct the pupils' survey, which yielded 2,272 completed questionnaires. We used one questionnaire for everyone, partly to have efficient ways of making comparisons between all the groups, partly because ability and interest do not strictly correlate with age. Bright 8-year-olds might do more than slow 16-year-olds and we wanted to include people from a wide range of ability.

Besides compiling a wide-ranging sample of types of schools, we included 100 schools which were recommended as being involved with rights education or school councils. Teachers are increasingly busy and over-burdened; even so, the low response rate indicates some general lack of interest in children's rights. Our initial letter emphasised that the survey was designed to take as little of the teachers' time as possible. We asked them to complete a two page questionnaire about their school and their views on children's rights, and to agree to conduct the questionnaire survey for 20 to 30 minutes and post back the booklets. In return, we would send a short report about the results and some teaching suggestions and materials.

The 24 page A5 booklet questionnaire had a shiny green cover, which each pupil kept after returning the inner pages. On the cover were a picture of a circle time, and brief explanations about the Convention, the survey, and the researchers. The

survey was planned as an information-giving as well as an information-gathering exercise, though we did not want to overwhelm people with too much information before asking for their views. Although all the questions are linked to the Convention they are about the students' own everyday experiences. We used short words like civil' rather than 'participation', and our paraphrases of the participation rights in the Convention appear in the subheadings below, for example, 'the right to respect for your worth and dignity'. These rather abstract ideas are broken down into simple questions about daily school life, such as the activities pupils enjoy when developing their skills and talents, or their views on the right to express religious beliefs by wearing a turban or scarf. The questionnaire responses were analysed by the SPSSPC computer package.²

The other main part of the survey was 34 small group discussions, usually lasting about half an hour with six pupils, which we conducted in some of the survey schools. We learnt a great deal by visiting the schools, talking with pupils and staff, and noting the general settings and routines. However, there is space in this article only for the questionnaire responses.

The questionnaire was called, 'What do you think about your rights at school?' and has the following introduction.

Human rights are about being able to do and say what you want to, as long as you do not break the law or hurt anyone.

Many people think that rights are about being selfish, grabbing what you can get and not caring about any one else. Yet human rights are about respect for everyone.

In 1989, everyone in the world was asked to support rights for children (see back cover) [here, we paraphrased the civil rights].

How much do you think your school respects children's rights?

And what do you think about your own rights?

It would be very helpful if you would tell us what you think.

There are no right or wrong answers; it is your views which matter.

Then we explained about filling in the booklet.

How to answer the questions.

We hope that you will answer all the questions, but if you don't want to answer some, just leave them out.

We hope the questions are clear enough for 8 year olds, but not too simple for 16 year olds.

You do not need to write your name, so no one will know how you have answered.

We have asked teachers not to look at booklets after they collect them in to send to us.

Please put a ring round the number next to each comment that best explains what you think, for example:

Do you like ice cream?

yes 1

no 2

varies 3

I'm not sure 4

If you partly agree, or think 'it varies' or 'it depends' please ring the 'varies' number.

If you think 'I don't know' or 'it doesn't apply to me' please ring the 'not sure' number, - or add your own answer if there is a line.

The 2272 replies were from 1224 girls, 1020 boys and 28 who did not specify their sex, ages are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Ages

Age:	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Number of people	3	59	126	311	352	231	325	319	314	122	2

The schools varied from large to small, junior, middle and secondary, six were special schools, and the teachers reported a range of socio-economic and ethnic groupings, and of urban, semi-urban and rural settings. We sent a report, set out as wall charts, for every school to display showing the total replies to some of the main questions from their own school, compared with the total replies from all the schools.

The survey results

Your right to respect for your worth and dignity, your right to express yourself and to develop your skills and talents fully

We asked the students to ring any of the creative, expressive activities we listed which they enjoy doing in or out of school, see table 2. Table 3 shows their replies to the questions about their opportunities to do these things. The survey was completed before the literacy hour, and (from autumn 1999) the maths hour, were

introduced, which may further encroach on time for creative activities. Table 4 shows views about freedom of expression and school rules about personal appearance. Schools in the survey varied from having no uniform to having a strict dress code.

Table 2. Preferred creative activities

Being with friends	2096
sports and games	1867
computers	1642
art/crafts	1361
making things (like model railways, cooking)	1278
music	1225
drama	1040
outdoors things (like caring for animals or digging ponds)	1021
writing	875
dance	814
other activities (please name)	547

Table 3. Opportunities to be creative

Do you do these things that you enjoy mainly while you are at school?	yes:	666
	no:	323
	it varies:	1274
Do you think your school gives you enough chances to enjoy these things?	very much:	243
	quite a lot:	694
	it varies:	649
	not enough:	399
	hardly at all:	158
	not sure:	134
If you would like to do more of these things at school, but you cannot, is this because your school needs:		
more money (such as for computers or sports)		547
more teachers		57
more time		361
(others were not sure or gave another reason).		

Table 4. Freedom of expression and rules about appearance

People express themselves in how they look, in their clothes and hair style.		
What do you think about your school's rules about what you can wear and how you can look?		
	all right	893
	too strict	853
	not strict enough	55
	it varies	227
	we don't have rules and I like that	129
	we don't have rules but we need some	19
	not sure	78

Your right to be heard, your right to have your views taken seriously in matters that affect you, your right to share in making decisions about your life

We asked how much they feel teachers listen to them and believe them (table 5). Like most of the questions, the answers combine the students' views about what does happen, with what could or should reasonably be expected. In the following tables, only the yes or no replies will be shown, in order to keep down the lists of numbers. Table 6 records views about school rules and when more specific questions followed the initial general one, rather more critical views emerged. During the group discussion at one primary school on a housing estate at the far edge of a city where it met the surrounding fields, the children were concerned about this freedom. They used to be allowed during breaks to go to a nearby shop, well within sight of the school. Since leaving the school during breaks had been forbidden, the shop had closed. The children argued that their custom had kept open a vital amenity which benefitted the whole neighbourhood on a remote and poorly served estate. Some of the children had never been into the city centre and they felt an important part of their lives and their community had been lost. The teachers who did not live on the estate were less aware of this loss.

Table 5. Views about teachers' responses

On the whole, do your teachers listen to you?	<i>a lot</i>	346
	<i>quite a lot</i>	889
	<i>not much</i>	581
	<i>it varies</i>	387
	<i>not sure</i>	59
On the whole, do your teachers believe what you say and take you seriously?	<i>yes</i>	554
	<i>no</i>	391
	<i>it varies</i>	1101
	<i>not sure</i>	227

Table 6. Views about school rules

	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>
Are most of your school's rules fair?	1113	473
Can you choose whether you stay inside or go outside during break times?	897	1037
Do you think you should be allowed to choose whether you stay inside or go outside during break times?	1880	240
Are you allowed to leave school (such as to go home or to the shops) at lunch time if your parents agree?	1051	1067
Do you think you should be allowed to leave school (such as to go home or to the shops) at lunch time if your parents agree?	1673	363

The young people's views about choosing their school are shown in table 7. The preference of many to decide for themselves, will be discussed later. We did not give the option of possibly not going to school at all. The questionnaire had to be worded very carefully, to translate rather abstract concepts into practical daily issues, to use clear user-friendly wording, and to satisfy the teachers who decided whether to conduct the survey in their school. The next two questions were open ones, and we coded the top ten replies to what they most enjoy and least enjoy at school (table 8). These replies do not necessarily contradict the earlier closed questions on expressive activities because they are about different priorities.

Table 7. Choice of school

Do you think you should be allowed to choose which school you go to?	yes	1230
	no	56
	share choosing with my parents	855
	there is only one school I can go to	59
Would you rather be at another school?	yes	249
	no	1586

Table 8. Main likes and dislikes at school (open questions)

What do you enjoy most at your school?	named lessons	410
	sports/PE	398
	seeing my friends	382
	break times	142
	art	82
	general atmosphere	40
	home time	36
	parties/celebrations	16
	craft and design	10
	foreign languages	7
What do you least like about your school?	named lessons	477
	teachers	247
	rules/being told what to do	160
	too much work/homework	151
	nothing (or I'm happy)	109
	physical conditions in the school	105
	rules about appearance	99
	bullies	49
	behaviour of other people	48
	school starts too early	37
	assembly	35

Popular lessons probably imply popular teachers although teachers are not specifically referred to in the enjoyments list and they come second highest on the least liked list. The negative list is mainly about conditions set by adults and bullies only come eighth. This suggests that though bullying may be common, and is for some students extremely serious, for many people it is not a severe problem and the main problems are posed by adults rather than by other students. This ordering of

dislikes raises questions about the way the education literature frequently emphasises problems raised by pupils, and implies that the adults only resolve and prevent problems. We asked closed questions about the main purpose of schooling (table 9),

Table 9. Main purposes of school (closed questions, ring as many as you like)

What are the main things you want from school?		
	<i>good teaching to help me to pass tests and exams</i>	1930
	<i>time to be with friends</i>	1845
	<i>good teaching to help me to get into the job/career I will want to do</i>	1783
	<i>learning about the real world, such as that I might be unemployed</i>	1377
	<i>getting ideas about interesting new things I could try</i>	1364
	<i>learning to be part of a group and to get on with other people</i>	1341
	<i>the feeling that I belong to my class or to the school</i>	1225
	<i>learning about my rights</i>	1209

Your right to hold your own beliefs, to have all kinds of useful information and ideas. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. To learn to live in peace, tolerance, equality and friendship and with respect for nature.

Table 10 shows views about school assemblies; 30 people said they did not go to assemblies. Views about rights to information are shown in table 11, including lessons about children's rights. During the group discussions, everyone spoke about respect, justice, freedom of expression, and their wish to be listened to, but few used the language of rights. We asked some of them, 'Do you ever say, that's my right, or, you have no right to do that?' The reply tended to be, 'Oh no, you'd get into trouble if you said that.' During discussions, black students were especially likely to emphasise their desire to learn about the countries their families originally came from. Some felt this was their right, particularly if they thought an unfair account was given of histories of conflict or colonialism between Britain and these other countries. Any formal or informal mention in schools about relations between black and white peoples and their histories affects young people's rights in terms of their sense of identity and self-respect, and also in the kinds of respect and understanding which they feel their peers are encouraged to have for them. The replies about ecology lessons confirmed the enthusiasm for green issues which many young people are believed to have.

Table 10. Views about school assemblies and religion

	yes	no
Do you like the school assemblies?	355	928
Do you think girls and boys should be able to choose if they go to assemblies?	1250	544
Do you think young people at school should be able to express their religion if they want to, such as boys wearing turbans, or girls wearing scarves?	1626	261
Do you think you should have lessons about religions around the world?	1071	536

Table 11. Rights to information

	yes	no
Do you think you should have lessons about events in the news like wars or elections?	1109	468
Do you think you should have lessons about children's rights?	1765	129
Do you think you should have lessons about the history of other countries, such as Asia or Africa?	1206	381
Do you think you should have lessons on caring for the world, such as saving tigers or the ozone layer?	1589	183

The right to go to peaceful meetings

Once more there was a difference between what the students think they are permitted to do, and the rights and responsibilities which they would like to have (table 12). On the right to arrange peaceful meetings, 787 said they were not sure, suggesting that they have not attended such meetings, and only 14 people did not reply to this question, suggesting a high interest in this topic.

Table 12. Peaceful meetings

	yes	no
Do you think you and your friends should be allowed to arrange meetings in school, such as to have a music group or plan an outing?	1878	113
Can boys and girls arrange meetings in your school?	656	815

The right to privacy and respect and the right to fair discipline (table 13).

We added to the privacy heading: 'If you write or say anything, which you want to be kept private, people should keep your secret, unless they think someone might get hurt.' We asked for young people's views on how their teachers keep secrets. This question is very complicated by child protection possibilities, which make many teachers guarded in how far they can promise to keep secrets. The 14 non replies suggest that they were not certain they could count on their privacy being respected. With the small group discussions, our usual opening question was, 'what did you think about the booklets?' A frequent initial reply was, 'we really liked the way it said the teachers would not look at them.' One reason students have for wanting teachers to be discreet is their power to influence other teachers and general attitudes in a school towards individual students. Given this concern, replies to the next question on teachers being fair, all but 12 people replied, also suggest caution among the majority.

The question on teachers explaining before punishment was the only question which everyone answered. The groups who discussed exclusions tended to say that it was rather a mysterious business: certain students who were known as

disruptive disappeared and little explanation was given. This can account for the high number of don't knows, from students who had never been threatened with serious punishments.

When the British government made the first of its regular reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, on progress in implementing the Convention, in 1995, the Committee selected a few points for particular criticism and one was that children have no right to a hearing, to be informed, or to express their view, before they are excluded from school (UN, 1995). This has still not yet been remedied. High numbers thought that some teachers punish the whole class when a few people have done something wrong, although this practice is illegal. Responses to a general question about 'the right amount of discipline to keep your school running well' appeared more satisfied.

Table 13. Rights to privacy and fair discipline

	yes	no	varies
Do you trust your teachers to keep a secret if you tell them?	792	699	
Do you think your teachers are careful to be fair when they talk about their pupils?	805	569	
If they think someone might have done something wrong, do the teachers listen to that person's view, before they decide whose fault it was?	845	609	647
Before anyone is punished, do the teachers first explain clearly to them how they will be punished and why?	827	612	521
If it is serious, such as if someone is going to be suspended, does a teacher talk about this with the boy or girl first, and listen to their view?	672	396 (908 were not sure).	280
If a few people do something wrong, do the teachers punish the whole class?	1217	390	575
Do you think there is the right amount of discipline to keep your school running well?	979	403	

The right to be kept safe from harm (table 14)

As mentioned earlier, a high reported incidence in response to a general and not a personal question, like the one about bullying, should not be confused with a high level of severity, or even with wide-spread personal experience of a particular issue; each problem needs to be seen in perspective and in relation to other problems for the person concerned.

The next question was a directly personal one. Psychologists classify, as basic needs, having some personal space which people can identify as their own, and somewhere safe to keep possessions, however few. Adults at home and at work tend to assume these needs as rights. Yet well over half the students feel either that their possessions are not in a safe place, or that they have to carry everything around the school with them. The groups talked about the problems of having to carry heavy bags and sometimes wet coats around all day, and how guarding their

bags during break times stopped them from playing active games. On personal safety, the groups discussed how most behaviour problems arise during breaks and that, when there is one lunch time supervisor per 70 or so pupils, the adult support is inadequate. Some schools have reduced these difficulties by involving the pupils in resolving conflicts with peer mediation schemes (for example, Highfield, 1997). They illustrate how schools benefit when all staff and students are respected.

Table 14. Rights to safety

	yes	no	not much	none
Is there any bullying at your school?	472	980	445	76
Do you have somewhere safe to keep your things (like your coat or books)?	911	1076	others said it varies/ not sure	
At break and lunch times, are the adults ready to help anyone who needs them?	1079	408		

Working together for rights, and how these are shared in your school

The views about school councils are shown in table 15. Replies of yes and no, to whether the school had a council, differed within some schools, suggesting that if there was a council, it was not well known. Our question may have excluded councils for students only, without staff members, but our phrasing was deliberate, because purely pupil councils can hardly be effective, without staff members to give or obtain essential information, and to support council decisions. The next six questions were only for students who said they had a council. These who were uncertain, may never have been councillors or experienced the issues directly. About a quarter of those with a council said that the students could raise any topic for discussion. For many of the schools who did not have a council, discussion was already limited. For example, some students told us about their failed attempts to get permission for a school council. Some teachers told us that it was impossible to have a school council, 'because all the children want to talk about is uniform, and they can't question that'.

Being able to raise a topic does not necessarily entail reaching a satisfactory conclusion. Some students told us that after the council made decisions, the head teacher's approval had to be sought. Sometimes this was not granted, or the head did not find any time to discuss council business. One inner city primary school had a derelict factory next to the cramped school grounds. For years the school council campaigned to get the local authority to carry through their decision to demolish the factory and extend the school grounds. They were disappointed each

year. In these kinds of matters, the children wanted more active support from adults inside and outside the school. One primary school deputy head was proud of the new council and newsletter, but the children said meetings were a waste of time because they had to write the newsletter instead of having discussions. Some of the youngest children had clear views on whether their council was a genuine forum or a pretence, and they could competently take notes and report business between the council and their class.

Practices of choosing or electing councillors varied within some schools when one class had quite an elaborate secret ballot, but in another the teacher selected council members or drew up a rota; this could be in an effort to ensure a fair mixture of councillors. Some people felt the experience of being on the council benefitted individual pupils as well as the whole school, and the more people who could be involved the better. Others thought that continuity with fewer members was important. The group that was critical about the school council was generally dissatisfied in response to most of the other questions (Alderson, forthcoming).

Table 15. School councils

	yes	no	not sure
Does your school have a council, where pupils and teachers meet to decide about things that happen in the school?	1196	735	
<i>The next questions were answered by those who had said yes, they had a council.</i>			
Can the school council talk about any topic?	762	118	383
Can the council only talk about things the teachers allow?	243	548	
Can the pupils choose anyone they like to be on the council?	718	299	
Do the teachers choose boys and girls to be on the council?	yes some 306, yes all members 208	494	
Is the school council good at sorting out problems?	342	313 (372 said varies)	226
Does the council help to make the school a better place to be in?	463	275 (289 said varies)	227

Explicit views about rights

The booklet said, 'Human rights are about respect for you and for everyone else. Sometimes, you have to give up a few of your rights to help other people.' Table 16 shows views about sharing rights and working together. Finally, table 17 shows their views on the questionnaire booklet. Almost everyone reached page 22, including many of the most generally critical students.

Table 16 Sharing rights and working together

	yes	no
Do you think your school has got the balance right between respecting each person and looking after the rights of the whole school?	790	468
Do you think that, on the whole, the pupils at your school have:		
<i>too many rights</i>	94	
<i>enough rights</i>	715	
<i>too few</i>	572	
<i>almost no rights</i>	344	
<i>varies</i>	197	
<i>not sure</i>	301	
Do you think that some people at your school have more rights than others?		
If so please show which groups you think these are:		
<i>boys</i>	158	
<i>girls</i>	256	
<i>older pupils</i>	837	
<i>clever ones</i>	694	
<i>pupils who are stronger</i>	126	
<i>pupils who are richer</i>	111	
<i>any other group (please describe)</i>		
244 (gave comments)		
<i>I do not think any group has more rights</i>	511	
Do you think any groups in your school should have more rights than others?	276	1613
Have you heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child before today?		
<i>yes, a lot about it</i>	107	
<i>yes a bit about it</i>	427	
<i>no, I've not heard about it</i>	1348	

Table 17. Views about the questionnaire

What do you think about this question booklet?	
<i>too long</i>	294
<i>too short</i>	266
<i>about the right length</i>	1567
<i>very interesting</i>	748
<i>quite interesting</i>	1024
<i>boring</i>	336

Discussion: the implications for youth policy

Survey research method

All research data need to be treated cautiously. We do not know how accurately the replies reflect the students' 'real' views and how these vary from week to week, or how their replies agree with or differ from their teachers' varied views. However, we aimed to ask fairly worded and balanced questions, and the large number of replies and range of schools are likely to give a general idea of young people's differing views about their schools. The groups' appreciation that their questionnaire responses would be treated confidentially, and their enthusiasm and

confidence when talking with us, suggest that the topics, wording and design of the booklets encouraged them to trust and confide in us.

One aim of the research was to develop fairly quick and cheap methods of collecting the views of many young people, partly because their views are so often neglected when researchers assume that adults can and should speak for them. We used methods developed by Andrew Thompson (1983) which show that people willingly fill in long detailed questionnaires if these are well designed. The quality (relevant topics, clear words, clear attractive layout, easy response methods) matters more than the length. The high completion rate in our survey shows that this is a useful method. The next sections discuss a few topics from the questionnaire.

Freedom of thought and conscience

Since very young children have clear strong views and notions of justice and kindness (Dunn, 1995), young people's capacity for freedom of thought and conscience cannot simply be dismissed as immature. The obvious enjoyment observed in well-conducted positive assemblies, and the anger and contempt which some students feel about boring negative assemblies or ineffective councils appear to be well-founded on reflective experience and not, for example, on immature inappreciation. Enforced and disliked assemblies seem likely to undermine, rather than nurture, interest in religion and morality. Assemblies could be key opportunities for students and staff to negotiate more positive shared occasions, but they are generally not yet enjoyed. The way age relates to this and other topics will be reported in another paper. Even if there are clear age differences, the general replies to the survey give a broad picture of the range of relations between students and teachers in British schools, and if disaffection increases with age, earlier prevention is important.

Expressing a view

On choice of school, the preference of many to decide for themselves, rather than their parents deciding for or with them, links to another study of decision making when only a minority of young people aged 8-16 said they wanted to rely on their parents to decide for them about their surgery (Alderson, 1993). These replies raise questions about the difference between many young people's desire for close supportive interdependent relationships with their parents, but also for some independence when making personal choices. Questions also arise about the general assumption that parents are the consumers of education, as in the language of the Parents' Charter and parental choice. During group discussions, pupils pointed out, 'our parents are hardly ever in the school, they don't really know what goes on here,' and 'I'm the one who knows what matters to me most about choosing a secondary school'. Many of the young people said their parents would support their choice.

School and class councils can channel imaginative ideas on new ventures and problem solving, besides the positive energy and enthusiasm of most people in the school (the pupils). Standards in learning and behaviour rise through such genuine dialogue (Highfield 1997; Davies, 1998; QCA, 1998; Hannon 1998). Teachers alone cannot ensure that schools are safe and creative places and, unless they work with the students' cooperation, they waste time and effort working against the students' resistance or apathy. We saw stressed, over-worked teachers regretting that they achieve so little, when they could share so much more with the students - who could be librarians during the lunch hour, for example, instead of the library being closed for lack of staff.

Our survey shows quite high levels of criticism and dissatisfaction among pupils. We noted negative cycles in certain schools. The staff reprimand and punish pupils, for example, for breaking minor rules, and believe that if they are irresponsible in small things, they cannot take on bigger responsibilities. Some students react angrily, and fall into a negative trap. If they comply they feel they are being infantilised; if they resist or try to show some initiative this is taken by the staff as insubordination. Teachers who take risks, encourage some independence, share some policy making, and accept some disagreements with students as a basis for working with them towards reasonable compromises, can gain in two main ways: they follow the educational and democratic principles of nurturing and respecting original critical thinking; and they reap the benefits of greater enthusiasm and commitment among the students. This can especially benefit the potentially most disruptive ones who can become positive leaders (Highfield, 1997).

Safety and personal property

Lack of safe space for possessions has serious practical and symbolic effects, in reminding students hourly of school management's indifference to them. Schools which expect students to carry everything around with them justify this as a means of reducing theft and damage to property. Yet such official systems set negative examples of precisely the kinds of disrespect for people and their property which are at the root of theft and vandalism. Abstract principles of respect only take on real meaning in apparently trivial daily interactions; matters which appear minor are often major concerns to young people.

Some schools, in large impressive notices, declare equal opportunities for everyone on grounds of ethnicity, social and religious background, gender and ability, but refusal to tolerate bullying. This works well if bullying is tackled through conflict resolution, peer mediation and other positive democratic methods. But if punishment and exclusion are the only methods, then the school cannot claim to respect equal opportunities, since bullying is often a reaction from pupils who already feel

rejected for their assumed inabilities and failings. The policy is, in effect, sexist and racist when black boys are over-represented among the excluded. 'Them-and-us' attitudes divide the delinquent few from the rest, and deny real equality. Individuals are heavily blamed, instead of divisive routines in schools also being attended to. Widely varying exclusion rates between schools suggest that the deciding factor is at least as much school policy as individual pupils' failings.

Current concern and costly new policies for managing 'disaffected youth' (Pearce and Hillman, 1998) will not be effective until the basic question is asked: *What is making young people feel disaffected and alienated?* Otherwise support and resources may be channelled to increase the very factors which alienate young people, such as greater pressure on them to stay in schools which damage them by disregarding their civil rights. Treating the symptoms of disaffection does not necessarily cure the disease and causes, and may exacerbate them.

Respect for young people and their rights

Children's rights are often derided in the media, and among the public as negative, dangerous or silly. Yet surely these views are based on ignorance. The UN Convention's rights to mutual and equal respect for everyone's worth and dignity treat children and teenagers as thoughtful potential contributors to their school community, not simply as passive receivers of services. If children's rights are to be valued, the public and the education professions will have to become far more informed and aware about: the 1989 UN Convention; the close links between theory and practice, teaching and extra-curricular activities, which mutually reinforce or undermine respect for children's rights in schools; ways in which teachers and students together can raise standards of learning and behaviour so effectively; the need for the government and school managers to respect all teachers, if pupils too are to be respected.

We also need new understanding of the value of the language of rights, which moves justice for young people beyond privileges that depend on the whim of kind adults, to the properly established, fair and protective standards, which adults in Britain can take for granted. A valuable way forward would be to involve young people themselves far more in designing and conducting civil rights based research about how they can work with the staff on improving their school community.

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Notes

- Figures in brackets denote the relevant article of the Convention.
- In this report, the replies listed do not add up to 2272 because not everyone answered every question. Also, we have not given all the 'it varies/don't know' responses, although these options were given with almost every question, because this paper is already so crowded with numbers.

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PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL STUDENTS LIVING IN UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

RICHARD A. TAULKE-JOHNSON & IAN RIVERS

For many young people, the first year at university or college provides them with their first experience of independence. While it is clear that, for the vast majority of undergraduates, independence brings with it a number of positive challenges and rewards, for some it can also bring with it an opportunity to address issues or come to terms with feelings that have had to remain hidden while living in the parental home. For young lesbians, gay men and bisexual men and women, universities and colleges are perceived as providing a liberal environment in which they can express themselves without fear of censure, however, as various researchers have shown this perception is sometimes far from the truth.

Over the last ten years or so, several studies conducted in the United States have demonstrated that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) university and college students are particularly prone to a range of both short- and long-term developmental and psycho-social problems (Garnets, Herek & Levy, 1990; Remafedi, 1987; Slater, 1988). Reports of alcohol and substance abuse (Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Goff, 1990), low self-esteem (Reynolds, 1989), isolation (O'Connor, 1993-94), depression (Otis & Skinner, 1996) and a general impairment in both social and academic functioning (Luhrs, Crawford & Goldberg, 1992; Mapou, Ayres & Cole, 1983; Slater, 1993) are just some of the difficulties found to be common within this population.

Suicide ideation among LGB students and non-students has also been shown to be particularly high (see Elia, 1993-94; Harbeck, 1993-94; Hetrick & Martin, 1987). Slater (1993) suggests that as many as one third of all teenage suicides in the United States are carried out by LGBs who experience intolerance at high school or university/college (see also Burke, 1995). However, Buhrich & Loke (1988), have supplied a much needed note of caution, providing a reminder that there are other factors aside from sexuality and sexual orientation, such as financial, occupational, and relationship matters, that play a significant role in the likelihood of an individual contemplating or attempting self-harming, suicidal or parasuicidal behaviours.

In their national survey of 4,200 LGBs in the UK, Mason & Palmer (1996) reported that as many as 1 in 3 men and 1 in 4 women had been subjected to some form of violence (e.g. being hit, punched, kicked or assaulted with a weapon) in the preceding five years as a consequence of being lesbian, gay or bisexual. According to the authors, assaults varied from incidents of rape and sexual molestation to causing damage to

personal property. As a result, victims not only reported requiring medical attention following an assault, but also they reported a range of psychological effects which included nightmares, nervous exhaustion, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

Concomitant with direct physical acts of aggression, Mason and Palmer (1996) also found that LGB intolerance manifested itself through graffiti, vandalism, threatening phone calls, rubbish being dumped through letter boxes, and name-calling. In fact, 73% of the respondents reported being verbally abused because of their sexual orientation.

Homonegativism in higher education

Although universities and colleges have long been portrayed as liberal institutions where homosexuality and bisexuality have been tolerated if not always accepted, recent studies have shown that homonegativism has been a feature of campus life of many universities and colleges in the United States for a number of years (D'Augelli, 1989a; 1992; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; D'Emilio, 1990; La Salle, 1992; Slater, 1993). According to Herek (1989) anti-gay/lesbian/bisexual discrimination has been documented on every campus where a study has been carried out, although it has been recognised that undergraduates tend to be less homonegative generally than high school students, non-students and young offenders (Pratte, 1993; Van de Ven, 1994). Nonetheless as D'Augelli and Rose (1990) have illustrated, students in higher education do exhibit strong negative attitudes towards LGBs. Indeed, in their study, D'Augelli and Rose found that nearly 30% of the 218 undergraduate students they surveyed said they would 'prefer a college environment with only heterosexuals, 'and almost half 'considered gay men disgusting' and 'believed that homosexual activity is wrong' (p. 490).

Like Mason and Palmer's (1996) study research focusing upon LGB intolerance on campus has been found to manifest itself through physical, sexual, and emotional victimisation (Slater, 1993; Schreier, 1995). Behaviours range from graffiti with anti-gay slogans (Workman, 1983) to actual physical violence (D'Augelli, 1989; 1992; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Gross, Aurand & Addessa, 1988; Marshall, 1993; Slater, 1993). In addition, indirect forms of victimisation such as social isolation and rumour mongering have also been found to be prevalent, and it has been suggested that these forms of aggressive behaviour are no less damaging or serious than physical violence (Garnets et al, 1990). Indeed, as Garnets et al (1990) pointed out, although there may be no outwardly visible signs of abrasion or distress, indirect forms of victimisation are 'more insidious because victims of [non-physical] abuse may find its 'psychic scars' more difficult to identify than physical wounds' (p. 373).

In terms of frequency, D'Augelli (1989a; 1992) found that as many as 77% of LGB students had experienced verbal harassment at university. In addition, he also

found that 27% had been threatened with physical violence, 22% recalled being chased, 17% had their property damaged and 5% reported being spit upon. Of equal concern was the fact that 94% of the 125 LGB participants in D'Augelli's (1989a) study did not report any incidents of intolerance directed toward them to the authorities - a finding common in many studies in this area (see Berrill, 1990; D'Augelli, 1992; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Evans, 1996; Mason & Palmer, 1996; National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 1989).

Intolerance towards LGB students has been documented not only in studies focusing upon peer victimisation among undergraduates, but also in those centring on people in positions of authority within the university setting - particularly student wardens (see D'Augelli, 1989b). Ideally, it would be expected that student wardens were chosen for the responsible attitude they take towards the welfare of fellow students, and it might also be expected that they would be sensitive to the needs of their wards since their opinions and attitudes are likely to influence those of other students living in halls of residence (Schreier, 1995). In D'Augelli's (1989b) study, it has also been found that the majority of student wardens were reported as having made a number of homonegative comments and, consistent with research focusing upon LGB intolerance in the general population, male student wardens were found to be more likely to make homonegative statements than their female counterparts (see also Grieger & Ponterotto, 1988; Kunkel & Temple, 1992).

Given the above findings, it would seem that universities may not offer students a safe environment in which they are able to explore issues relating to their sexuality free from victimisation or judgement. Yet, as most of this research has been generated by researchers working in American universities, it remains unclear as to whether or not the British student experience is comparable.

The present study offers such a comparison, exploring the experiences of LGB undergraduates studying at a British university. It considers whether or not undergraduates have faced intolerance comparable to that experienced by their American counterparts and whether or not there is a need for a review of housing policy relating to the accommodation of lesbians, gay men and bisexual men and women in university halls of residence.

Methodology

This study represents a qualitative examination of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students' experiences and perceptions of living in a British university's halls of residence.

Data collection

Data was gathered over a period of four months by the first author (RT-J) from volunteer members of a university Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students' Society. 12

undergraduates participated in this study (8 men and 4 women). At the time the study was conducted, all 12 participants were either living or had recently lived in a university halls of residence. 7 participants identified themselves as gay men, 3 as lesbians, and 2 (1 man and 1 woman) as bisexual. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 23 years, with the mean age being 20 years. 5 of the participants were in their 1st year of their degree, 3 were in their second year, 2 were in their third and the remaining 2 were in the fourth or final year.

Data collection was conducted using an adapted version of the interview schedule constructed by Evans (1996) in her study of the experiences of LGB students attending a North-American university. The schedule consists of four sections examining a range of issues surrounding LGB students living in halls of residence (see below).

Section 1 asks for information about the halls themselves (e.g. where the hall is situated), and the support systems offered by the university. It also asks about participants' personal backgrounds, such as when they suspected and when they knew definitely they were LGB, when and who they first came out to, and the extent to which they are/were out in their flat and hall.

Section 2 examined the problems LGB students face being 'out'/'not out' in halls, as well as what the participants think makes someone a target for LGB harassment.

Section 3 focuses upon the efforts the university's accommodation office have made for supporting LGB students and raising awareness of LGB issues in halls.

Finally, section 4 asked participants to offer their own suggestions relating to ways of improving the climate of halls of residence for LGB students.

Procedure

Prior to beginning the interview, the interviewees were informed that their participation in this study would remain anonymous and that their comments would not be disclosed to their university's accommodation services or their student wardens. They were also informed that they could ask any questions they might have at any point during the session, that they could stop the interview at any time, and that they could decline to answer any questions which they found too intrusive or uncomfortable.

Interviews lasted approximately 1 hour 30 minutes each, and were recorded onto audio tape for transcription. A debriefing session of between 30-40 minutes followed each interview, and participants were offered the opportunity to make any additional comments they felt necessary.

Data analysis

Data was analysed using the grounded theory technique developed by Glaser & Strauss (1967). Here the researcher does not begin with a theory and then prove or disprove it. Instead, a specific area of study is examined and common issues and themes emerge which allow generalisations, inferences, and conclusions about the phenomenon under investigation to be made (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theories are therefore built from the ground up, and constructed from the information grounded in the data (Neuman, 1994).

The transcripts were initially analysed using open coding which entailed extracting the major points from the transcripts (i.e. those that were frequently mentioned) and grouping those which had similar attributes or 'properties' into themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.72). The themes and their properties were then compared to each other to see if any relationships could be established between them thus forming conceptual categories. Grounded theory relies upon the research engaging in what has been described as 'the constant comparative method of analysis' where the researcher revised previously identified categories based upon her/his ongoing familiarity with the data set (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.101).

At the second stage - axial coding - the data was moulded back together and reorganised following extraction from the transcripts through open coding. This provided the authors with an opportunity to take an overview of the conceptual categories already identified, clustering them into superordinate categories.

The final stage, selective coding, refers to the systematic coding especially for the core category which relates directly to the main theme/concern/issue under investigation and which forms the basis of the study's main argument.

Results

Background information

As previously stated, all 12 participants were living or had recently lived in a university hall of residence. Rather than a large number of students sharing communal kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities, each hall was made up of a series of smaller units or 'flats' and each flat had its own kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities. The number of students in each flat ranged from 4 to 6, and in all cases the flats consisted of both male and female students. Flat mates tended to be of similar ages, but tended to be on different courses of study. Flat mates also tended to be from different parts of the country, and represented different nationalities, religions and cultural beliefs providing a melting pot of cultures and personalities.

Flats were described as being 'very much like a community within itself' (male bisexual, 21), with 'the little dynamic interplay of personalities' (gay male, 22)

lending each its own uniqueness. Participants said they generally got on with their flat mates, despite the inevitable tensions and disagreements which arose from living day after day in close proximity with the same group of people.

Common complaints about the halls related to dampness, the small size of the study bedrooms, where the hall was situated (two were located near night-clubs and one was near a local 'trouble spot'), and also the noise level due to the thinness of the walls. Despite these criticisms, the majority of the participants said they were enjoying or had enjoyed the experience of living in halls, leading one to term it 'the Butlin's effect' (gay male, 20).

The ages at which participants said that they suspected they were LGB or felt that there was something 'different' about them ranged from 5 to 16 years, and the age they knew definitely ranged from 11 to 22 years. Several recalled that they originally felt their homo/bisexuality was merely a passing phase. As one stated,

I mean even then [when you know you're gay] you're like 'Er, maybe'...You don't know what to think...I've gone through the phases of 'No, it's just this phase you read about in books' Basically you fool yourself all the way along (gay male, 20).

It was apparent that the unhappiness and distress some participants experienced when they realised they were actually LGB was related to a common strategy of denying or hiding these feelings, embarking upon heterosexual relationships in an attempt to prove to themselves/their family/their friends that they were not LGB.

I did try and make myself fancy a guy...because of the family - I could get married and have kids (lesbian, 21).

Did try to get off with a few lasses, mainly due to like peer pressure - 'Oh I should' kind of thing (gay male, 22).

I'd sort of like realised the fact I was gay and it was like I'd led so many lies and lives to people, how can I go back now and not loose all my friends? How can I not be rejected by my family? Rejected by society? I felt alone, isolated, and lost. I didn't know what the fuck to do (gay male, 22).

The ages at which the participants first disclosed their sexual orientation to others ('coming out') ranged from 16 to 22 years old, and the people they first told included their mother, (best) friend, and teacher. Although 7 of the participants revealed they had 'come out' to their parents (and in each case the reaction had been generally positive) as the following extracts highlight, experiences contrasted greatly when participants told their friends.

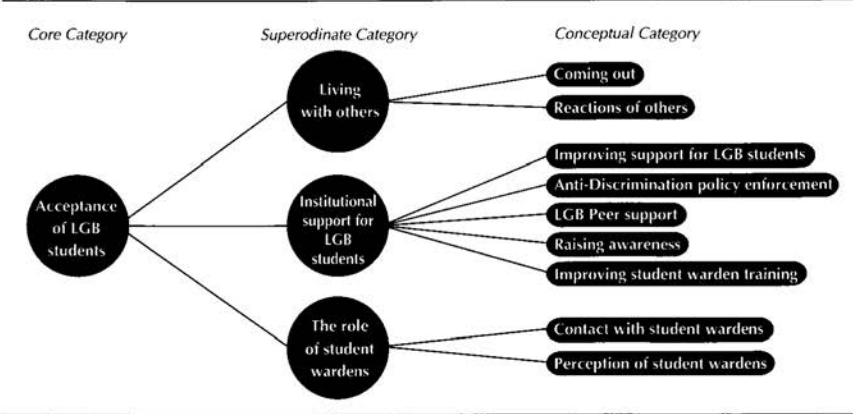
I went 'I'm gay.' He went 'Really?' 'Yeah.' He went 'Really really?' 'Yeah.' He went 'Really really really?' I went 'Yeah' and did the whole bursting into tears thing...And he just like put his arms around me, big hug, and I was like 'Oh, thank bloody Christ.' (gay male, 22).

I told him on Friday evening. I was at his house. And he was fine.. Monday morning at school from then onwards he ignored me...When I was talking to my friends he wouldn't talk to us (gay male, 20)

Experiences of living in university accommodation

Table 1 illustrates our interpretation of the data provided by the 12 participants in this study. The core category (which we have labelled 'Acceptance of LGB students') can be broken down into three superordinate categories, each with its own constituent conceptual categories. In the following pages, each of the superordinate and conceptual categories is described and textual examples are provided.

Table 1: LGB Students' Responses: Core, Superordinate and Conceptual Categories



Superordinate Category A: Living with Others

The worries and difficulties of having to 'come out' at university to flat mates were major issues that emerged from the transcripts. The degree to which participants had disclosed their sexual orientation to their flatmates differed considerably according to the nature of the relationships they had with them. While 9 participants said that they were 'out' or had been 'out' to all the people in their flat, 2 had told only one person and 1 participant had not told any one for fear of being isolated.

Conceptual Category 1 - Coming Out

The majority of participants had 'come out' very early on in their time at halls. Half of them said they 'came out' to their flatmates within a week of moving in. However,

as the following extracts demonstrate, such action went against participants' own advice to LGB students about to move into halls.

Find out what people's attitudes towards LGB issues are and then if they're OK then you can tell them, otherwise just hide it...Don't do too much stuff at the beginning. Just wait and see. (female bisexual, 21).

Be careful and try and figure out how the flat mates will react before you say anything. (gay male, 18).

I wouldn't let onto anyone that you were LGB until you'd sussed out your flat mates...Don't tell them until you feel confident and until you're sure that they won't beat you up basically. (gay male, 23).

Participants' recalled how their flatmates had found out about their homosexuality/bisexuality in a variety of ways. For example, in 4 cases participants had been 'outed' (i.e. another person had told someone else that the participant was LGB). In 2 of these incidents the disclosure of the participant's sexual orientation had been purposeful, and 2 had been by mistake. Instead of being angry and upset about being 'outed', however, participants felt relief and even grateful as they now did not have to go through the process of coming out to these people.

So basically he told everyone in the flat...But I was quite pleased because it just saved me having to do it, because it's not easy. (gay male, 20).

I was actually in the process of coming out to them when a friend of mine, before I'd gone all the way, let it slip. But I mean that wasn't a difficult position. I actually would've come out to them anyway, it just sort of hastened the procedure up. (male bisexual, 21).

Conceptual Category 2: Reactions of Others

The following 'coming out' experiences illustrate the very different reactions of flatmates when the participants told them they were LGB. The first extract was the most positive reaction that any of the participants related - that of unconditional acceptance of their sexuality.

[I] Took A aside and went 'Oh, there's something I've not told you...and I went 'I'm gay.' And she just gave me a big hug... B was saying 'We'll have to keep in touch' and everything, and I'm like 'Well, look, if we're going to be mates you might as well know this.' She was like 'Cool. You're my friend before, friend after.' (gay male, 22).

A less emphatic reaction was met by another participant when he came out to his flatmates.

The boys were shocked...The girls started hugging me going 'Don't worry, don't worry, we're your friends'...So everyone was OK with it except ~i who took a while to get used to it I think. He was a bit funny with me for a couple of days but he's OK now. The girls became immensely friendly. Y was OK with it. Z was a little bit off for a couple of days but after about a week he settled down. (gay male, 18).

The most negative reaction was from the flatmates of the following participant:

When you come into my flat it's like 'So who've you shagged today then?'...'What's it like having it up the shit box?'...I've had foam sprayed on my door saying 'Hello Gay boy'...and something sprayed on my window- 'Gay boy lives here.' (gay male, 20).

Interestingly, this participant defended his flatmates' actions, saying he did not report the incidents because they were only carried out for fun and to annoy him, and were not out of any malice or hatred. He went to say that:

My flatmates told me when I first told them 'It's all right if we beat you up, but if anyone else beats you up because you're gay come and tell us and then we'll flatten them.' (gay male, 20).

Superordinate Category B: The role of student wardens

7 of the participants' student wardens were female, and 5 were male. However, none of the participants were 'out' or had been 'out' to their student warden. Similarly, none of them had attempted to talk or confide in their student wardens and did not perceive them as having a pastoral role.

Conceptual Category 1: Contact

As mentioned above, it was clear that there had been a distinct lack of contact and interaction between participants and their wardens while they were living in halls suggesting that their exact purpose in living in halls or residence was unclear to the majority of students.

You never really see [the student warden]... I don't really know him at all. (gay male, 20).

I couldn't even tell you [the student warden's] name. (gay male, 20).

We did have [a student warden] but he was never there...He was totally absent...He was the one who delivered the mail in the morning, that was it. (female bisexual, 21).

I didn't really have that much to do with [the student warden]. She was just there to turn the fire alarm off and that was it. (gay male, 23).

Conceptual Category 2: Perceptions of Student Wardens

Participants held rather negative views of their student wardens, some felt that they did their job poorly and only for the money, ignoring the personal needs and welfare of the students in their halls.

[The student warden] did stuff because he was - well not being paid, but it was part of his job. (gay male, 20).

As far as [the student warden] was concerned, it would've been a case of students are there, leave them there. She really wasn't that bothered. She was really just concerned about getting money. (gay male, 22).

I think of all the people that I could possibly think of [to see about LGB issues, the student warden] would have been the last. (female bisexual, 21).

Superordinate Category C: Institutional Support for LGB Students

All participants said that they did not feel that their university's accommodation office had made any efforts to deal with LGB issues in the halls of residence.

Conceptual Category 1: Improving support for LGB students

When they were asked how hopeful they were that steps could be taken to improve the climate for LGB people living in halls, the majority felt that improvements could be made, but that their actual implementation by the university would be highly unlikely.

I think improvements have to be made and I think they could be made, but whether that's actually going to be done that's another thing. [The university] would find other issues to deal with before LGB. I think it's just bottom of the pile. I think half the time because it might not always be a visible thing then the university would say 'We'll just sweep it under the carpet.' (lesbian, 21).

I think improvements could easily be made if the university puts its mind to it, but it won't because it can't be arsed basically. This university doesn't even bother with LGB people - or if they do it's very low down on their list. (gay male, 23).

Conceptual Category 2: Anti-Discrimination Policy Enforcement

Several participants commented upon what they thought could be done practically to improve the climate of halls for LGB students, apart from more intense student warden training programmes which were commonly mentioned and which have been previously discussed, three main ideas emerged (conceptual categories 2, 3 and 4).

Firstly, 5 suggested that there should be a strict policy stating that homophobia would not be tolerated in the halls, and if it did occur that appropriate sanctions would be enforced.

[The university] has an obligation, and if they don't have a set policy [on homophobia] then they should do... [There should be] a set policy going we are not going to tolerate this and there will be suspensions, people thrown out of halls, whatever. (gay male, 22).

If incidents of homophobic or indeed racist or sexist abuse occur, make it clear that that will not be tolerated in a hall environment. People who engage in that kind of thing will be thrown out. (male bisexual, 21).

Conceptual Category 3: LGB Peer Support

The second suggestion was to place all LGB students together in one hall so that they would not be isolated and would have the support of other LGBs. However, objections were made on the grounds that the building would be a 'ready-made' target for LGB victimisation and would localise homophobia.

It sounds nice but I don't know if it's such a good idea because it would be 'That's where the gay people live' and everyone would be a target. (gay male, 20).

8 of the participants said that they were not aware/had not been aware of any other LGB students living in their halls. Placing LGB students in near proximity to one another but not all in the same hall would provide a sense of community and support without making them an immediate target for homophobic attack.

Do not put them all together somewhere. ...but do try and make sure you don't separate them too much either...Try to put them like sort of close but not too close, and make sure they're a bit together so they can stick together in case of something happening.(female bisexual, 21).

Conceptual Category 4: Raising Awareness

It was also suggested that one of the most important things to work on to reduce LGB intolerance in halls was the raising of awareness of LGB issues and by presenting homosexuality and bisexuality as one of any aspects of human sexuality.

I think awareness that LGB people do exist and they're not just people on television, they live next door to you...I think people have got to realise there's quite a few of us about. (gay male, 20).

As one participant stated:

Without educating people they are going to remain ignorant and going to be homophobic (lesbian, 21).

Conceptual Category 5: Improving student warden training

Participants also offered a number of suggestions as to how to improve the student

wardens included implementing a training programme to expand their knowledge of LGB issues and help them deal with minority students, not just LGBs. It was also suggested that the student wardens should raise their profile in the halls to let people know that they are there to listen and sort out any problems, including personal ones.

Before [the student wardens] can do anything positive, I think obviously they'd have to have some sort of counselling on LGB issues because if they don't have any knowledge about it then how can they deal with it? (lesbian, 21).

The warden's door should always be open for [students] to go and just sit down and have a chat...Just to let [LGB students] know that there is somebody actually living in your hall you could turn to just to like chew their ear off really. (lesbian, 22).

An issue also raised was that of student wardens holding homophobic attitudes themselves. Although none of the participants had experienced any LGB intolerance or victimisation from their student warden, a number of them expressed concern over the application process for the position.

If you couldn't come to terms with homosexuality then I don't see why they should be in that job really. (lesbian, 21).

Anyone can become a student warden - you could be racist, homophobic, or anything. And that's wrong, obviously. So [the accommodation office] should have a more rigorous way of making sure that they're actually suitable for the job. And if they're homophobic obviously they shouldn't be a student warden in the first place. (gay male, 23).

One participant had actually been a student warden, and he himself expressed concern over the suitability of people selected to do the job, as well as the job itself and the responsibility it carries.

Basically you go and turn the fire alarm off and that's basically all you do... [My student warden] wasn't that good at what she was supposed to be doing, but 99% of wardens aren't. And I mean I've actually done the job. I know it's a bloody stupid job because you're not really told what to do and you're not properly trained. So she did the best she could. She was quite lazy about the job but then I think most of us who have done it are...Anyone can become a warden. You could be B(ritish) N(ational) P(arty). All you have to do is bluff your way through it...I know that I wasn't suitable for the job of warden. I just bluffed my way in. (male bisexual, 21).

Discussion

The present study identifies a number of issues that were of special concern for LGB students living in halls of residence. 'Coming out' to flat mates was found to be a trying and complex process fraught with difficulties and uncertainties: not only did participants have to first predict how people they had never met before and now had to live with would react if they were told, but, as the study showed, they then had to be prepared for a range of potential reactions to the information (from unconditional acceptance to avoidance and, perhaps, even victimisation). An added dilemma was that the closed environment of a hall of residence provided little opportunity for respite from LGB intolerance especially in cases where peers had responded negatively to participants' disclosure.

Although student wardens were in a position to offer help and support to the LGB students in their halls, they were generally found to be ineffective and tended to be absent from the lives of most participants. Those student wardens who were known to participants were not viewed as being approachable or supportive and were viewed as being unwilling or unable to discuss issues especially those relating to LGB students. Participants felt that this was exacerbated by a lack of sufficient training for the job and poor communication with student support/counselling services, and, as a result, it was likely that many wardens found themselves unprepared to cope effectively with issues such as homophobia.

It was clear that participants also felt that the accommodation office had done little if anything to assist LGB students assimilate into halls of residence. They did not provide any back-up or assistance for a group that has been shown to experience at least a degree of difficulty in integrating with peers because of the prevalence of negative social attitudes surrounding homosexuality/bisexuality. Such a lack of awareness for the needs and safety of LGB students was also illustrated by the lack of explicit knowledge surrounding the university's policy on equal opportunities and its *perceived* unwillingness to intervene effectively in cases of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (although no evidence was presented to suggest that this was the case).

While this study has a number of limitations due to the small number of participants interviewed, it does mirror the findings from other studies conducted in the US suggesting that university campus life in the UK is not free from an intolerance toward homosexuality/bisexuality. It suggests that institutions of higher education need to reconsider the provision they make for students from minority groups living in halls of residence, and offer constructive guidance for those who experience intolerance or discrimination from other students.

Suggestions are provided below which reflect the comments participants have made during the course of this study, and which the authors feel would require a review of recruitment and selection procedures for student wardens, and the training they receive before being placed in halls of residence

1. *Student wardens should receive thorough training to enable them to be better equipped and able to deal with LGB students in both professional and personal capacities. One way forward is to adopt some of the methods of training peer counsellors currently used in anti-bullying initiatives in schools (see Sharp & Cowie, 1998). Furthermore, a more extensive student warden training would improve halls for all students, not just LGBs.*
2. *The role of student wardens should incorporate pastoral care duties as well as those of health and safety ensuring that all students have a point of contact when they are in need of support.*
3. *Secure notice boards (with perspex panels) should be placed in halls of residence. This would ensure that signs could not be torn down or vandalised especially those relating to LGB support and information services offered by the university and local community.*
4. *Where necessary, universities should clarify and promote a policy of equal opportunities ensuring that all its students are aware of the policy and thus can be assured of being educated within a safe, non-threatening environment.*

The present study opens up possibilities for other institutions of higher education to consider how they might best support lesbian, gay and bisexual undergraduates living in university accommodation. Currently, a much larger investigation of this issue is being planned, and it is hoped that as we learn more about the needs of LGB students, we may be in a better equipped to provide a safe learning environment.

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Andy Bennett

This is the second collection of papers edited by Steve Redhead centred around the theme of contemporary dance music culture. The first collection, *Rave Off: Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture* published by Avebury in 1993, was for the main part a bold attempt to re-think the CCCS's resistance thesis. Using the then highly fashionable Baudrillardian postmodernist work, *Rave Off* suggested that 90s dance music culture represented a radical departure from the 'hiding in the light' politics of previous subcultural incarnations towards a 'politics of disappearance' spurred on by an apolitical and hedonistic outlook - a legacy of Thatchersim.

The Club Cultures Reader represents an altogether more diverse and eclectic reading of dance music and its wider cultural context, this having much to do with the range of people who have contributed to the book, which includes seasoned academics, young researchers currently carrying out empirical work on aspects of youth, music and identity and people actively involved in the dance music scene. Indeed, in many respects the title *Club Cultures Reader* (borrowed from Sarah Thornton's (1995) study of dance music *Club Cultures*) is rather misleading. There are a number of studies here which do not correspond with the issue of club culture in the straightforward way which the main title of the book suggests, but are rather concerned with a more general charting of the relationship between musical taste, style and identity.

In this respect the opening paper, Simon Frith and Jon Savage's 'Intellectuals and the Mass Media', performs a highly effective scene-setting role. Given the criticism which certain cultural theorists are now directing towards what they consider to be the uncritical way in which popular culture is being celebrated in academic circles, and the increasing equation of popular cultural studies with popular journalism, Frith and Savage present a timely critique of such a 'put down'. In 'Rethorizing Resistance' Beverly Best, calls for the need for a greater understanding and collaboration between popular culture scholars and producers, on the grounds that this

would result in popular cultural texts that are 'self-conscious of their material environments' thus opening up 'potential sites of cultural resistance'. David Muggleton's 'The Post-Subculturalist', extensively referenced during 1998s *Interrogating Subcultures* conference in Rochester, NY, centres around the argument that, with the onset of postmodernism, former subcultural distinctions are now obsolete as young people become increasingly bricoleurist in their sense of style and fashion, thus deconstructing the once clearly defined relationship, in subcultural terms, between sign and signifier (a similar view informs Ted Pohlhemus' contribution to *The Club Cultures Reader*, a paper entitled 'In the Super Market of Style'). However, while Muggleton's paper offers a thought provoking addition to the various critiques of subcultural theory, it also rests on the rather tenuous assumption that it is possible to point to a time when rigidly defined subcultures existed - a view which a number of theorists, including *Club Cultures Reader* editor, Redhead, have contested.

If *The Club Cultures Reader* is a more wide-ranging text than its title suggests, then even those studies which are more squarely focused on dance music/club culture are, in themselves, also very diverse. A particularly interesting paper in this part of the book is Katie Milestone's study of Northern Soul 'Love Factory'. A largely ignored underground style, which hit its peak in the 1970s, there is a clear relationship between Northern Soul and the early warehouse parties of the acid house era. Milestone's study clearly illustrates this connection, as well as demonstrating some of the highly distinctive features of Northern Soul, for example, the collective emphasis placed on rare soul imports and the unique resonance of the scene with the 'depressed peripheral urban areas' in which it was largely located. Two further studies which highlights the local significance of dance music culture are Sarah Champion's 'Fear and Loathing in Wisconsin' and Hillegonda Rietveld's 'The House Sound of Chicago'. While much attention has been focused on the opposition to and subversion of the warehouse party scene in the UK (for example in Redhead's (ed) *Rave Off*) little has been said or written about official reactions to dance music elsewhere in the world. Champion's account of mid-west US dance music fans' struggle to stage raves in the face of the small-town conservatism illustrates the increasingly global character of contemporary dance music and the familiar reactions of local law enforcement agencies/moral guardians. Rietveld's study of the dance music scene in Chicago similarly highlights some of the more nuanced features of dance music in the city. In

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particular, Rietveld demonstrates how the Chicago 'house' party scene, a series of informally organised parties (from where 'house music' allegedly acquired its name) - was a direct response to the racist and homophobic sensibilities of Chicago's mainstream clubscene and wider community.

While *The Club Cultures Reader* could not be classed as a definitive reading of contemporary dance music culture, it is, nevertheless, a diverse and, in many cases, highly original collection of papers. From the point of view of those researching dance music or planning lectures around the topic, *The Club Cultures Reader* is certainly a valuable resource.

Andy Bennett is Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Kent.

Howard Parker, Judith Aldridge and Fiona Measham

Illegal Leisure. The Normalization of Adolescent Recreational Drug Use

Routledge 1998

ISBN 0 415 15810 9

Nicola Groves

Illegal Leisure is an important piece of confirmatory knowledge. It develops new theory which should spark further research.

Illegal Leisure is based on the findings of a five year longitudinal study, conducted in the North West of England which followed, at the outset, seven hundred young people, contacted initially in schools. In looking at young people and leisure, focusing on young peoples use of drugs, the book convincingly argues that there has been a surprisingly rapid increase in the availability and 'trying' of drugs in the 1990s. *Illegal Leisure* further argues that young recreational drug users are no longer distinguishable by class, race, and gender.

The introduction clearly sets out the book's starting point arguing that the traditional drug discourse, 'war on drugs' has undermined, misrepresented and misunderstood young people and their drug use. On these grounds *Illegal Leisure* aims to redress this balance, challenging the reader to rethink the war on drugs.

Contextualizing popular belief surrounding young people and their drug use. Chapter 1 argues the existence of an 'official' matrix of 'youth-drugs-crime and danger'. It persuasively argues that the matrix framed media constructions and dominated public policy in the 1980s and 1990s ultimately culminating in the government strategy 'Tackling Drugs Together'.

Chapter 2 looks at methods. Pointing to practical concerns involved in conducting research with young people over a five year period, the chapter moves on to discuss self report questionnaires and in-depth interviews. This chapter is slightly disappointing. Methods are focused on at the expense of methodology. Underlying philosophies which informed the choice of method are not specifically highlighted. A single paragraph serves to cover 'ethical dilemmas we had not predicted', when a decision has to be made to respond or not to a woman's postal questionnaire which indicated that she was 'struggling with her drug use' (p 36).

In-depth interviews were carried out by 'fully trained "young" interviewers'. The significance of this is not commented upon. If 'young' interviewers were trained in an attempt to provide 'match' interviewing this is not made clear. No discussion is given to interviewers being matched in terms of drug use, gender, or race.

Chapter 3 looks at young people and alcohol. This chapter is a welcome addition to a text looking at young people and drug use. As a youth worker in the North of England young people's call to put alcohol on the agenda was constantly being voiced. Chapter 3 concludes that young people make a cost-benefit analysis around their use of alcohol and it is this that forms a transferable framework around their decision making process regarding illegal drugs.

In chapter 5 the book moves away from prevalence focusing on the nitty gritty analysis of young people's drug use and behaviour. The chapter presents a 'drug pathways analysis', identifying and developing four key pathways: 'the abstainer', 'former trier', 'in transition' and 'current user'. The analysis developed argues that 'pathways are identifiable by attitude, future expectations about drug use and actual drug trying and drug taking behaviour'.

This theoretical framework provides a new and useful method for understanding young people's drug taking. I welcomed the inclusion of an increase in direct quotes from young people which had been a bit skimpy up until this point. The pathways diagrams were simple and effective.

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Chapter 6 looks at 'journeys' young people make as they try different drugs. Picking up on the cost-benefit analysis developed in chapter 3 it argues that young people become increasingly 'drug wise' employing 'identifiable cost-benefit assessments about regular drug use' (p 119). This chapter develops a market analysis of young people's drug use in which

regular use is an act of consumption which involves, directly or indirectly, the purchases of the chosen drugs, which in turn involves a decision about expending a limited disposable income.
(p 132).

It is interesting to note that the book does not explore the journeys of those who lack sufficient disposable income.

In looking at the implications of the North West study chapter 7 presents the normalisation thesis. It points out that this refers only to the use of certain drugs, mainly cannabis but also nitrates, amphetamines, LSD and ecstasy. Key features of the thesis are outlined. The conclusion makes clear that normalisation is not an absolute. The main tenement of the thesis is that in the 1990s recreational drug use is becoming more mainstream, as opposed to a primarily subcultural 'deviant' activity. This is an argument and conclusion that this book arrives at in an extremely thought provoking, interesting and coherent way.

Illicit Leisure overall is great. It challenges the reader to rethink the war on drugs providing useful new analytical tools. I would recommend this to degree and postgraduate students with an interest in youth culture, society and drugs. Alongside its academic worth it provides good anecdotal evidence for those working in the field.

Nicola Groves is currently the Development Worker at Leeds Drug Project.

*David Sadofsky Baggins***Drug Hate and the Corruption of American Justice**

Praeger Publishers 1998

ISBN 0 275 95956 2

£39.95

Nicola Groves

I couldn't quite get my head around this book.

The majority of the book looks at the 'War on Drugs' and accompanying 'drug hate' that the author 'argues' dominated orthodox American culture in the 1970s and 1980s and resulted in the corruption of the American justice system. The final chapter takes a step away from this, concluding that in the 1990s 'the hate card is no longer trump'. (xii)

I use the word 'argues' in a loose sense. The author states his beliefs as opposed to putting forward his argument, supported by evidence. Where examples are given to prove a point there is rarely any development of these into any forms of analysis. Linkages, assumed to be explicit, I found to be unclear, often ill-defined and based on assumptions that were not clearly justified.

The introduction is unclear as to where the book is coming from and in which direction it is going. Although the contents of chapters are briefly mentioned in the introduction, the language used and the dogmatic writing style completely threw me off track. Throughout the book, metaphorical references to war are ubiquitous. I would certainly recommend this book to feminists interested in language, masculinity and war...I digress.

It is unclear whether the author is adopting a cynical stance or whether he is subscribing to the standpoint I now believe he is 'attacking'. The book does argue against the legitimisation of 'drug hate' but this is by no means clearly inferred from the language used. Despite reading the words I found it hard to gain meaning. I felt that the language used was reminiscent of the shock horror style of the 1980s British campaign which included 'Heroin Screws You Up'. I draw parallels between the lack of effectiveness of this campaign with the overall effectiveness of the message of 'Drug Hate and the Corruption of American Justice'. I found myself dismissing points which may have been valid but were not qualified and were presented as a 'crusade' against the war on drugs.

Clarity and structure are missing throughout each chapter. Introductions are omitted, references to the message of the book appear indiscriminately, without warning, dislocated, negating the presentation of a cohesive argument.

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Chapter 1 states the existence of a 'War on Drugs' which dominated American public policy in the 1970s and 1980s. In looking at criminal justice and public policy the author tells us 'Los Angeles offers a microcosm of the general tragedy of criminal justice, which is the message of this book'. Moving on from this confusing message, under the banner 'War on Drugs' the argument is made that the American justice system is corrupt. By citing several examples of extreme racism which occurred in different American states, the existence of racism within the American criminal justice system is clearly made. What is not clear is the link these examples have and the relevance these incidents give to the 'War on Drugs'.

The book alludes to the 'social harm of mass incarceration' and the irrelevancy of incarcerating people for 'cultural offenses' (p 20). No explanation of this term is made despite its use throughout. No common level of understanding is established. The reader is left to imply meaning from comments proffered such as 'crimes with victims are usually subject to reduction (via incarceration) whilst crimes against culture are not' (p 25).

At random, parallels are drawn, under the heading of 'cultural crimes', between drugs, pornography and prostitution. The author refers to the role of 'cultural enforcement' and 'cultural purification' he believes pervaded the criminal justice system and American constitution. The inclusion of pornography and prostitution in this 'analysis' without any justification for inclusion or acknowledgment of the writers own assumptions I found extremely annoying. Sentences such as '...government has decided to conduct a war on crime defined substantially as forbidden recreational activity ie illegal drug use and prostitution' were not uncommon (p 35). These examples lay bare the authors own judgements and knowledge base, implicitly made as opposed to openly given. No reference to any theories or explanations of these 'cultural crimes' were given I can see Andrea Dworkins face now.

Chapter 2 asks 'What is the legitimate purpose to sending a person to prison for decades because his vices are unfashionable?' This chapter goes through the constitutional amendments and deconstructs them in an attempt to put across an answer.

Chapter 3 basically argues that constitutional rights go out the window 'when the public wants the focus of criminal justice to be cultural warfare' (p 50). Chapter 4 argues that public health considerations did not fuel public policy in the 1970s and 1980s but that 'drug hate' did. Chapter 5

looks at how 'drug hate' served the interests of politicians, governments and agencies and points to the beneficiaries and supporters of the war.

Chapter 6 surprised me. With the exception of the title 'The Passing of the Hate Age', there is no indication in proceeding chapters what this final chapter may hold. Far from concluding and drawing out the main implications of what has so far been argued, this chapter concludes. 'And so, amazingly, the drug warriors today after decades of propaganda feel the issue slipping from them' (p 159). Amazingly indeed! I was not prepared for this sudden change in direction in which the soldiers of war became rebels against it.

I cannot identify the niche in literature, knowledge or target audience that this book is aimed at. At £39.95 I am at a loss to identify who to recommend this book to. Perhaps this book would appeal to those who enjoy reading a good dogmatic diatribe.

Nicola Groves is currently the Development Worker at Leeds Drug Project.

Tony Jeffs

**Henry Morris: Village Colleges, Community Education
and the Ideal Order**

Educational Heretics Press

ISBN 1 900219 06 9

£9.95

pp 92

Ted Harvey

The Educational Heretics Press continues to turn out slim volumes which challenge the prevailing orthodoxy in education and provide solace to those who are uncomfortable with the current philistinism.

The subject in this case is, as the cover says, a fascinating combination of contradictions who yet achieved more than many radical educators and probably had an influence far beyond that which is readily acknowledged. Henry Morris was Chief Education Officer of Cambridgeshire for over thirty years, starting in the early twenties. The picture we get of rural

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education at that time is of fatalistic acceptance combined with local politics (in which the university played a major role, as did the church) conspiring to perpetuate an impoverished provision locked in years of neglect and apathy.

Morris' vision was extraordinarily radical, he wanted his Village Colleges to be cultural, social and leisure centres for the community and to embody a new type of education, one in which the dry rote learning of the past was replaced by much richer, more active and stimulating activities guided by a new type of teacher.

Over the thirty plus years he spent as Chief Education Officer for Cambridgeshire he worked unceasingly, against huge obstacles to realise this vision. The scale of his achievement was breathtaking, six Village Colleges based on this model were opened during his tenure, four more in the following years before his death in 1961. However his influence stretched much wider and other counties and even countries adopted some or all of his principles and his acolytes took up posts where his thinking became the basis for further developments.

Tony Jeffs' book gives us the essence of Morris' work including sufficient detail and context to help us appreciate the extent to which he was able to forge ahead with his radical agenda. It is hard, if not impossible to think of anyone who managed to combine such a wide vision with its realisation on a significant scale. The publication of this volume is relevant and timely. Apart from its intrinsic historical value, there is a sharp contrast between the educational reform of Henry Morris and that being attempted by the present government.

Morris' enterprise was driven by a genuinely inspirational vision with a core of profoundly human values. His concerns were for community, children, equality and culture and formed a whole vision for the future qualitatively different from the present.

The inevitable comparison with today's version of education reform is highly illuminating. It is probably no coincidence that his methods were startlingly different than those advocated in the modern educational scene.

Rather than being concerned with measurable outcomes, detailed action plans, performance related criteria, league tables and such like, Morris seems to have simply worked tirelessly towards the goal which motivated him. Little is said about his management style apart from comments that

he could be 'difficult' and was an unashamed centralist, how these qualities squared with the principles he wanted to promulgate is unexplored.

Another major area which it would be instructive to explore further is the nature and extent of change in classroom practice in the Village Colleges. It is no surprise that there is a shortage of information in this area. Personally I can not help being sceptical of some of the rather idyllic accounts that do exist, one of which, from Morris himself, is quoted here. Morris envisaged a completely different relationship between teacher and pupils, there is an admission that by the 1950s this had returned to the norm, just as the colleges there have since become standard state comprehensives. It would be fascinating to have some more evidence about these qualitative areas of his endeavour. The nature and extent of difference in the newly established colleges and the subsequent story of their decline in these respects could be highly illuminating and relevant for reformers today.

However, these comments are not criticisms of Morris, more testimony to the tantalising nature of this account, offering, as it does, a glimpse of a reformer whose work stands in sharp contrast to the mechanistic and short-sighted approach of the present government.

It is ironic that just as there is a upsurge of interest in lifelong learning, a concept Morris could legitimately have claimed to have invented, Cambridgeshire is re-organising its community education into a skeleton of its former provision. Overall this is a refreshing, even inspiring account which could encourage the downhearted and show those who subscribe to the current orthodoxy that other forms of educational reform are possible, desirable and achievable.

Ted Harvey is Assistant Warden at a Cambridgeshire Village College.

Margaret Crompton

Children, Spirituality, Religion and Social Work

Ashgate, Aldershot

£18.95 (pbk)

pp 283

Maxine Green

The recent rise in the interest in spirituality and how it relates to professional practice brings with it a corresponding need for information and resources. This book gives a good overview of the field while also addressing specific areas of policy, legislation and practice.

Crompton has produced a book which reflects wide academic research drawn from disciplines such as social anthropology in addition to theological and sociological sources. Her professional practice clearly informs her work and she has been able to use her own religious and spiritual experience to bring further clarity to the practice.

The title of the book suggests that it is aiming at social workers but it has a broad enough scope to be useful to youth workers and others relating to young people in depth. It would be a useful resource to anyone who is searching for the religious context of a young person they are working with, or someone who wants to explore how the spiritual values of a young person may affect their behaviour and their attitudes. Those workers who may find it particularly helpful are those who have no personal faith or direct religious experience as the book encourages professionals to use their wider professional skills in this area and not to 'back off' and look for a 'religious expert'.

The book is arranged in six parts, parts one, two and three give a broad introduction into spiritual rights, spirituality and religion. Parts four and five are concerned with practice particularly relating to abuse and neglect and death and bereavement. Part six suggests approaches on how to communicate with children concerning their religion or spirituality. The author also suggests that the way the last three parts of the book are addressed can be used as models for addressing other issues such as disability or offending.

Crompton tackles difficult areas, such as abuse within religious practices and ritual, with balance and an open mind. She picks up the issue with a child centred focus initially but also raises questions of support and good practice of the social worker when having to deal with disturbing revelations,

for instance in 'satanic abuse' disclosure. Crompton also tackles the subject of suicide and termination of pregnancy in the context of religious teachings and value systems. This information, although necessarily broad and brief, can give the practitioner valuable insights into differing cultural and religious values that young people in these situations are dealing with.

The book also covers areas such as religious observance, rites of passage, fast and festivals, worship, symbols and sacred objects and finally daily religious care.

There has been a lot of thought into how the book has been set out with questions and suggestions appearing throughout the sections. These are intended to encourage personal reflection and would be a valuable aid for trainers. They appeared largely useful though a little repetitious.

A criticism I would offer is the emphasis on where things went wrong. Whilst accepting that social workers would be more likely to be involved with dysfunction, I was sorry that the positive formative influence of spirituality was not given as much emphasis. An example of this was the section on Marriage where Crompton explores this as a liminal risky state and focuses largely on how it can be abused. There is minimal attention to the way the ceremony can strengthen an individual's faith, give their life meaning and direction, and reinforce the community.

This is an interesting and comprehensive book and would be a useful resource for individuals or projects.

Maxine Green, *National Youth Officer for the Church of England.*

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Articles of normally between 2,500 and 8,000 words should be sent to Jean Spence, Umme Imam or Ruth Gilchrist. They should take an analytical approach to theoretical, practical and/or policy issues concerning young people in society. On receipt of the article the author will be notified whether it is being considered for publication. This process involves the editorial group seeking comments from anonymous referees.

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which are less well known should be spelled out in the first instance with the abbreviated form following in parentheses, e.g. British Youth Council (BYC). The abbreviated form can be used thereafter. Tables, graphs and diagrams should be set out clearly and included in the relevant place in the text. Subheadings should be clearly marked and underlined.

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And for a report:

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

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