youth &policy

The National Youth Agency

the journal of critical analysis

issue number

spring 2003

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Youth & Policy is devoted to the critical study of youth affairs and youth policy. The National Youth Agency provides information and support for all those concerned with the informal, personal and social education of young people.

TOMORROW'S FUTURE OR
SIGNS OF A MISSPENT YOUTH?
Youth, Policy and the First Blair Government

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In returning to power after 18 years in opposition, the first Blair government made much of its 'youthful' credentials. Promising to tackle the neglect of the Conservative years, Blair's positioning of Labour as nothing less than 'a party of national renewal' (Labour Party 1997: 3) committed the in-coming government to the literal rejuvenation of a country grown weary of the singular pursuit of market forces. Rather than the anticipated liability, youth also became a means to fend off charges of political naivety and lack of Cabinet experience, as the relative youth of its leading figures on the one hand and the youngest Prime Minister for nearly 200 years on the other, were used to distance New Labour from both the discredited political class of the 1980s and 1990s, and from its own political failures of the 1970s.

Youth also featured in more substantive ways. Apathy and the now predictable reluctance to vote, saw strenuous efforts to enlist the support of the young. More than a match for Neil Kinnock's attempts to co-opt the youth vote at the end of the 1980s, without a hint of self-consciousness Tony Blair was happy to remind (young) voters of his involvement with a university rock band (complete with photographic evidence), do the circuit of television chat shows, push New Labour's 'youth-friendliness' in interviews to the rock and pop press, and enlist the support of any of those from the rock, pop and sporting world willing to lend their support. But New Labour's appeals to youth also went beyond the quest for votes. A priority from the outset, youth played a prominent role in New Labour's 1997 General Election campaign. Two of the Party's five key manifesto pledges - the New Deal for the Young Unemployed and fast-track punishment for young offenders - were directed at youth and, once in power, youth became both a more coherent principle of social administration and the object of a number of high-profile policy interventions. With the introduction of new political and administrative arrangements for policy development and implementation, it is perhaps no small irony that what Davies (1986) mistakenly saw as the beginnings of a national policy for youth in the authoritarianism of the New Right, only perhaps began to take on something that merits such a description with the return of Labour to governing power.

It is this last dimension to New Labour's 'youthfulness' that is the focus of this paper. Its begins by raising a number of critical questions about the practical and analytical status of 'youth policy' before moving on to consider more recent developments. While all modern governments have developed policies for young people, it is

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only with the election of New Labour that moves have been made to codify this into something administratively coherent that may merit the term 'youth policy'. Moving on to consider the significance of this change, the paper argues that New Labour's insistence on new administrative arrangements for the young overlays a more fundamental process of change. It is asserted that New Labour's embrace of 'youth policy' in fact reveals a deeper and more profound development, in which government is seeking to redraw the boundaries between state and youth and, ultimately, to effect its withdrawal from any previous commitment to providing substantive sources of support for the young. For this reason, the paper concludes by suggesting that moves towards the creation of a 'national youth policy' tells us more about the political needs of New Labour than it does about the needs of the young.

Do Governments Have 'Youth Policies'?

Making judgements on 'youth policy' is in many respects problematic since it begs the basic question of whether or not governments have one. Of course, at least since the early 19th century the young have been a major object of government policy as age became a much more significant principle of policy interventions (Mitterauer 1992). Today, age is the primary basis upon which the state relates to the young, rather than their gender, ethnicity or class, and it is through their age that governments assign young people to those institutions that we have come to associate with youth. The simple fact of possessing a certain chronological age brings with it a differential access to the formal rights associated with full social membership, while age also provides the means through which young people are brought into a more or less common relationship with the central institutions of modern life. From the sublime - schooling, paid employment, the criminal justice system, taxation, the armed forces, sexual conduct, enfranchisement, property rights, relationships with parents. - to (what may now often seem) the ridiculous - purchasing a pet, participating in dangerous public entertainment, entering or living in a brothel, being tattooed, begging for another, or participating in a performance of hypnotism - youth is most fundamentally a question of state and age.

Table 1 Youth, Age and Policy (England and Wales)

Age	Rights and Responsibilities
10	Criminally responsible (8 in Scotland) Can be remanded to non-secure local authority accommodation
12	Buy a pet Participate in dangerous public entertainment, under licence Can be remanded to secure local authority accommodation
13	Minimum age for paid employment, under licence (11 on farms) Own air rifle

Table 1 Youth, Age and Policy (England and Wales) *continued*

Age	Rights and Responsibilities
14	Ride a horse on the road wearing protective head gear Employed as street trader by parents, under licence
16	Age of consent Buy cigarettes Marry with parental consent (without parental consent in Scotland) Licence to ride a moped Minimum school leaving age Full-time employment Can work as a street trader Are permitted to enter or live in a brothel Can be used by another to beg
17	Join the armed forces with parental consent Interviewed by police without presence of an 'appropriate adult' Apply for fire arms licence Buy or hire a cross bow Licence to drive a car Can be remanded to prison
18	Engage in armed combat Marry without parental consent Vote in elections Jury service Open bank account without parental signature Bet in a betting shop Get a tattoo Entitlement to 'youth' rate of the national minimum wage Entitlement to lower rates of welfare benefits
21	Become a Member of Parliament
22	Entitlement to 'adult' rate of the national minimum wage
25	Can adopt Can obtain licence to sell alcohol Entitlement to full rate of welfare benefits End of restrictions on viewing films or videos
26	Full rate of housing benefit

Accepting that governments have policies for young people is one matter, but is another one completely to account for these in terms of 'youth policy'. All modern governments commit themselves to supporting young people's aspirations for independence from their families, allied to a measure of their care and protection. Yet what governments do in the name of the young often has ulterior motives: eg family allowances as anti-inflationary device, education as economic policy, social housing to promote labour mobility, 'targeting' and 'child support' as public expenditure restraint. The practical impact of policies carried out in the name of the young can also belie their ostensible purpose. The determination of governments during the 1980s and 1990s, for example, to reintegrate the young into the labour market on the basis of flexibility, low wages, government training programmes and an expanded tertiary education, have actually compounded the problems young people face in realising their aspirations for independence. Far from facilitating

their independence, the result has been a rise in the average age of marriage, increased rates of cohabitation, an acceleration in the decline in fertility rates and an increase in the average age of leaving home (Irwin 1995).

Identifying concrete examples of what may actually constitute 'youth policy' is also more difficult than may at first seem the case. Education policy, for instance, certainly has considerable implications for young people but it is obviously not synonymous with youth, including as it does primary school children, 'mature' students who now numerically dominate higher education and, more recently, life-long learning. Even specific initiatives within education policy are rarely exclusive to a particular age group, usually encompassing the entire years of compulsory education and often beyond. There are some notable exceptions, like the current moves to give greater coherence to provision for 14 to 19 year olds. But even here, many of the practical measures that this involves such as combating truancy and exclusion, examinations and testing, standards and league tables, the national curriculum, vocational 'relevance', selection and diversity, have immediate implications for both younger and older groups.

Governments, at least in the UK, have been equally disinclined to commit themselves to a clearly delineated notion of youth. As Table 1 also illustrates, as far as legislation is concerned we could include in a definition of youth anyone between the ages of 10 (when criminal responsibility begins in England and Wales, 8 in Scotland) and 26 (when the full range of adult entitlements to welfare benefits are available), or possibly any number of ages in between. For a long time, Britain and Denmark were the only European Union countries not possessing either a Ministry of Youth, Minister of Youth, parliamentary youth committee or cross-government committee on youth. It was only with the election of New Labour that a 'youth policy' took shape through the establishment of a Minister for Youth, a dedicated Cabinet Committee for Young People and an inter-departmental Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) (2001a) (see below). The creation of the CYPU does offer more clarity to what the government regards as youth, by defining as its remit the 20 percent of the population under 19 years of age. It is less certain, however, at what point the Unit's work shifts from children to youth, although we could perhaps follow the lead of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (2000) and restrict our understanding of youth to those aged 13 to 19. Even here, however, the SEU recognises the arbitrary nature of such boundaries and both the CYPU and the SEU include as a successful 'youth policy' the New Deal for Young People (NDYP), with its target group of 18 to 24 year olds. To further confuse the matter, government statistics on young people include all those aged 13 to 24 (Matheson and Summerfield, 2000).

The Myth of Transition

Practical difficulties encountered in identifying what may constitute 'youth policy' are further reflected at the analytical level. It has long been accepted that the existence of youth as a social or administrative category cannot be understood as the simple expression of those physiological and psychological changes that take place in adolescence. Even among those determined to hold onto the notion of adolescence as something immutable, this much is readily conceded (Marsland, 1992; Coleman and Hendry, 1991). Of course, all young people 'grow up'. We may dispute the detail, point to historical and cultural variations in timing and duration, but all young people must go through a process of biological maturity at some point early in their lives. Problems arise, however, when adolescence becomes a means of accounting for judgements that are in essence politically determined. Public justifications of why a young person cannot legally have sex until they are 16 years old, drive a car until they are 17, engage in armed combat until they are 18 and so on (Table 1), may frequently invoke the facility, emotional or physical, to accomplish such tasks without damage to the individual or society. But the absence of any discernible logic to the ages at which rights and responsibilities like these are extended and the capacity of young people to exercise them means that, in order to explain why it is that a young person's ability to procreate, control a machine or take a life occurs well-before they are legally or morally sanctioned to do so, we must look to the state and to politics to understand the contours of youth.

This emphasis on the state should therefore bring questions of 'youth policy' to the fore. Much space has understandably been devoted to the detail of policies affecting the young (e.g. MacDonald, 1997; Jones and Wallace, 1992; Coleman and Warren-Adamson, 1992), but the underlying issue of why states are so keen to organise young people according to their age generally passes without much comment. This is most likely a consequence of a shared assumption that 'youth policy' is an issue of socialisation or, in recent debates, more accurately the failure of the state to ensure that young people are inducted, trained, educated, moralised even, to take up their longer-term places in society. For the New Right, this is expressed in terms of the failure of governments to effect the socialisation of young people due to the malign influence of welfarism, the absence of meaningful role models and the obscurantism of recent academic debate (Marsland, 1992). For the centre, it is expressed in terms of misunderstandings and misinformation surrounding young people's personal and social worlds, as politicians respond to media hysteria and popular misconceptions by introducing short-term, contradictory and self-defeating policies (Coleman, 1992). And for the Marxist left, youth policies emerge in response to the over-riding interests of state and class, particularly surrounding the need to

ensure that the mass of young people become the next generation of compliant and passive workers (Davies, 1986).

Assumptions of socialisation also underpin the current vogue for transitional studies of youth. After the brief flirtation with radical theory during the late 1970s, the field of 'youth studies' has returned to a more orthodox concern with the transitional qualities of youth, or those 'sequences of statuses through which young people pass as they move from childhood to adult' (Coles, 1995: 20). Individually, youth policies such as education and training are held to represent the means through which states support and structure, hinder or obstruct young people's integration as adults: '"youth policies" are prescriptions and plans designed to help young people and to manage the transition from childhood to adulthood' (Coles, 2000a: 2). Crucial in this respect are those transitions from school to work, dependent to independent living and from progeny to parent. And when taken in sum, these same policies add up to a more general process of social integration, as youth is held up as a socially determined life-course event during which states progressively confer upon the young the rights and responsibilities of full social membership: 'youth can be seen as that period during which the transition to citizenship, that is, to full participation in society occurs' (Jones and Wallace, 1992: 18).

Although convincing at one level, the major problem accounts like these face is that the structure of actually existing obligations and entitlements displays few transitional qualities. One of the criticisms frequently directed at modern governments is their propensity to foster teenage confusion through the contradictory way in which they allocate 'adult' rights and responsibilities to the young. To return again to Table 1, transition appears far from adequate as a description (let alone explanation) of the ways in which governments give to the young rights to leave compulsory education, sell their labour, wed, vote in elections, own property, enter legally binding agreements, claim welfare benefits and services etc. What politicians give with one hand they can take away with the other where, for example, a young person can get married but not buy a drink in a public house as celebration or a single young worker is required to meet the full burden of income tax but does not have access to the 'adult' rate of the national minimum wage. The best we may be able to say is that the transfer of the formal rights and responsibilities of citizenship to the young operates in a curiously ambiguous fashion. At worst, the absence of any clear or logical quality to this process points to the markers of age in youth as the product of a series of discrete historical processes that have only a loose relevance to the notion of youth so defined.

To be fair, the implications of this have not gone unnoticed. In his indispensable review of recent 'youth policy', Coles notes how 'it would be easy to conclude

that, if a defining characteristic of "youth policy" involved having some explicit, co-ordinated strategy, then, until recently, the UK did not have a "youth policy" at all'. As he continues, 'instead we merely had a haphazard collection of policies and initiatives which impacted upon young people's lives in an often unplanned, uncalculated and largely chaotic manner' (2000a: 1). This is certainly a logical judgement to make when viewed from the perspective of youth-as-transition. But, when seen from a different angle the apparently haphazard and contradictory delineation of youth appears not such a bewildering process.

Keynesianism, Monetarism and the Changing State of Youth

This alternative perspective stresses the importance of age to youth and to the structure of the state and social administration. As Wallace and Kovatcheva well recognise, youth is 'a product of state systems through which age became bureaucratically calibrated. Without such a definition of age youth would not have been possible' (1998: 83). However, their own explanation of why age came to assume such importance to states rests on an underlying functionalism. In their view, modern states have to respond to the need in industrial societies for appropriately socialised and skilled workers, for example by establishing complex and sophisticated educational structures planned around principles of age. As they note, 'the increasingly complex division of labour in modern societies and the needs of ever-changing skills have necessitated longer period of preparation for work and retraining or re-education for life' (Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998: 85). We can simply point out here, however, that understanding the development of recent education and training policies in terms of skill and technical requirements is a problematic position to take, when it is remembered that for the past 25 years policy in this area has been motivated just as much by the political problems posed by workless youth than any underlying 'needs' of the economy (Coates, 2000).

In contrast, Mizen (2002) suggests that the functionalism of this approach can be avoided if age and youth are viewed as political categories. By this he means that the considerable importance capitalist states attach to age arises, first, not from any underlying necessity but from its value as a source of division. Age as an instrument of policy provides states with a means to create (arbitrary) divisions as part of its more general process of political management through the '... project[ion of] certain forms of organisation upon our everyday activity, forms of organisation which do not pose any threat to the reproduction of capitalist social relations' (LEWRG, 1980: 57). Second, the universalism that states ascribe to age also provides a form through which traditional sources of inequality can be reproduced, in the same way that, for instance, 'the universal citizenship *form* may have been the medium for promoting interests within a much more traditional class based political and

economic content' (Pierson, 1991: 37, original emphasis). And third, in relating to young people primarily on the basis of chronological age, age also becomes a point at which young people can be (re)integrated into the broader policy configurations that state's develop to manage social relations.

An illustration of this last point can be made by examining youth as an aspect of the two major state forms that have dominated post-war Britain. The first stretching from the end of the second world war to the middle of the 1970s can be termed Keynesianism and the second, emerging from the crisis of Keynesianism to the present can be termed monetarism. Both Keynesianism and monetarism are terms more usually associated with economics but following Clarke (1988; see also Burnham, 2001) they also have value as a way of expressing the broader configurations between state and civil society. State practices associated with each were not restricted to a narrow set of economic doctrines concerned with managing demand or controlling the money supply, but expressed a much more profound and expansive process of state activity engaged in the organisation and management of the entire framework of social relations.

Under Keynesianism, governments pursued strategies based on a programme that took the influence of the state deep into the fabric of society. Clearly embodied in the so-called 'post-war settlement', through the welfare state, a generalised system of 'industrial relations' and the political commitment to full employment, governments actively sought to reconcile popular aspirations with the imperatives of post-war reconstruction through a massive programme of concession and conciliation. Monetarism, in contrast, inverted this political commitment to inclusion by resorting to (the more exclusive principles of) money and the market as key agents in the management of social relations. Expressed in terms of the necessity of 'getting the state off the backs of the people' (Bosanquet, 1983), under monetarism the role of the state was not so much diminished as subject to a significant change in form which, in turn, had implications for the entire edifice of post-war social relations.

The practical implications of this for the young were immense. Under the Keynesian strategy youth embodied the social democratic belief that equality of outcome could be reconciled with national efficiency (Davies, 1986); in effect, youth was politically reconstituted through age as a relatively good 'state' to be. Age provided one practical means to achieve this where, on the one hand, new age categories and definitions were brought into being while, on the other, being a certain age brought with it distinctive benefits. More young people than ever were brought within an education system, itself progressively reconstituted along comprehensive lines, as the school leaving age was raised; tertiary education was expanded into a more inclusive system free at the point of demand; the costs of young people's

protracted dependence was to some degree off-set through a system of family allowances and child benefits; young people were brought more fully within a reorganised and expanded social security system, both as dependents but also increasingly in their own right; the conditions under which youth offending was regarded were progressively redefined as a welfare issue rather than a law and order one; and all of this was underwritten by the political commitment to full employment and to the narrowing of the relative earnings gap between young workers and adults.

With the restructuring of the Keynesian welfare state the apparently jumbled structure of age-related rights and entitlements that this created, was subject to considerable change. Precisely because age and youth had become such an important organising principle of the Keynesian welfare state, the turn to monetarism had such significant implications for the young. Two dimensions to this are worth noting here. First, most pre-existing age criteria survived but the implications of being a particular age dramatically changed. Previously the target of new resources, provision for certain younger age groups was marked out as a priority for expenditure constraints as public resources for education, the family, housing costs, the relief of unemployment, social security benefits and (more latterly) training programmes were brought within rigid monetary limits. Being a certain age also became a focal point for the aggressive pursuit of market forces: in education (selection, testing, 'league tables', devolved management structures, student fees etc.), training and work experience (employer-led, credits, TECs etc.), unemployment benefits (the 'active benefits regime', lower benefit levels, 'softer' forms of workfare etc.), the depression of youth wages (training allowances, wage ceiling schemes, abolition of wages councils etc.) and in access to social housing ('right to buy', the marketisation of rents etc.). And, in relation to young offenders, the inclusiveness of the welfarist agenda was progressively redefined within more 'exclusive' (Young, 1999) terms, as governments looked to the rule of law to curb youth offending.

Second, the turn to money and the market also actually heightened the administrative importance of age. As previous age criteria proved ill-suited to the purpose, new ones were created in their place. In social security age became a more important means of restricting eligibility and distributing resources, as income support levels were recalibrated according to age and the entitlements of school leavers removed. Similar arrangements were implemented in the allocation of public support for young people's housing costs (Rugg, 1999). New age criteria were also established in the name of 'targeting', as welfare benefits for school leavers were removed and lower rates introduced for other age groups. Such divisions were further replicated in the 'active benefits regime', as young people found themselves the object of intensive government activity aimed at moving them back into work. Again in relation

to the turn to law and order, new age categories were introduced in relation to the arrest, disposal, monitoring, punishment and confinement of young offenders (Muncie, 1997).

Tomorrow's Future?

When viewed from such a vantage point, New Labour's recent moves to create a coherent 'youth policy' would appear to mark a significant change of tack. For the first time a government appears to be moving beyond limiting itself to the more familiar (and jumbled) policy pronouncements on education, youth crime, unemployment and training, towards a more coherent and clearly articulated strategy (for 13 to 19 year olds) centred around the coordination of policy. The immediate origins of this are attributable to the work of the SEU which, after its creation following the 1997 election victory, quickly established youth as a priority. In the four years between the general elections of 1997 and 2001, four SEU reports - truancy and school exclusion (1998), teenage pregnancy (1999), minimum age school leavers not in education, employment or training (1999) and young runaways (2001) - were explicitly concerned with major problems affecting the young, and a further report dealing with rough sleepers (1998) had clearly 'youthful' concerns.

More significant still has been the SEU's advocacy of a national 'youth policy', as a coherent and focused response to the deeply entrenched problems experienced by growing numbers of the young. In the report of the Policy Action Team 12 on neighbourhood renewal, the SEU set out to provide 'a vision of how Government can give young people ... a better deal - both supporting them more effectively through adolescence and, if possible, acting earlier to stop them developing problems in the first place' (2000: 7). Focusing especially on those 'young people who experience poverty, poor family support, low education attainment and other problems' (12) wherever their domicile, in a notable change of tone the report readily conceded that 'young people today face a markedly different situation from their predecessors, and one that is still rapidly changing' (13). In a sometimes frank and revealing exposition of the plight of the young, the report went on to provide a detailed examination of the scale - 'a significant minority of young people experience a range of serious problems and acute crisis in adolescence' - international comparison - 'the numbers affected are in many cases worse than other comparable countries' - and trends - 'too many of the trends have been in the wrong direction' (14) - of the problems of contemporary youth.[1]

The recommendations of the report were equally lucid. While clearly attentive to both the scale of the problems faced by young people and to the range of individual initiatives already underway, 'a key conclusion ... is the need for greater coherence of Government policies at a national and local level' (10). To effect this, the report

advocated changes to the 'machinery of government' to create a clearer policy framework for youth. At the national level, the recommendations were that this should involve the creation of a Ministerial Group for Young People to 'bring together all departments which need to contribute to this strategy' and 'clear arrangements for Ministerial leading roles'. These new Ministerial-level structures should be supported by 'cross-cutting official support' in the form of 'a new Youth Unit or other similar arrangement' (69), the task of which would be to 'support Ministers in carrying forward the strategy, and as a common resource for all departments' (70). Of primary importance to this new Unit would be four key strategic issues: designing policies around the needs of the young, shifting the balance of government effort and activity from fire-fighting to prevention, more effective coordination and leadership and the dissemination of 'what works'. In a now accustomed move, the report further recommend that the performance of the government's 'youth policy' would be evaluated against national 'youth inclusive objectives' through a periodic report.

By the time the SEU report was published, these recommendations were already under review. Shortly afterwards in July 2000, they found a clear endorsement in the Prime Minister's announcement of measures to both promote and synchronize policy formation and the development of services for the young. Expanding the remit of the report's recommendations to cover all young people under 19 years of age (a move already implicit in the SEU report), Blair established a new Cabinet Committee for Young People, with a ministerial representation from all concerned government departments (14 members representing 11 departments), and a designated Minister for Youth. These were to be supported by a Children and Young People's Unit which, as subsequently articulated in its document *Tomorrow's Future*, would be 'a visible symbol of this Government's continued commitment to improving the life chances of our children and young people ... [and] a focal point for ensuring that our policies, across Government, are in accordance with this vision' (CYPU, 2001a: 26-27). The Unit was further given responsibility for both formulating a national 'vision' for the young and ensuring its periodic evaluation. Five months after Blair's second general election victory, the means to achieve this 'vision' was opened up to a process of national consultation (significantly including young people themselves) and the government's mission for children and young people was being articulated in terms of an ambitious and ostensibly radical agenda:

> *Every child and young person deserves the best possible start in life, to be brought up in a safe, happy and secure environment, to be consulted, listened to and heard, to be supported as they develop into adulthood and maturity, and be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential*
> (CYPU, 2001b: 2).

It's All in the Technique

This sense of change is shared elsewhere. In a sympathetic but sober analysis, Coles contends that these developments mark a major shift in the historic status of 'youth policy' for UK governments: 'since 1997, youth policy in the UK has been taken seriously by government ... probably for the first time' (2000a: 210; see also 2000b). He also sees this new-found prominence as bringing to 'youth research, policy and practice a new agenda for change' (*ibid.*: 209). Hailing the SEU as a 'surrogate Ministry of Youth' (*ibid.*: 202), the quiet revolution that it unleashed on government 'has involved adopting a holistic perspective and developing joined up solutions' (*ibid.*: 210); an approach to the problems of youth that recognises the interconnected nature of young people's problems and the need for a rounded response. No simple endorsement, Coles is nevertheless clear that New Labour's 'youth policy' provides the basis for both a rational assessment and sympathetic response to the needs of the young.

The drive for coherence in 'youth policy' is indeed a noteworthy development but the novelty of the agenda to which it answers is far less clear. Far from redefining the terms of the relationship between government and youth, modifications to the structure of administration that have flowed from the SEU's deliberations have actually consolidated traditional points of influence: '... the key challenge is to achieve greater coherence at a national and local level of *existing initiatives, rather than invent a series of new ones*' (SEU, 2000: 10, emphasis added). Perhaps it would be churlish to have expected a party returning to governing power after 18 years in opposition to have achieved anything more than minor modifications to the ways in which policy for young people is determined, especially within such a relatively short space of time. Then again in the area of 'youth policy' the government did much to encourage such expectations, freely proclaiming its policy agenda for young people as 'radical' (CYPU, 2001b). Moreover, youth's policy significance has marked not so much a revision of principles as the consolidation of dominant interests. The position of Minister for Young People fell to the Minister for State for the Home Office, who is also a member of the Cabinet Committee for Young People. The chair of this Committee is the Chancellor of the Exchequer, its vice-chair the Home Secretary and the CYPU is ultimately accountable to parliament through the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. Thus the hand of government departments traditionally dominant in dealing with the young - the Treasury and those responsible for education, employment and law and order - has actually been strengthened.

If the 'stakeholders' formulating 'youth policy' remain familiar, so too do the underlying principles they hold appear to have their roots in the immediate past.

As a 'flagship' initiative, we could perhaps point to the SEU's skeleton staff and the absence of new resources, or to a *modus operandi* that demands all new initiatives are either self-financing or deliver a net decline in public expenditure over the long term, as evidence of the modesty of its aspirations. More fundamentally still, the high profile the SEU has given to 'youth policy' emerges from a depressingly familiar starting point, at least as far as youth researchers are concerned: 'the emphasis was on those groups who were identified as potential workers, or as a moral danger. Those in poverty but neither perceived as workers nor a threat to social order took second place.' (Levitas, 1998: 150). For all the admirable evidence, the sympathetic case studies, the graphic illustration and detail, and the tentative rediscovery of the social, it is not so much the needs of the young that have determined the SEU's agenda. If need had been the deciding factor we could have expected to have been an equal concern with the chronically sick and disabled but such concerns were conspicuous by their absence. On the contrary, it is the more routine concerns about labour discipline and national efficiency, law and order and social control that continue to underpin the increased policy importance attached to youth.

A degree of familiarity also emerges from elsewhere. A conspicuous feature of the PAT 12 report, one replicated in the first documents to emerge from the newly-constituted Children and Young People's Unit, is the nature of the explanations offered for why so many young people are experiencing, or 'at risk' of, 'social exclusion'. In the 83 pages of main text (plus 51 pages of appendices and notes), only two thirds of one page is given over to those 'changes in the economy and society' (13) contributing to this situation: or seven bullet points ranging from the increased importance of qualifications and job insecurity, through to media attitudes and racism. This is followed by a further one third of one page, comprising four bullet points, outlining the 'weaker support mechanisms' that now characterise the lives of many young people. This stands in stark contrast to both the degree to which the problems of young people are detailed (24 pages of statistics, tables and comparisons) and a full chapter (10 pages) *explaining* these as a *consequence* of government failure. Again, in the CYPU's 32 page document *Tomorrow's Future*, the role of social and economic factors in providing 'context' to young people's 'exclusion' is limited to a cursory comment on 'changes in the labour market, in family relationships and in social structures' (2001a: 2). In contrast, six full pages are given over to those (previous) *administrative* failures perceived to be at the heart of the problem and what government can do to rectify them. As the SEU report clearly puts it: 'the PAT report believes that at the root of these problems [of excluded youth] lies a structural weakness - the failure of existing structures to provide a coherent national approach to policies aimed at young people at risk' (2000: 51).

The implications of this are considerable. First and most obvious, while poverty, inequality, unemployment, changes to the structure of employment, pressures on family life, the deterioration of the fabric of communities etc. are all conceded as contributing to the problem of youth's 'exclusion', in the eyes of both the SEU and the government they appear to be of secondary importance. The sheer weight of emphasis placed on administrative failure clearly submerges the importance of structural factors in explaining the problems encountered by youth, to the point where they begin to disappear from view. Even where they are introduced it is on terms that are heavily qualified. Rather than being understood structurally, as factors that are inherent to the social organisation of young people's lives, such issues are treated as 'risk' factors; that is, the dangers an individual young person faces from living in certain neighbourhoods, sporadic school attendance, possessing low levels of qualification, early parenting, drug misuse, involvement in crime or early experiences of unemployment. New Labour's formulation of 'youth policy' may thus contain a welcome 'rediscovery' of the social, concessions to the destructive potential of market forces and a realisation that markets are socially embedded, but such a rehabilitation, if this is indeed the correct description, remains at best a partial one.

Second, what may appear at first sight as a refreshingly candid admission of the culpability of government, on a more careful reading conceals a far more parsimonious agenda. For sure, equating administrative failure with the causes of youth's 'exclusion' does avoid directly conflating young people's problems with their own 'deficiencies'; although as we have seen, this tendency remains latent in the equation of youth's exclusion with 'risk'. Nevertheless, the PAT report is more reticent on the issue of individual responsibility than has been detected elsewhere in the SEU's reporting on the problems of youth (Colley and Hodkinson 2001). Attention to administrative failure also necessarily re-politicises problems of youth, since if problems are located with the (in)action of (previous) government then (current) government is obliged to provide some means to effect a solution. So much so good. However, the nature of this admission is, as we have already noted, one limited to what are essentially technical questions surrounding administrative incompetence. As a consequence, New Labour's formulation of 'youth policy' also effectively denies the existence of broader political processes in which governments have purposefully sought to reconstitute the very nature of youth through its comprehensive and systematic restructuring. In effect, New Labour's justification for a 'youth policy' is also tantamount to a denial that the often difficult, sometimes dire conditions which now characterise the lives of large numbers of young people are also to a large degree the direct consequence of conscious government activity, rather than simply a consequence of their passivity or ineptitude.

Such a failure of admission is no matter of coincidence. In defining government failure in technical terms, and this is the third point, New Labour's 'youth policy' also tells us much about the broader substance of the policy responses that are on offer to the young. What ostensibly appears as a benign, progressive even, reform programme is in fact underpinned by a much more conservative position in which the 'needs' of young people are redrawn within terms of better organisation, efficiency and coherence in government administration rather than a requirement that governments intervene directly into those areas of social and economic life that are crucial to the welfare of the young. It may well be true that New Labour is holding out the prospect of greater formal representation for young people, provides possibilities for greater administrative efficiency at national and local levels, and is constructing what may amount to better support structures for the development, implementation and monitoring of policy. It is also true that these measures may have some positive ramifications. But within this formulation of 'youth policy', a role for government intervention, regulation, and control over those resources that are key to any meaningful upturn in the fortunes of the young are conspicuous by their absence. Put another way, inherent to New Labour's 'youth policy' is a marked process of retreat, in which the Blair governments are not only seeking to redraw the terms of their relationship to youth. They are also attempting to do so in ways that actually mark a profound diminution of the role assigned to government in ensuring that young people have a legitimate claim over and right to substantive sources of support.

Signs of a Misspent Youth?

In this respect, New Labour's 'youth policy' sits comfortably with the broader substance of the 'Third Way'. As Coates (2000) argues, on their own there is not much that is novel about New Labour's commitments to national renewal, rejuvenation or social justice, and to this we could add neither is their much that is new about their pronouncements on the welfare of the young. Such refrains have been the staple of all recent Labour programmes, as has the belief that economic and social problems can be reconciled through a technicist approach. As Thompson points out, New Labour's embrace of 'supply side' measures - with their determination to 'increase the flow, enhance the quality and improve the use of factor inputs; the primary objective being to increase national efficiency, reduce unit costs and, crucially, enhance Britain's international competitiveness' (1996: 39) - as the means to bring this about would have rested easily with the programmes of previous Labour governments. To return again to our example of youth, Harold Wilson's faith that 'new schools and universities open to all would produce the white-coated technicians capable of fusing the white heat of scientific revolution with rapid social advance' (Ainley, 1988: 66), finds a clear echo in New Labour's pledge to combine 'a skilled and educated workforce with investment in the latest technological innovations, as the route to higher wages and employment' (Labour Party, 1997: 11).

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The principle point of contrast can be found in the limited policy instruments that the Blair governments have adopted to realise this agenda. Beyond the obvious novelty of a Labour government winning two consecutive general elections, what is genuinely new about Blair's Labour governments is the extent to which their embrace of 'supply side' measures (such as their technocratic vision of 'youth policy') has been accompanied by the refusal to deploy many of those policy instruments historically associated with governments of the social democratic left (Thompson, 2002). If we again confine ourselves to youth, the scale of this reluctance is amply demonstrated by changes to policy commitments for young people between the 1992 and 1997 general elections. By the time of their first election victory, earlier pledges to full employment had been dropped in favour of promoting individual 'employability'; abolition of the social fund and reinstating income support for unemployed 16 and 17 year olds were both discarded in favour of 'inclusion' through education and 'welfare to work'; a free university education was the subject of open procrastination (and swiftly repudiated days after the 1997 general election victory); and a key plank of Labour's earlier policies for young workers, a compulsory training levy on employers, was rescinded in favour of continuing support for a system of 'employer-led' training.

Replacing commitments like these with what amounts to a technocratic 'youth policy' thus returns us to a more recognisable terrain. In effectively repudiating their earlier commitments to youth based upon the political commitment to meet young people's needs through a direct engagement with market forces - e.g. redistribution, the direct regulation of the labour market, close control over the terms of young people's employment, a comprehensive education, compulsory investment in quality training, universal welfare benefits and systems of support, measures to tackle the welfare of young offenders - we now find ourselves faced with a familiar situation: the political endorsement of market forces as the most effective means to meet the needs of the young, only this time augmented by technically more sophisticated means to achieve the objective.

For this reason, New Labour's moves towards the creation of a national 'youth policy' is perhaps more significant for what it tells us about the 'needs' of the government than what it does about needs of the young. Without the political will to exercise some degree of direct regulation over the distribution and production of key economic and social resources, and the creation of the practical basis to act upon such sentiments in ways that will have some lasting effect, in all probability the creation of new committees, support units, administrative structures and lines of Ministerial accountability will make very little impact upon the substance of youth's 'exclusion'. At worst, the policy prominence that New Labour have given to youth may presage a

more extensive rewriting of the government's relationship to the young. This is one that, moreover, will in all probability involve a further process of government withdrawal from any meaningful engagement with those resources most likely to make an enduring difference to the lives of the young. If this is the case, far from delivering a more inclusive experience of youth, the problems of some of the most vulnerable and hard-pressed young people will in all likelihood undergo a further deterioration.

If there is any veracity to this argument then perhaps there is another dimension worth noting by way of final concluding remarks. If the development of a coherent and expansive 'youth policy' actually tells us that government is embarking upon a process of marked contraction of its obligations to young people, one that involves a significant refashioning of their legitimate rights to key economic and social resources, then to paraphrase Mizen (2002), the 'state of youth' looks certain to become even more costly; especially so for a notable minority. By resorting to a 'youth policy' then, not only do New Labour effect the removal of some of those pledges that Labour governments may have previously held out to the young. It also provides a means to shield the government from the consequences of those potentially unpopular policies that it has self-consciously chosen to follow. Through the creation of a 'youth policy' government can shield itself from the costs of its own actions while at the same time accumulating possibilities for further political advantage, by providing some means to reassure young people and parents increasingly anxious about what the future is likely to bring. Yet as we have argued at length, behind these claims to be laying the foundations for tomorrow's future, in all probability New Labour will continue to misspend our youth.

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Notes

1 The SEU's remit extended only to England and Wales.

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NOT ASKING AND NOT COUNTING:
Assessing need for young people's drug services

RICHARD KIMBERLEE, MATHEW JONES, AND JANE POWELL

Young people's drug use has been the subject of concerted policy attention in the UK since the middle of the 1990s. In the ten year anti-drugs strategy of 1998 the Labour Government largely adopted its predecessor's focus on reversing the upward trend in young people's drug use and producing targeted service interventions at the local level. However, two events in late 2002 signalled that government, at both national and local levels, had encountered significant problems with this strategy. Firstly, the Home Office Minister announced that specific targets on reducing drug use amongst young people were to be abandoned and, in their place, new targets associated with service performance measures were to be set. Secondly, an Audit Commission report (Audit Commission, 2002) and a BBC investigation (BBC Radio 4, 2002) found that a number of Drug Action Teams (DATs) in England were failing to make appropriate use of new funds intended for developing drug services.

In this paper we are centrally concerned with problems local authorities have encountered in their assessment of the needs of vulnerable young people for drug support services. We suggest that the contested nature of 'need' and the 'estimation of need' underlie much of the difficulty associated with young people and drugs policy. It is proposed that two decades of retrenched policy making in relation to young people has produced a particular characterisation of young people's needs. This characterisation shapes the manner in which needs assessments at the local level are being conducted. In addition to the idea that needs are politically constructed, we suggest that there are some inherent difficulties arriving at 'accurate' estimations of young people's needs in relation to substance misuse issues at the local level. Finally, we consider how, in the light of these issues, local welfare provision can develop in a manner that is responsive to young people's substance misuse-related needs.

The problem of young people and young people's needs
In the past two decades, the notion that 'young people are a problem' has assumed a particular form in UK policy and the wider public sphere. Amongst other things, young people have been seen as responsible for drug problems on local housing estates, the lack of safety of public spaces and for crime, in particular vehicle crime (Coles et al, 1998). It has been argued that there is now a large, angry, resentful teenage underclass that is undereducated, from broken homes and appear to want to do nothing more than engage in violence and social mayhem (Best and Kellner, 1998). A large body of research has investigated the presentation

of such problems, their actual (as opposed to alleged) extent (Parker et al., 1998) and possible solutions (Anastacio, 1998).

Broad social changes throughout the eighties and nineties forced more young people than previously to take on responsibility for their own lives. The decline in manu-facturing, de-industrialisation and the extension of training and education beyond compulsory school age meant that young people had to independently develop appropriate skills to find their place in a flexible labour market (Miles, 2000). Post-war support structures such as young people's rights to social benefits have been eroded or even withdrawn. There has been a gradual decrease in the resources available from local authorities to maintain or provide access to key social goods, such as social housing.

In addition there has been a decline in social support with respect to personal, family and community deprivation, which has specific implications for the life circumstances of some young people (Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995; Perri et al. 1997; Piper and Piper, 1998). As well as confronting these changing fortunes young people are being required to assume more responsibility, for example, in personal educational performance or personal conduct in public spaces. Also, ironically, young people have acquired greater freedom and opportunity to indulge in a broader variety of leisure activities not seen by previous generations, including drug taking (Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995), drinking (Boreham and Shaw, 2001) and sex (Dillner, 1989).

As local social problems persist 'disaffected youth' are increasingly perceived as the cause of local problems. In response governments have largely shifted the debate on youth and citizenship towards the notion of responsibilities and duties and have resorted to increased forms of intervention and control (France, 1996). Policies aimed at young people have been seen as increasingly authoritarian in recent years (Jeffs and Smith, 1996). Parenting orders, anti-social behaviour orders and the locking up of persistent young offenders have heightened tensions between generations and increased the challenges for service providers (Crawshaw, 2002).

New Labour have looked to a variety of locally based initiatives to ameliorate problems associated with young people's extended transition to adult statuses. In particular the Social Exclusion Unit has encouraged local service deliverers to develop and sustain 'approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown and poorly performing schools' (Coles et al, 1998:12). Thus locally based regeneration and training initiatives funded by a range of government and locally based organizations including Training and Education Councils (TECs), and European schemes such as URBAN have sought to

address the issue of problematic young people. DATs have been charged with addressing the problem of young people and drug misuse at the local level.

In recent years ideas of young people's needs have taken on a particular quality. Family, community, peers and the market are asserted as the 'natural' or 'most effective' respondents to young people's needs, while the role of the state is cautiously circumscribed. Where the state is identified, the universal needs of young people have increasingly been defined in minimal or threshold terms with respect to education, health, social support, housing, leisure and so forth. As appears to be the case with contemporary welfare discourse more generally, the public are reminded that rights to have needs met are accompanied by responsibilities; both to seek alternatives to welfare and also to temper 'unreasonable' or 'unrealistic' demands.

In addition young people's needs have become heavily differentiated by the state. This has a pluralistic component, in terms of recognising heterogeneity in young people's lives. However it also has a selective component, by making distinctions between different groups of young people, it allows welfare to operate in a specific and targeted manner that erodes comprehensive approaches. Some of this selectivity has produced an authoritarian approach to need, in which 'what they need' has become the dominant emphasis in addressing 'the problem of young people'. Overall then, the dominant discourse has been that policy makers can only be expected to meet needs through a heavily managed process that entertains specific conceptions of need. Young people's self definitions of need have not necessarily been given precedence, or credence, above 'adult' conceptions of what is needed to address the problem of young people (Harris, 2002).

The contested nature of need

At the local level, DATs in England and Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs) in Wales have been responsible for ensuring co-ordination between key agencies and assessing whether local spending plans and initiatives are aligned to key Government targets on drugs. The teams are expected to include senior representatives from local authorities, health authorities, police, prison and probation services. In 2001, DATs in England and Wales were required by central government to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the current provision of drug services in their local areas against a profile of substance use and misuse amongst young people. This exercise was intended to act as a springboard for local DATs and other key agencies to strategically commission and plan services for children and young people in their local authority area. All DATs followed DrugScope/DPAS (2001) standard guidance for their needs assessment exercises. At the heart of the very structured framework to guide conduct of this need analysis was a requirement to calculate the extent of young people's drug misuse within a local authority.

Assessments of need are commonly presented as technical, objective and value neutral enterprises in mainstream policy literature. By contrast we suggest that such exercises engage with specific characterisations of need that, both explicitly and implicitly, reflect the policy and wider social context. The young people's needs' assessment exercise undertaken by DATs, illustrates perfectly the way in which young people's substance misuse related needs are selected and managed. Some of the difficulties DATs have experienced in estimating young people's needs highlight some contested issues that remain in assessing young people's substance misuse related needs. We illustrate these issues by drawing upon our analysis of one DAT area in the South West of England.

Selectivity in assessment of need

The main thrust of the needs' assessment guidance was directed at addressing the needs of vulnerable young people; defined in the following terms:

> ... The term vulnerable refers to children and young people whose life chances will be jeopardised unless action is taken to meet their needs and reduce the risk of social exclusion.
> (Drugscope-DPAS, 2001: 4)

In this sense, vulnerable young people comprise specific identifiable groups. Vulnerable young people are 'looked after' by local authorities; homeless and local authority care leavers. Other vulnerable young people are in the criminal justice system, have drug or alcohol misusing parents, are disaffected from or excluded from school. Others are young people living in difficult family circumstances, involved in prostitution, or have physical disabilities or learning difficulties and live in an environment with a high availability of drugs. This selective approach draws attention away from other groups of young people not necessarily corresponding to formal definitions of eligibility in terms of their 'vulnerability', but nevertheless in need.

In addition the guidance suggested that DATs focus attention on specific geographical areas of need, for example crime hotspots and areas of multiple deprivation. Other directions in the guidance focused attention on the provision of information, identification, screening, and tracking procedures in relation to targeted groups. It was also oriented towards identifying those young people eligible for specialised intervention. None of these suggestions or directions in the guidance suggested evaluators assess the self-defined needs of young people or 'asked them' their perceptions of their own needs and their experiences of drug services. We suggest the adult constructs that inform need assessment could be seen as 'authoritarian' and the application of such constructs gives potentially misguided implementation of plans by policymakers to meet young people's needs.

The challenge of a local context

Each local authority is likely to have unique demographic and cultural influences that will impact on extent, use and availability of drugs in any local area. In the DAT we studied there was a high density of treatment facilities for problem drug misuse with seven privately run residential rehabilitation centres or hostel/supported accommodation. Thus people came into the DAT area for treatment or resettlement, that were normally living elsewhere. The extent to which treatment centres and particularly the re-housing and relocating of drug misusers affects local drug markets is unknown. Nevertheless, it is feasible that proliferation of treatment services in a locality will affect local data counts.

Our DAT area was also unique in having several rural communities scattered over a large area. Until recently the issue of drug use had been perceived largely as an urban and inner city problem. However in establishing DATs the government forced local authorities, previously unconcerned about drug usage amongst rural young people, to consider the services they were offering in their hinterland. The School Health Education Unit (1998) survey revealed that young people in rural areas were in fact more likely to have had some experience of taking drugs than other locations. This was a problem that our DAT had to take on board.

In the local DAT area where our needs analysis took place, the local authority had in recent years worked hard to expand its leisure and recreational facilities to attract tourists to the area; a policy development that hitherto was seen as vital to survival of the local economy. The principal town in which most known drug users resided had over several decades declined as a destination of choice for family holiday makers. Hotels and bed and breakfasts had diversified into either offering a range of facilities or ceasing to cater for holiday makers altogether. As a result the leisure industry was instead beginning to offer conference facilities, housing social security claimants or residential homes. Tourists to the area were increasingly likely to take shorter breaks and the local leisure industries were forced to consider new entertainment opportunities.

The principal town in the area had over time increasingly become a popular resort centre for young people on short breaks and even attracted young visitors from major city conurbations in the South-West, Wales and the Midlands. In 1990 there was only one nightclub in the principal town with a capacity for 725 people. However following the advent of the dance scene, the town had permitted the development of 15 licensed nightclubs and late bars with the capacity to serve 6965 people on any evening. The town's booming nightclub culture was attractive to young people particularly at weekends and during holiday periods. After all,

'nearly everyone' who attends a rave or dance event will use an illegal drug as part of their evening's entertainment (Mignon, 1993).

The relationship between young people, substance misuse and the local leisure/resort industry required exploration. Particularly as it is broadly recognised that prevalence of drug use by young people as part of the 'rave' scene in Britain reflects an acceptance of drug use amongst users and non-users as a part of young people's leisure. This has led to the assumption that a process of 'normalization' of recreational drug use among young people has occurred with resulting legal, education, employment, and health implications (Measham et al, 1998).

There was no known local research examining the extent of drug use in clubs to which we could refer. However recent research on the sexual behaviour of young people who work in the tourist industry in the South-West, suggested that young people who come to work and visit the area were more likely to be more sexually active than the local population (Hennink, 2000). National data on UK visitor behaviour to dance venues in Ibiza yielded some interesting comparisons. A cross-sectional survey collecting matched information on individuals' behaviour in the UK and abroad highlights the problem that recreational drug use may pose for leisure hosts because it demonstrated that young visitors to Ibiza significantly alter their pattern of drug, alcohol and tobacco use. For ecstasy, in the UK 2.9% of users used the drug on five or more days a week, while in Ibiza this rose to 42%. Fewer individuals reported using amphetamine, ketamine, cannabis, LSD, cocaine and GHB in Ibiza although those continuing to use in Ibiza consume at substantially higher rates than when in the UK. Using multiple drugs over a one or two week stay was also quite common (31.9%). While the potential for substance related ill health was dramatically elevated in Ibiza, harm minimisation measures in such resorts remained scarce (Bellis et al, 2000)

Drug use behaviour could follow a similar pattern in the UK leisure areas and the DAT area we studied could in fact be providing an attractive venue for visiting young users. This of course raises the question of the DATs responsibility in terms of young visitors and the extent to which it should consider its responsibility to a cohort of people likely to be more itinerant and temporary than any other age group.

The extent of drug problems associated with clubs in the local area could only be guessed. In 2001 the local police could only confirm that they had 11 records of drug related offences for possession connected with four licensed premises. These figures do not include seizures or finds, which are not attributed to an individual. Data on the number of finds and seizures made at the clubs was not available. Such data were kept reportedly on the retrieved property file along with other

types of property data. As the local police did not have an easily accessible database with which to further analyse the extent of the drug use in local nightclubs, the research team could only guess the size of the problem. Anecdotal evidence collected from police working with local clubs suggested that the number of arrests made at nightclubs for drug related offences reflected 'only the tip of an iceberg' and it was widely reported that door keepers regularly hand over abandoned drugs discovered on their premises.

National and regional research highlights a strong association between drug use and the nighclub/dance industry. Studies show that the prevalence of drug use amongst young people attending dance music events often appears dramatically high, with some studies reporting lifetime use of ecstasy of between 60-80 per cent of club-goers (Branigan, 1997; Release, 1997). Ecstasy consumers rarely come into contact with treatment services and those that do are unlikely to be representative of the larger population of users (Winstock et al., 2001). Indeed a recent nation-wide survey of 1151 club-goers revealed that 96 per cent had used ecstasy, 86 per cent had used it in the last month and the mean age of first use was 19.6 years. The research reveals that poly-substance use was also widespread amongst club-goers. Thus frequent participation at dance clubs is likely to lead to binge patterns of consumption particularly if a person is on holiday (Winstock et al., 2001). Additionally, a recent national survey of 4,042 club-goers revealed that the clubs are the most common venue for first experimenting with ecstasy and that the summer months and Christmas time were the most popular times for drug usage (Sherlock and Conner, 1999). Whilst nightclubs are seen as attractive to 'recreational' drug users; they can also attract 'dependent and chaotic' drug users (Calafat *et al.*, 1999). Evidence from Manchester, the dance centre of the UK, suggests that nightlife is beginning to move away from clubs and into bars and restaurants, as dance lovers and drug users seek to avoid nightclubs; places perceived to be full of violence and intimidation (Calafat et al, 1999). It was conceivable that a burgeoning local club culture in our DAT area was similarly acting as a magnet in attracting young ravers to the area; albeit on a smaller scale.

Difficulties estimating need at a local level

There was very little existing local research on young people's drug misuse and the research team had to therefore draw on a variety of data sources to assess the extent of possible drug misuse within the authority. This included the use of existing surveys, agency records, interviews and projections based on other research conducted in local authorities. We found enormous difficulties in arriving at actual number counts or even estimates. This is because local data in the Regional Drugs Misuse Database (RDMD) is poor, formal data collection systems are adult oriented and

create projections on the basis of national or comparative evidence. Also the RDMD database contains necessarily, information about those young people known to authorities or 'in the system' and this has obvious shortcomings.

On the evidence available, our needs' analysis discovered some significant drug misuse problems amongst the DAT area's young population. The area had the highest incidence rate for problem drug misuse of any DAT area in the South-West region. In addition to indigenous residents, there were significant numbers of known problem drug users living in the area coming in from other parts of the region and elsewhere. Also the principal town had developed a club scene over the last decade which raised a number of under-explored substance misuse issues; beyond the remit of the research. Each of these issues posed serious questions in terms of the extent of drug misuse taking place in this DAT area.

Existing local evidence was sometimes dated and quite patchy in terms of its scope and sampling. A Health Authority survey from eight years ago revealed the highest prevalence of problem drug use concentrated in one major town (Avon Health Authority, 1993). A rate of 4.24% was calculated for the 'at risk' population of 15 to 34 years. There were 848 problem drug misusers estimated to be living in the town, with over 50 per cent being opiate users. However the results of the study had been criticised because of the bias towards the notification of problem drug users who were in treatment. Thus occasional users and later problem users were unlikely to be identified in these figures. Examining a recent study undertaken by the South-West Public Health Observatory (Wilkinson et al., 2002) a high rate of problem drug use for the DAT area was revealed, but this was not just related to the tempo-rary influx of drug users coming for treatment. In the five years 1996 to 2001, the local authority had 2,586 people, resident in the area during the five years, who were referred to the Regional Drug Misuse Database (RDMD). However this infor-mation did not allow us to really understand the extent of drug misuse amongst young people. Instead we had to turn to existing national datasets to attempt to understand through projection the extent of possible drug misuse in this local area.

Drug Misuse amongst young people
National data sources
There is a considerable amount of national information about drug use and young people. However the extent and rate of increase appears unclear. Recent estimates of the extent of drug use vary considerably. For example by the age of 16 a range of studies have suggested that anything between 20 and 45 per cent of young people have tried an illegal drug (Balding, 1998; Dowds and Redfern, 1994; Shiner and Newburn, 1996; Boreham and Shaw, 2000). Recent research has also demonstrated an unprecedented rise in the prevalence of illicit drug use in increasingly diverse

groups of young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds (Measham, 1998). However longitudinal research conducted by the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) has revealed that the percentage of young people that have tried an illegal drug actually peaked in 1995-96. This percentage has 'since 'stabilised', or possibly even come down, since then' (Balding, 1999:10). This evidence presents a confusing picture that is sometimes further clouded by small local research surveys that demonstrate high levels of drug misuse by certain groups of young people. A survey of more than 600 young people between the ages of 10 to18 in Bro-Morgannwg and Morgannwg health areas by the local DAAT revealed that 32 per cent had used some form of drugs, solvents or alcohol in the past.

Overall, therefore, what these surveys suggest is that the majority of young people never take drugs at all, many 'experimenters' will grow out of it quickly and a small hardcore will develop very serious problems. Drugs use is most common amongst people in their teens and early twenties, but the average age of first drug use is becoming younger. Even though almost half of young people are likely to take drugs at some time in their lives, only about one-fifth will become regular users, (ie at least once a month), with a tiny minority of that group taking drugs on a daily basis (Sutherland and Shepherd, 2001). Most young people who take drugs do so out of curiosity, boredom, or peer pressure and continue misusing drugs through a combination of factors ranging from enjoyment to physical and psychological dependency (Goddard and Higgins, 2000). Cannabis is the most commonly used drug amongst the young, followed by amphetamines, poppers, LSD and ecstasy. However there are some distinct groups of young people evolving to become regular users, for example, young people attracted to the dance scene.

From the data available there is strong evidence to suggest that the earlier a young person starts taking drugs, the greater the chance that he or she will develop serious drugs problems over time. Thus regular drug users in early to mid-teens often have other problems in their lives. In fact strong links have been highlighted between drug use, exclusion or truancy from school, break-up of the family, and initiation into criminal activity. Young drug users are also likely to have been in trouble with the police, have a history of poor academic performance and low future academic expectations, a lack of religious belief, come from a non-intact family, favour peer over family opinion and to have been suspended from school (Sutherland and Shepherd, 2001).

Problems associated with survey data
A lot of research on drug misuse depends on data collected through survey techniques. For most DATs this is the only data available. However there is a danger that surveys could over estimate the extent of a drug problem because it often includes some

young people that have tried just one drug on just one occasion. Secondly, as drug taking is an illicit activity, reliable data on prevalence is very hard to obtain. The results of self-report surveys may be questionable, as some respondents may not admit to the use of more heavily stigmatised drugs such as heroin and crack cocaine or conceal their drug taking because of the existence of a punitive legal framework. Surveys can potentially under-represent more difficult to capture drug misusers, including those with chaotic lifestyles, homeless people and people resident in institutions (Audit Commission, 2002). Finally, at best national surveys can only indicate national trends and developments but effective local understanding and action depends largely upon local knowledge (SHEU, 1998). After all most large-scale survey data pay insufficient attention to the normative context within which drug use occurs (Shiner and Newburn, 1997).

The problems associated with survey data leads us to seek the potential that could be offered by alternative methodological techniques. Those young people using drugs on a regular basis are more likely to be part of a close knit group of people unlikely to be engaged (or have only lose links) with school or work structures. We suggest in depth, qualitative approaches by a researcher over a longer period of time might overcome the problem of difficult to reach young people. The methodological difficulties encountered in a community-based study of young drug users aged between 15 and 19 years have recently been explored extensively. In particular the significance of gaining the acceptance and cooperation of one key individual occupying a central position in the social structure of the group, is vital for access to and networking with users that associate with other users (Mayock, 2000). However, the use of such techniques to make more accurate assessment of drug usage in a DAT area might be largely beyond the resources available to any local authority for such purposes.

Conclusion

National co-ordination agencies are unlikely to make effective use of resources unless they work with opportunities and constraints in youth sub-cultures that can only be understood at a local level. Local level assessments of young people's needs in relation to substance misuse are problematic. Clearly there are pragmatic difficulties associated with the adequacy of local information, defining substance use and substance misuse, drawing distinctions between substance misuse-related needs and wider social needs and so forth. However we have also suggested that the exercise itself is deeply conditioned by the political, policy and service environment in which it arises. This environment shapes the forms of evidence that are deemed credible, the forms of need that are worthy of attention and specific ways of understanding young people's needs. Current policies towards young people

and substance misuse bureaucratise needs, select specific groups of young people for attention and prioritise those needs that can be addressed through authoritarian or otherwise highly managed interventions.

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'IT HOLDS SOCIETY TOGETHER';
Exploring Young People's Understandings of 'Welfare'.

IAN MCINTOSH

The central aim of this paper is to explore young people's understandings of 'welfare'.[1] This interest arose from previous research into people's attitudes towards giving, or not, to beggars (McIntosh and Erskine 1999, 2000). Many of those interviewed in this previous research partly explained the existence of beggars in terms of a 'failure of the system' or that they are 'let down by the system'. Others talked of how people 'fall through the safety-net', should be 'looked-after by the social' and wondered why we 'pay our taxes'. These, and other, common allusions and metaphors for systems of caring and welfare raise important and intriguing questions about how people, in this case young people, conceptualise and understand the workings, and huge edifice of, the 'welfare state'.

There has, of course, been an enormous amount of scholarship on many aspects of welfare and the welfare state (e.g. Goodin et al. 1999; O'Brien and Penna, 1998; Pierson and Castles, 2000; Spicker, 2000; Williams et al., 1999). Despite this Critcher et al. notes that:

> To some extent welfare research... has been dominated by quantitative methods - or at least by the implicit view that research findings based on quantitative data are somehow more trustworthy than those emerging from more qualitative approaches.
> (Williams et al, 1999: 70)

This may be overstating the case somewhat, however, qualitative explorations of the ways in which 'lay' individuals relate to and conceptualise, however vaguely, the operation and the role of welfare systems within a society like the UK are not common.[2] For example, what do people actually mean when they talk about the 'system' or getting 'looked after' by 'the social'? This is an area normally associated with more quantitative investigations, discussed below, into 'opinions' and 'attitudes'. However, such questions, and how they relate to welfare, form the main focus of this paper.

The Study
The intention then was to investigate what welfare means to young people and how it informs their understandings of the social world and their relation to, and dealings with, others. In order to explore these issues interviews were conducted with young people between the ages of 18-25.[3] These lasted on average one hour and were taped and subsequently transcribed and analysed. Given the phenomenological

orientation of the research, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main research tool as this was seen to be the best way in which to tap into, and fully explore, any meanings and understandings young people had in relation to welfare (Bryman 1998; Mason, 1996). The sample was accessed initially through a small number (three) of personal contacts in Dundee and Stirling then snowballed up to a total of 33 people, comprising of eighteen women and fifteen men. The sample included individuals from across a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Six of those interviewed were recent school leavers working in a range of full-time and part-time jobs (shop work, 'temping', etc.), four were still at school and two had worked in full-time occupations for a number of years. The rest of the sample was split between young people who were in further and higher education (mostly full-time) and those who had recently left and were looking for employment - some of whom were currently working in various jobs. A number of those who were in higher education had previously worked in a variety of occupations (the Army, bar and shop work).

In terms of actually claiming benefit(s) the respondents' experiences varied. Some had been through periods of unemployment whilst others had had little or no interaction with the claims making process. Of course, all of those interviewed did have close involvement with the welfare state in relation to, for example, education and the NHS. Thus in this research I tried to avoid equating 'experience of welfare' solely with the process of claiming, or not, from a narrow range of available benefits. In addition, we cannot assume clear connections between any specific 'experiences' and more general 'understandings' of, in this case, welfare and the welfare state. In this study there was no significant evidence that those who had claimed and received 'benefits', had any more systematic, well-formulated or significantly different ideas on what welfare is, or should be.

A potential danger when 'snowballing' a sample is that it can be rather self-selecting and unrepresentative (Burgess, 1984; Gilbert, 1993). It is fair to say that different results may have emerged from a sample of individuals with different histories in relation to the welfare state and from a study conducted at another time and place.[4] Given this we of course have to be aware of the potential relativism in such research and be wary of over-generalising (Mason, 1996). Nevertheless the sample was not homogenous and constituted a rich reservoir of varied experiences and there is no reason to presume that these are wholly untypical. Individuals between the ages 18-25 have lived their whole lives against a backdrop of regular debate and discussion about the nature and form of welfare provision in the UK. From the era of Thatcherism through to New Labour and major policy initiatives such as the 'minimum wage' and the 'New Deal', the general policy context and

the characteristics of the UK 'welfare regime' have undergone significant change during this period (Esping-Anderson, 1999; Pierson, 2001; Pierson and Castles, 2000). Thus interviewing people from this age range gives the opportunity to explore how such changes may have impacted on these young people and their general perceptions of welfare.

An 'inherited background'?

At the beginning of each interview young people were asked what they understood by the word welfare and in almost all cases they started talking about welfare provision, 'benefits' and made references to 'typical' claimant groups. Consequently the question arose as to what extent these young people's ideas and notions about welfare drew upon what Wittgenstein referred to as an 'inherited background' (quoted in Charlesworth, 2000:109) or Charlesworth's 'orchestrating mythology' (2000: 109). One young person makes the point that:

> You use words like welfare all the time but when you start thinking about what they mean then it's difficult ...Yeah, I never really think about stuff like that normally but it's around, if you know what I mean.
> (male, 21)[5]

Charles Taylor, with his customary precision, emphasises the problems encountered when both trying to articulate and investigate such 'background' knowledge:

> The very fashion in which we operate as engaged agents within such a background makes the prospect of total explication incoherent. The background cannot in this sense be thought of quantitatively at all.
> (quoted in Charlesworth, 2000:113; see also Taylor, 1993).

The question as to what extent do notions of welfare form an 'inherited background' became a useful way to understand the often fragmentary and partial responses - Heidegger's 'pre-understanding' (Taylor, 1993:327) - of those interviewed. It also became a crucial way in which to explore other often opaque areas of social life into which the research headed. As a consequence of inquiring about welfare almost all of the interviewees incorporated into their responses discussions of 'others', the needs of strangers and moral considerations regarding the limits of individual and social responsibilities (Bauman, 2001; Ignatieff, 1990; Mulhern, 1996; Simmel, 1971; Stichweh, 1997; Titmuss, 1977).

'These are really hard things to try and say exactly what they are': Incorporating Vagueness

The interview questions generated a considerable amount of vagueness on the part of the interviewees. This could not be understood solely as an unintended consequence

of my interviewing technique. There appeared to be a consistent vagueness in the responses to questions about welfare. Typical of these were the following:

Erm, I don't have many thoughts on it cos I haven't really thought about it! I think I know what you mean but its hard to be precise about it.
(female, 19)

Welfare? It doesn't really mean much to me. I suppose I have an idea of what it might be, I would have to think about it.
(male, 18)

Yeah. Welfare, I thought, I don't have a clue about anything like that, but you've asked me questions and I've given some information.
(female, 19)

I sort of know what you are getting at ... but I am not sure what I think about it all really.
(male, 19)

'Vagueness' and the 'boundaryless' nature of concepts have been a long standing concern of philosophers (Keefe and Smith, 1996; Pierce, 1966; Williamson, 1994) but it poses something of a problem for social scientific research. How do we handle such (dis?)information? Do we dismiss it as it does not constitute an easily quantifiable 'opinion' or 'attitude' or do we attempt to incorporate it into our analyses? Taking to heart Bertrand Russell's comment that, 'It would be a great mistake to suppose that vague knowledge must be false' (in Keefe and Smith, 1996: 67), I found the qualitative approach adopted to be an appropriate way to incorporate the 'vagueness' of much of the interviewees responses. It also facilitated the exploration of the ways in which welfare resonated with young people, how they made sense of the term, what it represented and, indeed, if they could imagine a society without some form of welfare.

This entailed asking questions which often proved to be somewhat puzzling for those interviewed as it involved a process of foregrounding 'things' that normally existed in a hazy background; putting into sharp focus something that was generally blurred and rarely thought through but by no means completely unfamiliar. As Bourdieu puts it, 'Very often ... the people who do know about the social world are not able to speak about it' (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1992: 118). This is indicated by the following comments:

Because you know what you want to say but you don't know how to say it.
(female, 18)

I think these are really hard things to try and say exactly what they are. You sort of know what they are ... but it's difficult.
(female, 22)

And it's hard cos I say something and you ask 'why do you think that?' And then you think 'Oh, you just think it, you don't, you don't question why you think things'.
(female, 20)

Significantly, very few of those interviewed were not able to talk at some length about their understandings of welfare. As one young person put it, I was 'asking them about things that they never normally thought about' but she added that she was 'a bit surprised that they could answer the questions ... and have something to say' (female, 22). Indeed, a common exclamation across many of the interviews was 'I never knew I knew so much about it'.

Having an 'Attitude'

Qualitative approaches can thus help us both augment and move beyond (or, perhaps, 'behind') concerns with 'attitudes' (e.g. Bourdieu, 1993; Gelissen, 2000; Papadikas and Bean, 1993; Svallorfs and Taylor-Gooby, 1999; Taylor-Gooby, 1983, 1985, 1991, 1998, 1999) and 'opinions' (e.g. Crespi, 1997; Glynn, 1999; Papadikas, 1992; Price, 1992). Such quantitative research is of course crucial to our broad understanding of people's position towards many aspects of welfare provision within and across nations. Much of the analysis of attitudes and opinions can yield a great deal of rich and nuanced data, certainly not easily characterised (or caricatured) as being simply 'quantitative' (Bryman, 1998; Critcher et al, 1999; Schmuttermaier and Schmitt, 2001).

However 'attitudes' and 'opinions' are often 'second-order constructions' (Schutz, 1971, 1972; see also Moscovici, 2000) collected to then be variously processed, codified and manipulated by social scientists; data that needs to be ordered into a recognisable shape before being judged to be workable. Bourdieu makes the point that 'every opinion survey assumes that everyone can have an opinion; in other words, that producing an opinion is something available to all' (1993: 149). What emerged strongly from the majority of my interviews was that young people did not always reveal or exhibit well formulated views on welfare which resembled 'attitudes' or could be crystallised into 'opinions' in any obvious ways. Their understandings of welfare and the workings of the 'welfare state' *could* at times be precise, and strongly held but more often than not it was rarely considered or thought-through and often partial and contradictory.

Many of the issues that emerged during the interviews took us quite quickly into an opaque word of indeterminacy and ambiguity, silences and unfinished statements and pre-reflective, half-formed, vague understandings; reflections on the social that methodologies designed to harvest attitudes and opinions are perhaps not equipped to accommodate. As Moscovici points out: 'Attitudes do not express knowledge as such but a relation of certainty and uncertainty, belief and disbelief, in relation to that knowledge' (2000: 235; see also Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). However, notions or 'social representations' (Moscovici, 2000) of welfare (discussed below), what it is and should achieve, do exist strongly amongst young people and are often held onto with a high degree of commitment and passion if not precision and clarity.

'The dole, the DHSS, the NHS, giros': Representations of Welfare

The first response of most interviewees when asked an open-ended question as to what they understood by the term welfare was to list those things that were seen to 'represent' welfare in some sense:

> *Er, well I think of pensions, unemployment benefit and health care are probably the main three that I would think of.*
> (male, 24)

> *People who are maybe unemployed, getting social security? The DSS ... childcare, council houses. That's the sort of things I would start thinking about.*
> (female, 21)

> *Erm, like the homeless, unemployed, maybe orphan children, that's the kind of thing in my head, sort of poorer people in society.*
> (female, 18)

These loose associations of bureaucratic procedures, claimant groups and available benefits were often the starting point for understandings of welfare and seemed to form a common understanding across many of the interviewees.

> *Erm, I don't know. Unemployed, family allowances, disability and things like that ... erm, like the homeless and things like that, and the unemployed and stuff.*
> (female, 20)

> *The dole, the DHSS, the NHS and giros, that's another thing.*
> (female, 19)

> *Single parents, people who've been made redundant, disabled people, homeless people, people with problems like drug addiction, alcohol, things like that.*
> (female, 23)

For Moscovici, social representations 'appear as a network of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together' (2000:153) which can 'enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world' and 'enable communication to take place between the members of a community' (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990: 1). It seems to me that this is a useful way to understand these initial responses to what welfare *is*, how it is understood and what it closest associations are.

'You've got to have some kind of system'

The idea that welfare was part of an overarching 'system' was a recurring one and was frequently employed by interviewees as a means to explain what it meant to them. Indeed, some kind of welfare organisation, often loosely associated with an entity called the 'state', was central to this system that, as one person put it, 'held things together'.

> *Yeah, there's always somebody or some system you can go to for support or help. And I think you need that really.*
> (female, 19)

> *There's got to be some kind of system that tries to even things out.*
> (male, 20)

Many of the young people interviewed were quite clear about the positive nature of being part of a wider 'system':

> *I think it is important to have some kind of system around you that you feel part of.*
> (female, 22)

> *Yeah, I think it's good that there's some kind of welfare system, yeah, cos if there wasn't that system that we've got at the moment they'd be a lot more people on the street.*
> (male, 18)

The comparison of the workings of the welfare system to that of a 'safety net' is one that is frequently done in popular discourse (McIntosh and Erskine, 2000). This metaphor was utilised on numerous occasions by the young people interviewed - most of whom, it should be recalled, suggested they knew little about welfare. This, I would argue, sheds further light on the way in which 'lay' individuals draw upon an 'inherited background' or common stock of knowledge (Schutz, 1972) which although not necessarily formulated into quantifiable opinions does provide a powerful source for grasping the intricacies of the world. As Furnham writes, 'ordinary people are frequently exposed to debate and discussion about such issues which, in turn, influences the content and structure of their social representations about welfare and inequality in their society' (in Roland-Levy et al, 2001: 134).

If you're going to put in all that money to the state then you need some sort of safety net for people when bad things come up.
(female, 22)

But some people do fall through the safety net and I don't know who I think it should be run by. Sometimes I think more should be done.
(female, 22)

Yeah, I think in a way it is a good idea cos you're always going to have that safety net there. You know, it's good that you feel that you're paying something into that.
(female, 19)

The uses of the terms 'system' and 'safety net' tended to be used in a way that was detached; a 'system' to deal with 'others', those not known, strangers. The implication being that it was the 'responsibility' of someone else, often 'the government' or the 'state', (entities often described in turn as 'systems') to ensure that these 'systems' were in place. One interviewee emphasised the deferred nature of this relation, 'I pay into a system and pass on the responsibility' (male, 19).

'Somebody on the corner; you've got to help them': On the Welfare of 'Others'
It was, however, a feature of the research that this use of 'detached' terms like 'systems' and 'safety nets', in almost all cases, quickly gave way to an understanding and explication of welfare and welfare provision that was inextricably mixed with moral and ethical considerations.

It's just basic morals I think ... I can see some people saying 'oh well they deserve it' but [it is] basic morals to help out people less fortunate, you've got to have some basic moral care.
(male 22)

Yeah, I also think it's to do with basic morality, being in a society you can't be too self-centred. You've got to be aware of other people's needs and feelings.
(male, 21)

Its not only a social responsibility ... we have a moral duty to each other.
(female, 19)

For the good of others and that gives us a stronger bond as human beings.
(man 24)

Bauman makes the point that 'the essence of all morality is the responsibility which people take for the humanity of others, this is also the measure of a society's ethical standard' (Bauman, 2001: 79). In this regard the person who told me that 'I

don't feel anything towards people who are complete strangers' (male, 18) was very much an exception. The questions raised as to why we should pay into a 'system' which would benefit people whom we will never truly come to know - 'others', Simmel's 'stranger' or O' Neil's (1999) 'moral strangers' - met with a consistent response:

> *I mean, I'm never going to meet half the unemployed people, but if I was there I would want someone there to help me.*
> (female, 21)

> *We should all look out for each other, if you know them or not.*
> (female, 18)

> *It should be individually and collectively. We should all look after each other.*
> (female, 18)

In addition, when discussing welfare almost all of those interviewed seemed to find it impossible to do so without drawing upon the concept of 'society':

> *I think everyone's got to look after each other, whether you know them or not ... Yeah. I think it'd be a much more unhappy society and an unfriendly place to live in, if people didn't look after each other.*
> (male, 22)

> *Just cos you don't know them doesn't mean that you shouldn't help them. We're part of the same society.*
> (female, 19)

The constant recourse amongst all of those interviewed to gravitate towards the use of terms and metaphors such as 'system', 'society', 'the state' and 'safety nets' should make us wary of attempts such as Urry's (2000) to fashion a new vocabulary for sociology.[6] The aforementioned are perhaps indicative of the tenacity of the images, institutions, representations and contours of modernity. Sociologists may emphasise 'change' and 'mobility' and ask whether any 'fixed points can remain' and if sociology can recover from the loss 'of its key concept of society' (Urry 2000: 17). Meanwhile young people continue, it seems, to understand their social world in less 'innovative' terms:

> *Erm, society to me is a system, a very big system that's ultimately controlled by a central state ... I think to me it's like a series of mechanisms that kind of drive people.*
> (female, 24)

'Society' is still a central representation of these young people's understanding of their social realm. Society was drawn upon and utilised as a deeply moral term

rather than a spatial or geo-political one and always implied relations with, and responsibilities towards, others:

> If you are in society you do have some kind of responsibility to the rest of society.
> (female, 19)

'A bit towards their fault I think': On Responsibility

Responsibility towards, and for, others was of course not without limits and needed to be reciprocated in some sense. Issues of 'fault' and 'blame' and individual versus collective responsibility (Goodin, 1985a, b; Schmidtz and Goodin, 1998) emerged as key elements of young people's understandings of welfare. The following comments were indicative:

> I don't know ...I don't think the government should do it all. I think it's got to come down to the person that's homeless as well. They've got to want to get themselves out of the situation. Some of them could get themselves out of the situation if they really wanted to.
> (male, 22)

> Yeah, I think it's about, two way, you know. You're not going to get any welfare help if you're not prepared to work on it yourself. You know, if you just expect to get but not give anything back in return.
> (female, 22)

> A bit towards their fault I think. Not directly their fault, but in the middle, put it that way.
> (female, 19)

Such comments lend further weight to the conclusion drawn by McIntosh and Erskine from their research on giving to beggars that, to a large extent, the 'moral obligations to strangers, it seemed, had been fulfilled via the workings of the welfare "system" and being approached by a beggar was seen as an extra burden, an intrusion' (2000:15). The vague workings of the welfare state, in-part manifest in the images and metaphors of 'systems' and 'safety nets,' did seem to provide a powerful moral basis upon which young people understood relations with 'others':

> Welfare? I suppose it's the well-being of people in general in society.
> (female, 18)

> Welfare is good in a way. Everybody has to live ... it's creating a whole community.
> (female, 19)

> *Well, it's about looking after people and helping people out ... just sort of*
> *helping people.*
> (female, 23)

To quote Bauman again:

> *Clarity and unambiguity may be the ideal of the world in which 'procedural*
> *execution' is the rule. For the ethical world, however, ambivalence and*
> *uncertainty are its daily bread and cannot be stamped out without destroying*
> *the moral substance of responsibility, the foundation on which that world rests*
> (2001: 79).

Young people's conceptions of welfare were shot through with ambiguity and contradiction.

> *Yeah, I think it's definitely something vaguely reassuring I wouldn't say it's*
> *a perfect system but at least there's a framework there that can be worked,*
> *sort of used.*
> (male, 21)

> *It's not that I totally agree or totally disagree with welfare, see I'm sort of in*
> *the middle, there's good and bad. I don't know what I feel about it!*
> (female, 20)

> *It's not perfect but I think we need it.*
> (male, 23)

Ignatieff writes of a 'solidarity amongst strangers' which is mediated through the 'numberless capillaries of the [welfare] state' (1984:10). My research with young people points to the way in which their understanding of the limits and boundaries of their responsibilities to others does coincide to some extent with the hazy contours of a 'welfare system'.

'Everything would just fall apart': No Welfare?

Conceptions of welfare may have been characterised by vagueness and rarely thought about but when asked to consider a society without welfare those interviewed showed much less ambiguity or ambivalence. This was something they found difficult to contemplate, as if a Hobbesian 'state of nature' would ensue, and evoked a strong, at times even impassioned, response.

> *I think you know, it'd be sorely missed if it was drummed out ... It could be*
> *a very harsh society, something I couldn't really imagine. Not knowing*
> *anything other than it. I mean I've read the history before we had any,*
> *we're talking a hundred years ago.*
> (female, 21)

You've got to have some kind of system. I mean, it'd just be everybody for themselves.
(female, 19)

I think that would be more negative 'cos everybody would be, you know, everybody would start to compete with one another and try and do one better than another and it could just all collapse.
(female, 19)

This, almost universally, strong reaction does provide evidence for a Wittgensteinian 'inherited background' which operates at some distance from normal everyday routines and interaction, as Charlesworth writes; '...phenomena come to have a personal meaning, a lived-through significance that may not always be transparent to consciousness' (2000: 3). However, the contemplation of non-existence can generate a response that pushes background phenomena very much into the foreground:

To be honest, that would be quite bleak, I think it would be very bleak and I'm certainly in favour of a welfare system.
(male, 21)

I think it really needs to be there! I don't know what it would be like, I've never really thought what it would be like without it there but, I mean, there's people who genuinely need help and that's what it's there for.
(male, 18)

I think that's too negative. It's very extreme, there should be safeguards so that people who fiddle or who get income that they're not deserving, that they don't need it, but I think that people who genuinely need it should get it. (woman 19)

Such comments are indicative of the strongly held, but generally ill-defined, commitment to some form of welfare provision. A strong reaction that is qualified by the utilisation of the deeply moral category 'genuiness' (see McIntosh and Erskine (2000) for a fuller discussion of the use of this term).

'It makes society seem more whole': Conclusion
This article has explored the ways in which young people understand welfare within the UK. The research was borne out of an interest which emerged from previous research into giving to beggars, in the tangential and often vague way in which people alluded to the workings of the welfare state and the nature of welfare. The young people interviewed made similar allusions and drew upon a range of metaphors and images when asked how they understood welfare. Somewhat paradoxically they often claimed to have given little thought to the subject but

expressed strong views when asked about the prospect of living in a society that had no welfare. Further, the findings indicate that this 'inherited background' of understandings of welfare and a welfare 'system' was an important way in which the young people understood themselves and their relations to others. The evidence suggests that the institutions, discourse and representations of welfare in the UK do inform young people's understandings of their social world, their place within it and their relations to others. As one 21 year old woman told me, 'It makes society seem more whole, everyone helping everyone else, rather than just leaving everyone to their own devices'. Young people, it seems, see a welfare system as providing a cohering force in their lives - 'it holds society together'. As one interviewee said, 'Yeah, cos we're so diverse I think we need something to give you a sense of solidarity, something like that' (male, 21).

Methodologically this research adopted an approach which could be tentatively described as phenomenological (Schutz 1971, 1972; Charlesworth 2000) in intent and focus. Certainly the emphasis was different from that of the more quantitative concerns of those involved in the gathering and analysis of attitudes and opinions; the most common manner in which people's attachment to, and understanding of, a welfare state is assessed. An attempt was made to include into the analysis the vagueness of much of the data as a way of recovering and utilising what Wittgenstein described as 'imponderable evidence' (Charlesworth 2000:83). Incorporation of the vague in this way may perhaps as Sainsbury says '.... enable us to better understand ... The boundaryless fabric of most of our thought and talk' (in Keefe and Smith,1996: 264).

Young people's 'thought and talk' regarding welfare certainly seemed to question Bauman's contention that 'the institution of the welfare state is starkly out of tune with the climate of a consumer society' (1998: 59). I would argue that welfare has become, to borrow a phrase from Bourdieu, part of our doxic knowledge of our social world which informs our everyday discourse and interactions in profound yet often imperceptible ways; a process described by Bourdieu as a 'naturalisation of ideas' (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1992: 113). Clearly welfare, as it has been constructed, delivered and constituted throughout their lives still 'means' a lot to young people; and explanation of what it 'means' has been a central aim of this paper.

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Notes

1   From this point quotation marks from the word 'welfare' will be omitted.

2   Exceptions, to some extent, include MacDonald (1997) and Coffield et al. (1986) and, albeit in relation to the impact of the media, Golding & Middleton (1982) and Franklin (1999).

3 These took place from December 2000 through to March 2001.

4 A similar study carried out within a different welfare context would be required to highlight fully the particularities of understandings of welfare in the UK.

5 Only the ages and gender of interviewees are given.

6 In addition, across all of the interviews it was universally assumed that paid labour was absolutely central to the organisation and understanding of welfare and to people's lives more generally.

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FROM YOUTH WORK TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:
The new government framework for English youth services

MARK K. SMITH

Government concern to 'transform' English youth work (DfES, 2002) provides further evidence, if we needed it, of the extent to which managerial and bureaucratic thinking, and the ideologies of market economics have come to dominate politics and policy. As Rowan Williams (2002) has argued, government has become increasingly technocratic and oriented to voters as consumers. Unfortunately, the vision of this market state 'has nothing to say about shared humanity and the hard labour of creating and keeping going a shared world of values'. This has profound implications for youth work and youth services. English youth work – at least the portion that Government can influence – is to be moulded to fall in line with the Connexions agenda and its focus on keeping and reconnecting young people with schooling, training and employment (DfEE 2001; DfEE 2002). In the new specification, *Transforming Youth Work - resourcing excellent youth services* (DfES 2002), we see a push towards 'delivery', accreditation, individualisation and targeting, and to a way of working that is very close to conventional North American approaches to youth development. To ensure compliance the framework feeds into Ofsted's Inspection Framework for Youth Work, and the central monitoring of youth services through action plans and the like. In this article I want to outline some key lines of critique around the specification; explore the drive to youth development; and argue that there is hope for alternatives.

Some issues and problems

As I have argued elsewhere (Smith, 2002a) a number of lines of critique can be developed around this new framework. Here I want to highlight and summarize six.

Centralisation. While there is talk of local youth services setting their own curriculum and developing their own plans, one of the inescapable features of the new framework is that they have to address centrally defined targets and work within the Connexions strategy. This, augmented by an increased emphasis on central monitoring, means there has been a shift in power to the centre in the governance of youth services. It will have an impact on the degree of freedom that state-employed and state-funded youth workers have to respond to the needs and wishes of the young people they encounter. If young people (in the 13-19 age range, for example) do not fit into the particular target categories identified by the Government they are much less likely to be worked with. If they have no wish to participate in programmes that lead to accreditation (the specification requires that 60 per cent of those worked with in the 13-19 age range attain some sort of 'accredited outcome'), workers are likely

to be under pressure to either find other young people or to push people into activities that can be accredited. Some may try to 'work the system' and manipulate participation figures and data in order to ensure that youth services are not viewed as 'failing'.

Targeting. The specification runs in line with early government documents (DfEE 2000, DfEE, 2001) in placing an emphasis on working with young people at risk (defined as those assessed as not in education, employment or training [NEET] or who are at risk of, or already fall into the following categories: teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol or substance abuse or offending). There are also specific targets and performance indicators linked to work with these groups.

When set in the context of the overall Connexions strategy we can see that there is an important reorientation of work within youth services. It builds on movements that have been occurring since the late 1970s (and the shift to issue-based work) and entails a significantly increased emphasis on surveillance and control. In this there is an obvious focus on particular groupings as well as a more general monitoring of all young people via the Connexions database. For youth workers and informal educators there are a number of problems. First, there are issues around how they can justify work with people who do not fit into the government's preferred categories. We know from the experience of other target-driven policies (such as in schooling) that work becomes narrowed and there are considerable pressures to direct resources to the attainment of targets. Second, the focus on 'at-risk' young people can lead to stigmatisation of what become more recognizable groups. Third, the shift of resources away from other groups and activities involves a movement away from might be described as social capital building towards a more individualised social pathology.

The focus on accreditation. The requirement in the new framework that 60 per cent of young people worked with in the 13-19 age range must 'undergo personal and social development which results in an accredited outcome' has far-reaching implications. It alters the focus of activity in a way that undermines the informal and convivial nature of youth work. Alongside this has also come an emphasis on gaining competencies (particular skills) rather than competence (the ability to live life well). Competence is something more than a collection of competencies (Hyland, 1994). Workers will be under pressure to look to those activities that have an obvious outcome rather than having faith in the benefits of building relationships, process and relationship itself (see below). We are also likely to see a further increase in 'two bit' certification – the giving of awards and certificates of little worth and meaning.

Alongside an increased emphasis on curriculum in the specification (and that by definition takes much of youth work out of the category of informal education which is conversation-based) there is a clear alignment of work in youth services

with the sort of disposition usually associated with schooling. The specification substantially increases the pressure to formalise the tasks of workers within youth services and to take them away from the sorts of open-ended conversations, activities and relationships that defined the work in much of the twentieth century. The overall result is an alteration in the balance of work within youth services between the formal and the informal.

Delivery rather than relationship. Organising work around concepts like outcome, curriculum and issue means there is a danger of overlooking what lies at the heart of youth work. Primarily, workers face losing 'relationship' as a defining feature of their practice. The pressures around the meeting of targets in other sectors have meant a reduction in the amount of freewheeling time that practitioners are able to spend with people. A classic example here has been the experience of teachers in the classroom. The same mix of curriculum imposition, targets, performance indicators, inspection and accreditation (exam success) has led to a narrowing of focus within school classrooms and a declining readiness on the part of teachers to engage with young people as people and to build meaningful relationships with them. Indeed, the pressure in this direction has led to schools employing and using youth workers and informal educators to lessen the impact of these shifts and to ensure that relationships between young people and adults in schools can retain the possibility of some depth.

The problem that workers face isn't only about the amount of time they are able to devote to relationship, it is the way their work is increasingly framed. Education and the work of youth services are being commodified. In the 1980s and early 1990s this movement was partly carried forward by the rise of managerialism in many 'western' education systems. Those in authority were encouraged and trained to see themselves as managers, and to reframe the problems of education as exercises in delivering the 'right outcomes'. This has meant that schools and youth work agencies have had to market their activities and to develop their own 'brands'. They have sold 'the learning experience' and the particular qualities of their institution in order to get the money they need to survive. Complex processes have been reduced to easily identified packages; philosophies to sound bites; and young people and their parents become 'consumers' (Jeffs and Smith, 2002). The overall result has been a drive towards to the achievement of specified outcomes, the adoption of standardised teaching models and a failure to adequately question what is going on. There are now serious questions as to whether schools are engaged in what can rightfully be called 'education' (MacIntrye, 2002).

Individualisation. Within government policies there has been a growing focus upon targeting interventions at named individuals - we can see this in some of the activities of youth workers within the new community schools, of learning mentors

within the *Safer Cities Initiative* in England and of personal advisers within the Connexions Service. Essentially a form of case management is seen as the central way of working in this area (Jeffs and Smith, 2002). People are identified who are thought to be in need of intervention so that they may take up education, training or work. Action programmes are devised and implemented. Programmes are then assessed on whether these named individuals return to learning or enter work (rather than on any contribution made to the quality of civic life, personal flourishing or social relationships that arise out of the process). While this process predates the Connexions strategy, it has been accelerated by it and taken a new twist. The personal adviser function has already moved some youth workers further towards the territory traditionally occupied by social workers, the *Transforming youth work* specification also pulls them in the direction of schooling.

Youth services have largely lost faith in association - one of the three central features of youth work identified by the Albemarle Report (1960). Perhaps the most visible sign of this has been the movement away from club into more task-focused work. As a result, there has been an important shift in group work undertaken by workers. It has become less oriented to the needs and processes of the group (or club or unit) as a whole and instead focused on the achievement of learning that benefited individuals. In other words, it had lost much of its communal quality and emphasis on club life (see Robertson, 2000; Smith, 2001; and Jeffs and Smith, 2002). This shift has connected with wider changes linked to globalization and the emergence of the 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) and the movements charted by Robert Putnam (2000) and others away from civic participation. However, rather than appreciating the significant costs to local communities, groups and to individuals in these changes, youth services and many youth work agencies have simply gone with the tide. The alternative course, trying to build defences around, and promote, community and association has not been taken by most agencies and services. The result has been a sharpening orientation to young people as individual consumers of a service rather than the creators of groups and activities.

Bureaucratisation: For some years the adoption of so-called 'professionalism' has contributed to an embracing of a bureaucratic orientation. A central aspect of this has been the dominance of what is 'correct' rather than what is 'right' or 'good'. Youth workers have increasingly submitted to policies and procedures that place their safety first and cut the risk of litigation and disciplinary action, rather than attending to what is good for the actual people involved. At one level the reasons for this are obvious. Issues around safety in minibuses and on trips and activities, and concerns around child protection require careful attention and inevitably lead to the imposition or adoption of rules and procedures. However, the policies that

result can often tend to fail to give proper space to taking account of the particular circumstances, and to undermine key aspects of youth work (e.g. around spontaneity and informality). Alongside this there has been a growing marginalisation of the role of the volunteer in some services. The emphasis on policy and procedure and upon professional language and competence has worked to devalue their contribution.

Within recent New Labour policy initiatives there has been additional pressures towards bureaucratisation in the shape of 'joined-up' thinking and the surveillance and control of individuals. The amount of record keeping on individuals has increased significantly (see Jeffs and Smith, 2001). In the new specification for youth services, for example, there is a raft of new requirements around monitoring and evaluation, and initiatives such as the youth service questionnaire. Services will have to demonstrate that 70 per cent of those participating have expressed satisfaction with the service, for example (DfES, 2002: 16). One of the largest increases in bureaucratic activity brought about by the new specification will be in the necessity of keeping and processing the records necessary to evidence and accredit learning. The requirement that 60 per cent of young people worked with in the 13-19 age range must 'undergo personal and social development which results in an accredited outcome' (op. cit.) will bring about an explosion in paperwork. Full-time workers within local youth services already spend a relatively large proportion of their time in administrative activity. They are likely to spend even more in 'transformed' youth services.

From youth work to youth development

The scale of the shifts, for example towards accreditation and curriculum delivery, has tipped the balance away from the orientations and practices that have been central to the development of youth work. As Heather Smith (2002) has argued, the form that professionalisation has taken within youth work, combined with these sorts of pressures on practice, has seriously undermined the potential to form and sustain authentic relationships in youth work. An immediate question is whether the government specification for the work of English youth services can meaningfully be described as youth work.

When we come to examine the dominant discourses of youth work in the twentieth century five key elements appear with some regularity (Smith, 1999, 2002b). These are that youth work involves:

- *Focusing on young people.*
- *Emphasising voluntary participation and relationship.*
- *Committing to association.*
- *Being friendly and informal, and acting with integrity*

- *Being concerned with the education and, more broadly, the welfare of young people.*

The Connexions agenda and the new specification for English youth services involve a rather different set of orientations. There has been a shift from voluntary participation to more coercive forms; from association to individualised activity; from education to case management (and not even casework); and from informal to formal and bureaucratic relationships (Jeffs and Smith, 2002). Significantly, the new targets surrounding accreditation will inevitably accelerate the movement away from informal education towards formal education, formation and training. The overall effect is a radical alteration of the shape of work within youth services. Jobs may involve some youth work - but they are increasingly becoming something else. Perhaps the best way of characterising it, for at least work with 13-19 year olds, is youth development.

While there is considerable confusion around the term 'youth development' and something of a tendency in the United States for it to be used as a 'catch-all' for various forms of youth-related service (see Delgado, 2002), some fairly distinctive traditions of practice have emerged over the thirty years or so that the term has been in professionalised usage. However, there is a strong problem-orientation in much of the discussion of practice and recourse to programmatic activity and competence. For example, the National Youth Development Center defines youth development as, 'A process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent' (1998: 1). In the more recent literature (following Pittman, 1991 and others) much is made of 'positive youth development' and of viewing young people as partners in the work rather than as being problematic and in deficit. For example, the National Youth Development Center, again, suggests that 'positive youth development' addresses the broader developmental needs of youth 'in contrast to deficit-based models which focus solely on youth problems'. The discourse of youth development, positive or not, has been part of attempts to advocate and professionalise youth services in the United States. It has often played into governmental concerns about 'at risk youth' and has set itself apart from the more associational forms of language and practice within traditional youth-serving organisations such as the YMCA, boys and girls clubs, the Boy Scouts and settlement houses (Delgado 2002: 34).

The language and direction of much of the Connexions and *Transforming Youth Work* agenda displays a marked similarity with 'conventional views' of youth development. They both focus, in practice, 'almost exclusively on the individual'

(Degado, 2002: 48). They both utilise what is, essentially, a deficit paradigm. The Connexions strategy, like conventional youth development, broadly follows a public health model that 'identifies, isolates, and then treats the subject in order to restore him or her to good health, meaning adjustment to the dominant culture' (Lane, 1996: 17). The concern to keep young people in, or return them to, 'good shape' in the first *Transforming Youth Work* paper (DfEE, 2001), the particular focus on personal and social development in the second (DfES, 2002), and the assessment model utilised and promoted by the Connexions Service play strongly into a focus on the sort of 'at risk' indicators that run through much of the youth development literature (see, for example, Saito's 1995 discussion). The emphases in conventional youth development on organised and 'progressive' activity, on building relevant 'youth competencies' and on outcome (National Assembly, 1994) are in line with the new English requirements for curricula and accredited outcomes. When these elements are taken together there appears to be is a strong case for viewing the new specification for youth services (DfES, 2002) as a vehicle for the promotion of a problem-oriented version of youth development.

This emphasis on youth development and the concentration on securing specified changes in the behaviour of targeted groups of young people provide a rationale for the repositioning of youth services that has been taking place in the light of the Connexions strategy. Youth work has traditionally operated in the 'middle territory' between social work and teaching (Kornbeck, 2002: 49). Within the Connexions strategy local youth services are losing this distinctive position. The redefinition of youth work as youth development allows services to make sense of the movement of some of their workers into personal adviser roles, and others into development worker roles that resonate with formal education and training. Youth development can embrace both the Connexions personal adviser role and the personal and social development role of the development worker.

SOCIAL WORK   SCHOOLING

Personal Advisers   Development Workers

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH WORK
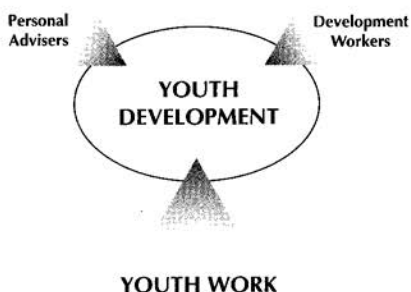
The embracing of what is, essentially, a youth development paradigm allows youth services to move from the margins of social work and schooling into the mainstream. This has been welcomed by many within youth services who interpret it as recognition of their work and a firming up of their role. However, as we have seen, it entails a change from the practices, processes and orientation of what we have come to know as youth work – and in the way that workers will be perceived by young people and others in local communities. There is no distinctive place in this for youth work as we have come to know it. Pockets of wisdom and practice might seep into the new format but they will be dominated by the language and practice of these other traditions. As a result, the identity of workers within local youth and Connexions services will change. The personal adviser role that a significant number of workers are now trying to make sense of is different from that of the youth worker. It draws upon practice wisdom and theory of assessment and intervention most commonly found within the case management traditions associated with social work (Kornbeck, 2002). In a similar way, the professional identity of many other workers will become increasingly wrapped up with those of trainers, teachers and personal development practitioners within formal education. Significantly, though, the notion of youth development provides a focus, language and orientation that allow the personal adviser role and the development and training role to meet. They become two sides of the same coin.

A further implication of the shift is that the freedom to engage in relational, associational and more open-ended forms of youth work within state youth services, and within agencies heavily dependent upon the state for funding, will be further curtailed. As we have already noted, a growing proportion of many youth workers' time has been eaten up by increased paperwork, the management of staff and in 'co-ordinating' activity. Not only will this process be accelerated, but the fundamentals of youth work will be further eroded. Workers within local youth services will have their work cut out to maintain and develop youth work based around relationship, conversation and association. Some space will no doubt be found, but direct youth work will be such a small part of many state workers' practice (and of many of those in receipt of significant state funding) that it will be difficult to describe their overall role as youth work anymore. Youth development workers may be a more accurate description – as some agencies have begun to recognise.

There is also likely to be a growing tension between conventional and more positive or community-oriented approaches to youth development within the strategy. Many of those welcoming the new specification within youth services have taken on good faith the various declarations concerning 'youth work values and methods' in the *Transforming Youth Work* documents. Reading them, it is fairly easy to be

lulled into the belief that the Government has recognised the worth of what in the United States could be termed a positive youth development agenda. However, when we come to examine the actual services that are required to be 'delivered' there is a very clear orientation to work with those deemed to be 'at risk', and to the offering of accredited 'personal and social development opportunities' (DfES, 2002: 16-17). There is little or no recognition of the time involved in, the benefits, and the open-ended nature of, community-based learning (in contrast to some of the guidance appearing in Scotland e.g. Scottish Executive, 2003). Neither youth work, nor 'positive' youth development, can thrive in the sort of target-driven culture that permeates the Connexions strategy in England.

Being hopeful

One of the outcomes of the Connexions strategy, and the move into youth development from youth work by local youth services, is that we can engage in a more productive debate around the nature and direction of work with young people. Broadly, in the immediate future, youth work with its relational and convivial nature is more likely to flourish in non- or limited-state funded organisations. These include churches and religious bodies, community-based projects and groups, and older youth movements. Youth development (sometimes misleadingly called 'youth work') largely will be the province of state-funded services and agencies, and will become increasingly professionalised and specialised. In part as a reaction to the narrowness of the emerging youth development agenda, and what was seen as a lack of appropriate focus in more open forms of youth work, a distinctive set of practices around youth ministry has also developed to supplement Christian youth work, often drawing on North American sources (see Smith and Smith, forthcoming). This is likely to become more of a force in debates as work develops. The number of workers engaged full-time in church-based youth work and youth ministry has, for some years, exceeded the number employed in local government youth services (Brierley's [2000] study suggests that there were over 7000 full-time workers in churches in 1998). The shape of work is altering in ways that those who focus on *Transforming Youth Work* (DfEE, 2001; DfES, 2002) can easily miss or underestimate.

It is reasonable to assume that there will be a growing divide between what we can now name as 'youth development' work and youth work. Tom Wylie (2003), the head of the English National Youth Agency, has argued that the new specification for youth services provides:

> *...a subtle and robust framework which sets out the legal duty on local authorities to secure an adequate and sufficient Youth Service, in partnership with the voluntary sector and young people themselves. It specifies standards*

and levels of provision which have to be met everywhere in England by 2005. It identifies a core target age group and other potential groups outside the core. It sets out performance indicators and arrangements for quality assurance, backed up by external inspection. It requires each local authority to have a clear curriculum statement which identifies how youth work promotes and records the personal and social development of young people. Identifying the roles of youth workers and those who manage them, it requires employers to ensure that their staff has an entitlement to continuing professional development and a specified budget for training.
(Wylie, 2003)

He has further suggested that those who argue against this view are somehow stuck in the past; that the advocacy of 'informal and convivial work' is utopian, and that those who believe that government – any government – is going to pay for such work are 'not operating in the same country as I am'. The line being drawn here is between those who draw on technocratic and bureaucratic concerns, and those who approach the debate from bases in political, religious and social movements. Another way of framing this is as a divide between professionalisation and calling (Doyle 1999). The significance for our purpose here lies in the extent to which the latter entails an orientation to the good, and the former a concern with policy and the correct.

Many within education and welfare are pessimistic about their work and worn down by governmental intervention and bureaucratic requirements. As David Halpin (2003) has pointed out, there is a fundamental need to 'remoralise' educational practice – to place an understanding of the good, and an orientation to love at its centre. He argues that teaching (and education generally) is built on hope:

… that is, on the possibility that it will realise improvement of one kind or another; that being hopeful as a teacher facilitates innovation and an earnestness to do well in one's work; and that hope is a relational construct which in the education context requires teachers to look for and build up the 'Good' in their students.
(2002: 30)

Those of a technocratic bent may well describe such talk of hope and love as utopian or unprofessional – and conclude that governments will not want to pay for such work. Others, perhaps steeped in a religious or social movement's anticipation of a better future may sense that utopian thinking provides us with a 'distinctive vocabulary of hope' and 'an antidote to cultural pessimism and an alternative to currently fashionable narratives of professional decline' (ibid.: 44). Having a vision

of what might be possible, and looking to what is good rather than correct, allows youth workers to engage authentically as people with others. As Parker J. Palmer (1998: 10) has put it, 'good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher'.

We can predict that the current set of initiatives linked to Connexions will fail either to further economic growth or well-being, in any substantial way. The specification stands in a depressingly long line of political interventions in this area. As Alison Wolf (2002: xiii) has shown in her analysis, the 'more overtly and more directly politicians attempt to organise education for economic ends, the higher the likelihood of waste and disappointment'. As for well-being, Robert E. Lane (2000) has conclusively demonstrated that once a certain level of wealth and income has been achieved, there is a significant tailing-off of happiness. In market democracies such as Britain and the USA there is now considerable evidence that unhappiness has risen as real income has grown. Interventions such as the Connexions strategy may alter the position of a very small group of people – but they do nothing to alter the fundamental problem of growing inequalities in income (IDS, 2003), and fail, in any real way, to address the fundamental issue of what makes for happiness and human flourishing.

But we can be hopeful. While *Transforming Youth Work* and the Connexions agenda may be missing the mark, there remains a large amount of youth work – largely within faith-based organisations, community groups and groups associated with social movements - that does not. According to Lane (2000), Putnam (2000) and a growing group of other analysts, friendship, association and a good 'family life' are what make for happiness. 'Companionship', Lane (2000: 88) has commented, 'is almost a condition of happiness'. However, for a number of complex reasons, people do not generally know the causes of their well-being and will often confuse increased consumption, and the possession of things, with happiness (ibid.: 325). It is here that the traditional concerns of youth work with relationships, association and character come into their own. People can benefit from help and encouragement to explore what constitutes human flourishing. Some, like Kerry Young (1999: 120) would argue that the purpose of youth work is to engage with young people in the task of moral philosophising, 'through which they can make sense of themselves and the world'. Many others working in religious or social movement settings would be happy with the old McNair Report characterisation of the youth worker as a 'guide, philosopher and friend to young people' (1944: 103).

We have a large amount of evidence with regard to how the experience of friendship and associational life can significantly alter how people feel about their lives and the world. We know, for example, that joining in with the life of a club can significantly

extend an individual's life expectancy and sense of well-being (Putnam 2000: 326-335). Putnam's discussion of these issues via the notion of social capital provides youth workers with a powerful rationale for their activities. Their paradigmatic working environment is the group, club or organisation – and these are central to the fostering of social capital within communities. They are the central means of cultivating social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. His work also provides a case against those who want to target work towards those who present the most significant problems and tie youth workers' activities to the achievement of specific outcomes in individuals to further social cohesion and order. Crime can be reduced, educational achievement enhanced and better health fostered through the strengthening of social capital Putnam argues. Significantly this entails working across communities – and in particular sustaining the commitment and capacities already involved in churches, other religous organisations, community organisations and enthusiast groups, and encouraging those on the cusp of being actively involved. The majority of the people we are talking about here cannot be classified as suffering from multiple disadvantage, will not be engaged in criminal activity, and will be (or have been) engaged with education systems and/or the world of work. In other words, open and generic work needs to be afforded a far higher priority – and so-called 'issue-based' work needs to be more closely interrogated as to the benefits it brings. Excellent youth work involves living, working for, and inviting people to share, the good life.

In conclusion

The shape of services for, and work with, young people over the next few years now seems clear. There will be a growing division between those concerned with youth development and those interested in the relational and associational life of youth work. This division will largely follow institutional lines with local and national state youth service organisations (and those tied to them significantly by funding) focusing on youth development; religious organisations, largely non-state funded youth movements and community groups looking to youth work. There will also be a growing gulf in language and orientation – with a more technical and professionalised discourse being allied to youth development.

In the short run government will, on the whole, back youth development – but there will be significant exceptions. One effect of programmes like *New Deal for Communities*, and developments in social housing such as tenant management organisations (Cairncross et al, 2002), appears to be a growth in the numbers of community groups locally who want to set up and run youth groups – and money has flowed in their direction. Such 'organic youth work' sits quite firmly within what can be called the 'social and leisure tradition' and has some emphasis on

mutual aid, friendship and association (Smith, 1988: 48-64). There has also been some significant funding given to local non-governmental agencies around the cultivation of social capital that has found its way into youth work initiatives. In the longer run the picture may well be different. As centralised initiatives in education and welfare fail to achieve targets, and people remain dissatisfied with what is happening; and as critiques of the 'received truths and clichés' (Wolf, 2002: 256) that constitute government policy in this area mount up, there will be pressure to change. Politicians may even discover that education, and youth work and youth development, have purposes other than to promote economic growth. As for those steadily working away in religious institutions, older youth movements and in community-based youth groups – there will be pressures to adopt a stronger focus on youth development. But surely many will be able to resist the pressure to copy state-sponsored work and to speak the language of faith, hope and love.

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Some parts of this article concerning *Transforming Youth Work* first appeared in Smith (2002a) and have been the subject of discussion on the informal education homepage. To follow the debates go to www.infed.org/forum.

CLASSIC TEXTS REVISITED

Classic Texts Revisited
G.W. Goetschius & M.J. Tash
Working with Unattached Youth:
Problem, Approach, Method.
London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1967.

C.S. Smith, M.R. Farrant & H.J. Marchant
The Wincroft Youth Project:
A Social-work Programme in a Slum Area
London: Tavistock Publications 1972.

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These books offer detailed descriptions of two 'experimental' projects. The discussions around values, confidentiality, managing behaviour, inter-agency working and evaluation are such that they still helpfully inform the consideration of current dilemmas. The two projects possessed many similarities. Both were set up initially to work with 'difficult' young people and at the outset used a coffee stall/ bar to make contact. Each then focussed on chosen individuals, undertook individual support and group work, and used trips and 'project work' to engage with young people. However there are differences; Smith et al's project focused more on 'delinquency', where as Goetschius and Tash's emphasised community integration and interpretation. The former engaged volunteers, whereas the focus of the second remained on work done by a small professional team. In evaluation terms Smith et al tried to formulate statistically based 'outcomes', undertaking a complicated attempt at assessing the impact of interventions, whereas Goetschius and Tash developed a more reflective approach, focussing on the interpretation of the detailed process recordings provided by the workers.

Context

The beginnings of outreach and detached work can be traced back to the nineteenth century when pioneers worked the streets (Smith, 2002). However the emergence, in Britain, of the forms of 'detached work' described in these texts is often located in the late1950s and early 1960s. Smith et al explain this development as follows:

> *New forms of delinquency were emerging and some of the older, more uncivilised forms, such as violence, were growing in importance. Illegitimacy had markedly increased among adolescent girls. The social conditions*

> *that heighten the risk of deviation were becoming more widespread. Substantial numbers of youngsters were irregularly employed and increasing numbers were 'sleeping rough' away from their homes. To make matters worse the traditional forms of treatment, such as approved schools were showing much less successful rates than in the past. (1972: 5)*

The *Albemarle Report* suggested there were substantial numbers of young people who were 'too wary or too deeply estranged to accept ... even the slight commitment required by club membership'. Therefore they advocated a need to 'experiment with peripatetic youth workers, not attached directly to any organisation or premises, who would work with existing groups or gangs of young people' (HMSO, 1960: para. 187). Material relating to work with US street gangs also became more available in Britain during this period. Smith et al cite Crawford et al (1950) and Spergel (1966) as influential in developing detached work. Goetschius, as an American, was undoubtedly familiar with this style of work.

A number of experimental projects emerged during the years either side of the publication of the *Albemarle Report*. For example the 'Teen Canteen' Elephant and Castle, with which Smith was involved, was established to create a bridge between the 'unattached' and local youth organisations. In 1959 the coffee stall in Paddington, which became the starting point for the project described by Goetschius and Tash, was opened. 1960 witnessed the launch of the National Association of Youth Clubs programme described by Morse (1965). Finally the Wincroft Project, located in a neighbourhood adjacent to Manchester, began operating in 1963.

The Projects

Both projects were allocated funding to employ a research team to document and evaluate their work. Wincroft initially established a café in February 1964, through which workers and volunteers made contact with young people. It employed 3 full-time project workers and one part-time 'case worker', as well as 151 volunteers. The café closed in January 1966 so that the 'full resources of the project' could be brought to bear on the 54 boys selected as 'participants' because of their 'delinquency and/or maladjustment' (Smith et al, 1972: 22). Contact was then re-established with this group, and other young people known to them, through group activities, trips and meetings in cafes, pubs and other designated premises in the area.

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The objectives of the Wincroft project crystallised in November 1965, and were:

> (a) *To work with young people in need of help, and assist them in finding a dynamic adjustment to society, and thereby among other things to control delinquency;*

> (b) *To develop methods of working with difficult young people in an unstructured setting. (Smith et al, 1972: 6)*

This was not viewed as a narrow focus on social control by the authors for 'an attack on delinquency meant an attack on its roots in poverty' (op cit: 5).

The project documented by Goetschius and Tash began as a coffee stall with one full time worker. This offered a point of contact with the unattached and the initial response indicated significant numbers needed and would use it. A fieldwork programme was then developed over a three-year period with 4 additional full-time workers. After the first year 40 young men and 10 young women were selected to form the core group over the next 2 years. The aim was 'to contact and work with the unattached in the borough using detached workers, to study and develop methods of doing this, to record the work and to prepare a document based on these records' (op cit: 1-2).

The Paddington project used 'unattachment' as a reference point to define the work. The 'unattached' were seen as lacking positive relationships with adults able to offer help and guidance. It was hoped this need might be partially met by a detached worker able to develop relationships with young people and facilitate access to recreational opportunities. As the project progressed it became obvious that 'unattachment was a community problem' (op cit: 5). One involving 'a conflict in expectations between those who offer the service ... and those – the young people- who want and need it but who are unable or unwilling to accept it on the conditions on which it is offered' (op cit: ix). The needs of the young people required, they concluded, a broader access to a range of voluntary and statutory services. This difference reveals a tension still present within current detached work. Wincroft had 'the control of delinquency' as an explicit objective. However the aim was broader and 'more positive' than this, focussing on 'dynamic adjustment' whereby young people could both adapt to their environment and help change it (Smith et al, 1972: 6). Both aimed to move beyond addressing perceived inadequacies,

however, the focus on group and case work, rather than the adoption of approaches more focussed on 'consciousness raising' may have resulted in an emphasis on personal adjustment, rather than active citizenship (op cit: 246). Contemporary detached work, it should be noted, experiences these tensions when crime reduction agendas pressure them to address community concerns about 'nuisance youths' or 'hotspots' rather than work with an educational agenda.

Finding a role

Constructing the detached worker role was not easy. Staff did not offer a relationship akin to that of a friend or parent, nor, hopefully, was it a patronising one, where workers 'know what was best'. An underpinning idea shared by the workers was a 'non-directive person centred philosophy' (Smith, 1972: 52). This was loosely based upon the work of Rogers. Workers sought to help groups and individuals do what they wanted to do (within the bounds of the law) without 'taking over'. To create 'enabling relationships' that helped the young people make choices, resolve conflicts and make decisions. The work was concerned with 'social education', aiming to 'pass on knowledge, understanding or skills to facilitate the social development of individuals by means, in circumstances and under conditions appropriate to the needs of the recipients' (Goetschius and Tash, 1967: 284). Workers slowly built relationships, and gradually, young people began to talk to them and see them as people who could help (Smith et al, 1972: 75-77).

Boundaries

Ambiguity relating to role meant questions regarding boundaries arose. The use of 'permissiveness as a technique' lead to workers allowing 'wide degrees of license' concerning young people's behaviour. The theory was that this helped build relationships with 'difficult' young people. However Smith et al concluded

> much clearer guidance ought to have been given to the voluntary workers, for some, having abandoned the common-sense convictions of adult-adolescent relationships, found themselves utterly at sea when the new basis for communication they expected to happen did not materialise. (1972: 264).

Goetschius and Tash noted that although 'the relationship with the young people was our primary concern, since it was only through relationship that we could offer help' (1972: 40) the extent to which workers tolerated

bad behaviour in the name of maintaining that relationship raised questions for them. The Paddington project was criticised by other agencies for allowing behaviour to go too far. The balance between sustaining work with a young person, without condoning, by action or implication, behaviour damaging to another individual is difficult to achieve. Both projects decided they would not pass information to the police about criminal activities, but that workers should not participate in criminal behaviour, nor indicate approval.

Unsurprisingly workers found themselves in a position of tension between different value bases. Goetschius and Tash identified three discrete ones, that of the young people, the neighbourhood, and the wider community (including voluntary and statutory agencies). Smith et al argue 'the project brought a radical change to the (young peoples) personal environment by introducing middleclass attitudes to their lives' (1972: 245). The workers needed to be true to their values without requiring young people to accept these. Using the 'ever present conflicts in values and standards to point out the choices available' and to attempt to mediate between different value systems whilst keeping communication open (Goetschius and Tash, 1967: 100). Reading the book today raises questions about professional boundaries. There was little 'time off', workers invited young people back to their homes, and were often contacted 'anytime' at home, for 'urgent troubles' or chats (Goetschius and Tash, 1972: 35). Staff felt this pressure, but a former worker believed the project would not have been the same without such commitment. Staff worked with challenging young people, trying to create a new role, with the added pressures of recording and on-going training. It is difficult to believe the levels of contact described could have been maintained for much longer. Wincroft workers also felt pressured by the volume of work, especially the demands of those not identified as one of the 54 participants,

> on what basis do we accept new demands - need or expediency? Whatever the claims for expediency it is extraordinarily difficult for workers in group situations to make decisions ... discouraging personal relationships, yet we recognise the unfairness of a situation in which those who shout loudest ultimately get service. Operating in a free setting, where the role is open to a variety of interpretations (and misinterpretations) increases the difficulty for workers defining the limits to each relationship .... (Smith et al, 1972: 70).

The issue of targeting provision, raised by the Wincroft study remains pertinent. The text offers no glib solution but it does remind us how limited resources and competing agenda ensure that issues relating to selection are longstanding and rarely easily resolved.

Priorities

A criticism of Wincroft is its failure to address gender issues. Goetschius and Tash also recognised that the coffee stall was not a good way to make contact with young women. Nevertheless the project highlighted special concerns relating to young women and the need to consider alternative methods of contacting and working with them:

> *The girls' need for personal service was equal to that of the boys but the behaviour of the boys frequently made their needs appear more obvious … The girls had come to accept that clubs were for boys and that the leaders were for boys as well … we were aware of the almost pitiful progress we were making in finding continuing help for the girls … in the last months of the project.*
> (1967: 89-90).

Both projects used groupwork and individual casework as methods. 50% of sessions at Wincroft were group work, with casework (37 per cent of sessions) used with those who 'because of the severity of their maladjustment' could not function effectively in a group (Smith et al, 1972: 170). Wincroft also formed groups for the purpose of supporting a particular participant. The Paddington project worked mainly with natural friendship groupings, helping them 'plan and carry out recreational activities and offering them the leadership and resources with which to do this' (Goetschius and Tash, 1967: 2). Individual work was undertaken when a young person approached a worker with a specific problem. The distinction reveals differences between the two, Wincroft adopting a more 'social work' style, focussing on individuals and undertaking planned interventions. Whereas Paddington employed an informal education approach, using naturally occurring events as opportunities for conversation and development. Current emphasis on work with the individual may see more potential in the Wincroft approach, however it is important to note this still relied, to a considerable extent, upon a bedrock of informal group work using activities as a means of promoting 'dynamic adjustment'.

CLASSIC TEXTS REVISITED

Paddington, of the two, stressed to a greater extent work with the community, including work with family, neighbours, indigenous adult leaders, other professionals and employers, coming to see this as 'the most important aspect of the whole operation' (Goetschius and Tash, 1967: 3). This involved sharing information, interpreting the needs of the unattached, and informing young people where agencies were situated and what they had to offer. Locating the work firmly in the community helped avoid an emphasis on the personal inadequacy of the young people that can flow from an over-emphasis on case and group work.

Staff support/ training

Both projects placed great importance on staff training and development. The presence of the researchers at Wincroft gave workers a regular opportunity to relate their work to sociological theory via discussion papers linking their practice to emerging theory concerned with adolescent and community development. Especially influential in this respect was the work of Cohen (1955) around status frustration. This argued that workers should seek to create an increasing number of positions in the local community to which status was attached, and the significance of the 'residual network'. Through supporting the young person in maintaining membership of a small group, they would be eventually integrated into more formal organisations. Within the Paddington programme the influence of Tash (1967) can be seen with regards to the emphasis placed on supervision and reflection. Records from weekly meetings and supervision provide examples of a high quality of staff support and development. Building research into the programmes was justified by the need to explore and record the use of 'innovative methods'. As well as providing an opportunity for workers to reflect with skilled educators and facilitators upon the value of the work undertaken. The connections established between practice, theory and reflective learning undoubtedly helped to produce a critical and illuminating account of the work and establish key methods and approaches still encountered today.

Even in comparison to the methods currently employed wherein it seems 'outputs and outcomes' are given an inordinately high priority the recording methods used by these two projects appear detailed and exacting. Workers were encouraged to record their encounters with young people and reflect upon them. Wincroft also focussed on statistical evaluation, which produced an assessment of their 'success' by comparing the outcomes for the 54 participants with a control group. The statistical

analysis is detailed and complex, and concludes, amongst other things, that the methods used were more effective with young people who had lower levels of 'maladjustment' when they were younger. The detailed notes and reflections upon practice written by workers, with all their personal biases and subjective impressions provide, perhaps, a better feel for the progress and value of the work. While it is necessary to consider the 'hard' outcomes of the work, the reflective recording process seems to offer more hope of understanding and developing detached youth work than detailed statistical analysis.

Conclusion

The books were written at a time when 'detached work' was widely perceived as being new and innovative. They also pre-dated a period of sustained growth. A 1976 survey found 50-60% of Local Authority Youth Services in England and Wales provided some form of outreach or detached provision; by 1998 all but one employed detached and/or outreach workers (Davies, 2001). Currently the increasing focus on countering social exclusion among young people and developing the Connexions Service in England has further boosted the number of detached and outreach projects as a means of relating to the 'hard to reach' and re-integrating them into mainstream services. Both books conclude with a series of reflections on how improvements might be made to services in order that they might better serve the needs of the young people with whom they worked. Reading these three decades on reveals a situation in which many of the same problems persist. While detached methods offer a way of engaging with young people, there still remain questions about the extent to which these approaches are allowed to focus on 'active citizenship' rather than the personal failings of individuals. The focus of detached work as a way of re-engaging young people with the system still fails to question the reasons some young people choose not to engage in the first place.

The adoption of detached methods then opened up questions about how existing youth serving agencies might better meet the needs of some young people. Both failed to involve the young people in the overall design of the projects, indeed they did not even let them know what it was that was 'being done to them', however the process of going out to find a group of young people, asking them what it is they want and then working with them to organise it (now so familiar) is closely explored in the texts. Importantly the process the workers went

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through, of developing and debating their role, planning, acting and reflecting on practice remains as relevant now as it was then. That is perhaps what makes both still important and valued texts.

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Feature Review

Nicholas Emler
Self-esteem: The costs and causes of low self-worth
York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2002
ISBN: 1 84263 020 2
£15.95
pp. 97

Tony Jeffs

Initially it is difficult to grasp why this slim volume has caused such a furore within youth work circles since it appeared just over a year ago. After all it amounts to nothing more or less than a literature review published by a research institute. Narrated in an even-handed monotone this is no polemic. Yet it has nevertheless become a catalyst for a heated, at times, acrimonious debate. Before mulling over why that has happened it is perhaps advisable to consider what the author set out to achieve.

Answering a need

This monogram reviews research and other literature relating to the topic of self-esteem. The focus rightly is on work undertaken by psychologists for until recently it was within the discourse of that discipline that the term was most frequently encountered. Also whenever self-esteem appears in the conversation of professionals and laity it is typically allied to an assessment of a third party's psychological well-being. Usage of the term is booming. The review, as Emler warns, cannot hope to be fully comprehensive for 'self-esteem' as a topic is at present attracting unprecedented attention. Currently within psychology alone research papers and articles dealing directly or tangentially with it are surfacing at the rate of over 1,000 per annum. The study besides evaluating this growing corpus of material tries to explain a parallel phenomenon. For academic fascination has been matched, possibly eclipsed, by the attention lavished upon the concept by the popular press, 'celebrities', cod-psychologists, the self-help fraternity and cohorts of welfare professionals. Amazon.com lists over 2,000 books currently in print offering prescriptions for raising self-esteem. Books with a ready market, not least amongst the gullible, for a lack of self-esteem is now viewed, in many quarters, as posing a serious threat to an individual's well-being. In particular, the scribblers tell us, young people are at the greatest risk. By extension so also is the wider community for it is frequently argued that as a consequence of 'inadequate' self-esteem individuals embark on adulthood with a belief they are

devoid of value. A conviction that this will subsequently result in these individuals inflicting 'violence' upon both themselves and others.

Getting to grips

Emler leads the reader through a labyrinth of studies, reports and research findings. The journey is not a comfortable one. The concept of self-esteem, which, at first glance, appears so transparent, upon close analysis and reflection becomes murky and imprecise. It is vague, subject to wide fluctuations and regularly measured according to rather simplistic criteria. Criteria often rooted upon the willingness of individuals to make fleeting pronouncements regarding how they feel about or judge themselves. Feelings and judgements invariably shaped by who they last spoke to, what sort of morning they had and who forgot to send them a birthday card yesterday. For example the most frequently cited measure, the *Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale*, asks the subject to make 10 assessments of themselves along the lines of 'At times I think I am no good at all.' Psychologists apply sophisticated controls and refined techniques in attempting to measure and assess self-esteem but despite their best efforts one is obliged to acknowledge this is a slippery concept. It is no good blaming the psychologists for the confusion and absence of precision. The fault fundamentally lies within ourselves. We expect too much from them and all too frequently fail to ask the appropriate questions of the concept itself.

Emler cautions that as 'most things are related' (p. 13) consequently there is almost certainly a link between levels of self-esteem and forms of behaviour and the mental health of individuals. What is important though, he stresses, is the strength of that linkage. Is it significant? That is the question to ask: not merely does it exist? Second he expects us to reflect on the nature of the affiliation. In particular does a particular behaviour flow from high or low self-esteem, or do given forms of behaviour influence levels of self-esteem? This is not a one-way street. As Leary et al (1995) and others show by tracking behaviour we learn that when relationships are successful, when one is loved and respected by friends and family, self-esteem will be relatively high. Whereas if relationships are poor, and someone feels marginalised, unpopular and unwanted it slumps. These shifts therefore provide a valuable corrective mechanism. When levels fall we are warned relationships are deteriorating and it is time to pay attention to those around us, our own behaviour and the needs of others. After all others may well dislike us for very good reasons – perhaps we can't be bothered to wash often enough, are treating those

around us with disdain or selfishly exploiting the kindness and goodwill of others.

Besides seeking to contextualise the concept this text weighs up the evidence regarding whether low self-esteem significantly contributes, as many commentators have claimed, to the following:

- *crime and delinquency;*
- *racial prejudice;*
- *abuse of illegal drugs;*
- *alcohol abuse;*
- *risky sexual behaviours leading to teenage pregnancy;*
- *child maltreatment;*
- *educational underachievement;*
- *chronic dependency on state support;*
- *eating disorders;*
- *suicide and suicide attempts.*

Wow – glory be! A pretty wide-ranging listing and if blame for only half the above social 'problems' can be laid at the door of low self-esteem then Jerusalem is just around the corner. Certainly we need to cultivate the talents of those promising us they have developed techniques to raise self-esteem. For once they have worked their alchemy good-bye social security, forget about locking your front -door and prepare for a massive reduction in tax bills. As one enthusiast explains:

> *If there were ever a magic bullet that could transform a young person's life it would be a pill coated with self-esteem. This powerful yet fragile quality is the key to the future for a teenager.*
>
> (Katz, 2000 cited Emler p. 2)

Unfortunately research fails to provide evidence that the magic bullet works. Worse in some cases it tells us raising self-esteem may accomplish undesirable outcomes for those seeking a better society. Try as he might Emler simply fails to unearth the evidence to support the all-embracing claims of those such as Katz. Concluding 'no study to date has shown that low self-esteem leads to delinquency' (p. 19). Worse regarding violent crime he finds plentiful evidence of it resulting 'from a high level of self-esteem' (p 20). For it seems that those most likely to be angry and hostile

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to others 'had high but unstable self-esteem' (ibid.). Racial prejudice, the same story, 22 out of 23 studies 'showed that discrimination was highest amongst those whose self-esteem was initially highest' (p. 21). Drug abuse: with respect to smoking 'there does not yet appear to be a case for a strong causal influence of low self-esteem with respect to taking up smoking' (p. 22). Ditto alcohol. Seems there are 'few differences in the [educational] achievements of low- and high-esteem individuals' (p. 28). Child maltreatment, here research indicates:

> that violence of all kinds, including violent abuse of one's own children, is more likely to be done by people whose self-esteem is very high than by those whose self-esteem is very low. They point out that the former category will include people whose high opinion of themselves will be more often challenged. This will be especially true when high opinion has little basis in reality.
> (p. 27)

Only in relation to teenage pregnancy, eating disorders, suicide attempts and poor earnings and extended unemployment of males does low esteem emerge as a possible risk factor. Overall it seems those with low self-esteem may treat themselves badly but they 'do not, however, tend to treat others badly' (p. 59). Whereas those with high self-esteem are more likely to be prejudiced towards minorities, reject social influences and indulge in risky pursuits.

Lifting the lid

This book challenges a number of educational shibboleths. For schools and colleges, like it or not, it pulls the rug from under those who believe raising self-esteem offers a short-cut to improving the performance of under-achievers. Those with high self-esteem will simply explain away their failure in ways that concur with their already inflated opinion of their talents – they were unlucky, unfairly discriminated against or didn't try this time but when they do will 'walk it'. Whilst sadly those at the other end of the spectrum are apt to dismiss their success as a stroke of luck or the result of grafting harder than their 'more talented' peers.

For youth work, although it must likewise refrain from perceiving pro-grammes that promise to lift self-esteem as a cure-all, the issue of signing-up to this approach has an added dimension. For schools and colleges these programmes are an aid – sugar-coating that will, they hope, ensure the curriculum pill is more painlessly swallowed. Elevating self-esteem, like putting water bottles in the classroom, holiday classes, introducing

tough-love, teaching emotional literacy and stress-busting sessions is just another desperate attempt by desperate people to meet externally imposed targets, to improve their standing in the all important league tables. If it fails to enhance SATs scores then it will be instantaneously and offhandedly discarded. Even if it was proved, beyond reasonable doubt, that the raising of children's self-esteem subsequently made them exemplary parents - out it would go unless the government added it to the curriculum.

Within youth work, however, raising self-esteem has been re-formulated into a sought after outcome, not adopted as a mere appendage to facilitate the achievement of some other end. It is viewed as something of benefit to the young person, rather than the agency, school or college. This situation will change as statutory and state-funded youth work is 'transformed' into a service obligated to meet externally set targets, like the rest of our education system, but for the moment this is thankfully not the case. We can therefore see it employed as a discrete objective by, for example, Wylie and Merton (2002) who talk of core areas of skill, knowledge and understanding within a youth work curriculum. One of these, *Emotional Literacy,* incorporates self-esteem. Leading to what they term 'learning gains for young people' amongst which are included 'confidence and self-esteem.' Likewise Huskins who, in his *Curriculum Development Model,* tells youth workers they must understand the 10 social skills and be able to develop these with young people - first amongst these is 'self awareness and self esteem.' At the local level projects and workers increasingly cite raising self-esteem as a core focus of their work. Justifying any and every intervention from canoeing to detached work because it does precisely that. This is why Emler's review has generated such a disproportionate response within youth work circles. Without setting out to do so he has succeeded in making those who have been spraying the term around look a mite foolish.

Steaming ahead - regardless

'Self-esteem' has been embraced by many contemporary youth workers in a similar fashion to the way their predecessors once latched onto 'self-respect' as a defining characteristic of their work. Two out of the first four of the influential Charles Russell Memorial Lectures (1952 and 1955) were devoted to that topic because developing 'self-respect' was gifted such high priority by workers. As Sprott, who gave the second, reminded his audience it was an expression so frequently employed by them and Russell, a key figure in the development of the youth club movement, that it deserved special attention. What 'self-respect' had come to mean,

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Sprott argued, was that young people acquired the qualities workers 'consider desirable' (1955: 1). Indeed when a worker said of young person '"He has self-respect"' it was 'equivalent to saying "I approve"'(ibid.). The worker meant they had become a 'virtuous citizen' (ibid.). Today many workers employ self-esteem in similar fashion. In saying that they are seeking to develop this attribute they are often merely assuring the listener, and themselves, that they are intervening in ways they trust will encourage a young person to become a virtuous citizen. To reduce the likelihood they will engage in all those behaviours listed earlier all of which may damage themselves and others. Thus to argue against raising the self esteem of young people is, in the eyes of some workers, tantamount to advocating they set aside their responsibility to address those behaviours. Their annoyance, anger even, with those questioning the value of devoting resources to raising self-esteem is understandable but misplaced. Emler is not asking us to abandon our efforts to help young people avoid those 'pitfalls' but to recognise that despite what some may tell us certain forms of intervention may not merely prove fruitless but actually may worsen the situation.

Some attacks directed at Emler's measured review have been somewhat intemperate. Perhaps the worst example of these appeared in *Young People Now* penned by Paul Oginsky (2002), co-founder of the youth work charity *The Weston Spirit*. Huskins' (2002) in similar vein produced a rather bombastic piece also published in *Young People Now*. Both shamelessly played the populist anti-intellectual card. Each fashioned a straw academic obsessed with theory and out-of-touch with the 'real world' in the expectation that this would secure the sympathy and allegiance of practitioners to their cause. Practitioners whom both writers insultingly assumed share their own self-proclaimed indifference to serious research and scholarship. Emler, wisely, predicted this line of attack and asks his reader merely to consider 'has science for some reason failed us because it does not confirm what intuition and common experience tell us is true?' (p. 33). On balance the vehemence of the attacks has probably been counter-productive, serving only to bring the book to the attention of a wider audience. If so, all well and good; if not one can only hope that over time word will spread and individuals will search out the text and make their own judgements. Evaluate it in the light of their practice.

Taking care

Hopefully youth workers, along with other welfare professionals, will

find the time to read this slim text. Certainly it will repay the effort. Gratitude rather than annoyance should be the response. The contents in no way bring into question the value of youth work. This is not an anti-welfare polemic. Rather it amounts to a plea for practitioners and others to reflect carefully upon what they seek to achieve and the modes of intervention they subsequently employ. For example to think about what is appropriate and avoid the 'magic bullet' approach. So when the Commission for Racial Equality simplistically tells us that one of the nine 'ingredients leading to a racist act by a young person … is low status and poor self-esteem' (1999: 19) we instinctively take care. Because many racists, Emler warns, do not suffer from a lack of self-esteem but wallow in a surfeit. Likewise when the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1994) self-confidently pronounces that young people with SEBD (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties) have low self-esteem, this text reminds us to reflect on our own experience and the research before acting in haste.

In this respect this book, like all good scholarship demands we examine our assumptions, probe common-sense and be mindful regarding our use of terminology. Like poverty, for example, self-esteem is a relative concept and therefore we must exercise care when employing it in relation to individuals or within a policy context. To extend the comparison whether we like it or not individuals and groups experience poverty as a consequence of making comparative assessments. No more than we can seriously 'treat' the 'problem' of poverty unless we are willing, with equal vigour, to wrestle with the problem of greed, can we discuss dealing with a lack of self-esteem without recognising that excessive self-esteem is a serious problem. The self-esteem industry predominately commences from the same 'blame the victim' stable as the 'poor are responsible for their own poverty' lobby. A mode of intervention that encourages us to treat the 'inadequacies' of individuals rather than begin by addressing the structural causes of their plight. One more in tune with individualistic rather than collectivist *modus operandi.*

Finally because this book demands we start from first principles it helps us resist the blandishments of the 'self-esteem' entrepreneurs' and snake-oil pedlars spouting the following sort of nonsense:

> *What we are trying to tackle in this one hour is what I think is the root of all the problems in the world – lack of self-esteem is what causes war because people who really love themselves don't go out and try to fight other people.*
> (Oprah Winfrey, cited Emler p. 20)

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Now anything puncturing the ludicrous ego of those making such promises must be welcome. If it irritates those promulgating outrageous claims regarding the capacity of high self-esteem to inoculate 'people, and in particular young people, against vulnerability to a wide range of social ills' (p 3) all too the good. If it also, as this book does, helps us clarify our thinking and create more worthwhile practice then that is an added bonus.

It can hardly have been an easy task combing through the mountain of reports, articles and books that was needed to produce this valuable text – one can only be grateful for the dedication of the author and assure him it was well worth the effort.

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Alan Smith

Transforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Services is the third in a series of publications from the DfES that sets out the Government's vision of Youth Work and Youth Services. It forms a logical progression from the earlier 'vision statement' offered by *Transforming Youth Work – Developing youth work for young people* (2001) and *Transforming Youth Work – Ensuring a high quality workforce* (2002), the report and recommendations from a national conference on workforce development in youth work held in Warwick in March 2002. In addition, the DfES has issued a planning framework to support the *Transforming Youth Work agenda, Transforming Youth Work – Planning for the Local Authority Youth Service: 2003–04 Guidance* (2002). This raft of measures has to date been met with a very mixed press. Certainly Mark Smith (2003) has suggested that it spells 'the end of youth work as we know it' whilst other commentators have cautiously welcomed this attempt at providing a more secure statutory base for Youth Work provision.

Firstly let me state my position. As the Secretary of the Community and Youth Work Training Agencies Group (TAG) I am a member of the Transforming Youth Work National Advisory Group and Workforce Development Implementation Group, so my comments are obviously based on a more positive reading of the documents. That is not to say that I do not share some level of concern about the increased bureaucratisation of youth work, and the ever increasing emphasis on product rather than process. But I do believe that *Transforming Youth Work - Resourcing Excellent Youth Services*, when taken as part of a wider policy initiative that commits to young people and youth work, offers a framework within which good quality youth work can thrive, rather than a straight-jacket that limits opportunities for innovative and young person centred youth work.

At an early stage in the life of the Transforming Youth Work National Advisory Group, I was reminded of the Introduction to *The Albemarle Report:*

> 2. *We are appointed at a most crucial time. First, because several · aspects of national life, to which the Youth Service is particularly*

*relevant, are today causing widespread and acute concern. ...
Secondly, because it soon became clear to us that the Youth
Service itself is in a critical condition. ...*

(i) *... All over the country and in every part of the Service
there are devoted workers. ... the inspiration of exceptional
individuals or organisations, or the encouragement of local
education authorities, have kept spirits high. But in general
we believe it true to say that those who work in the Service
feel themselves neglected and held in small regard, both in
educational circles and by public opinion generally. We
have been told ... that the Youth Service is 'dying on its feet'
or 'out on a limb'. ... These are distressing observations,
but ... indicate accurately the background of feeling among
many of those engaged in the Service; ... No Service can do
its best work in such an atmosphere.*

(ii) *that our witnesses were nevertheless in no way disheartened
about the fundamental value of the Service. They gave us the
firm impression (...) that a properly nourished Youth Service
is profoundly worthwhile; and ... of special importance in a
society subject to the kinds of change which we have noted ...*
(Ministry of Education, 1964: 1)

Whilst the current Government initiative makes less reference to the social,
political and economic context it can be viewed as part of the wider policy
agenda to address Social Exclusion, which includes the development of
the Connexions Service and promotion of Lifelong Learning. In fact,
despite a sense amongst some in the wider youth and community work
field that might easily replicate the witness testimonies gathered by Lady
Albemarle, this report is remarkably upbeat, praising the successes of
youth work and youth workers and setting out a Governmental commitment
to 'a youth service fit for the 21st Century' (DfES, 2002: 3).

In essence, *Transforming Youth Work* is a careful balancing act between
'carrot and stick'. It offers a promise to Local Authorities that Government
(and the Local Government Association) will adequately fund a Youth
Service. It sets out a series of measures of the Service's quality based on
young people's perception as well as locally identified targets. We see a
commitment to the youth work curriculum, and a clear statement of the
value of youth work. 'Only the youth service has as its primary purpose
the personal and social development of young people' (DfES, 2002: 6).

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The framework offered by Transforming Youth Work also addresses the methods used by youth workers, and the values that underpin these. 'The vital diversity of "youth services" is underpinned by having in place a shared set of youth work values and by the use of distinctive methods, for example educational group work, which seek to promote learning and achievement through relationships with adults which have been freely chosen by young people themselves ... This particular combination of goals, methods and values characterises youth work' (DfES, 2002: 6). As a framework, this offers an opportunity for creativity and innovation, capitalising on the 'distinctive character' of the youth work relationship and applying both the processes used and the product, into a framework of accreditation or certification.

Significantly, four Key Themes emerge within *Transforming Youth Work*. The first relates to the inter-relationship with the Connexions agenda. This involves what can be seen as a narrowing of the age range in terms of the main focus of youth work and includes an emphasis on specified target groups drawn from those identified as socially excluded or at risk from becoming excluded. However, the report also makes it clear that the 'youth service needs to be accessible to all young people in the target age range 13-19 and to those targeted groups in the 11-13 and 19-25 age ranges' (DfES, 2002: 10). This balancing act allows Local Authorities and individual projects to identify more broadly the groups they intend to work with, rather than demanding that they merely replicate the Connexions targets.

The second key theme is that of making the Youth Service accountable to young people. This is achieved through 'a local pledge' (see Annex 3, DfES, 2002: 22) underpinned by a local commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (DfES, 2002: 10). Within the specification for measuring effectiveness and performance is an expectation that '70% of those participating in youth services express satisfaction with the service' (DfES, 2002: 16).

The third theme relates to the Youth Work curriculum, here again great emphasis is placed on the youth work relationship, stating that 'it has to connect with young people's interests - particularly as they engage voluntarily.' (DfES, 2002: 27). As with the framework offered within *Transforming Youth Work* and in many aspects of the report's content, it is recognised that it is 'not appropriate to lay down nationally what constitutes a curriculum for the diversity of youth work across the country' (DfES, 2002: 27). In

essence this is a recognition that different organisations, projects and localities may have very different needs.

The final theme relates to the service that young people can expect to receive, not just in terms of access and availability (Annex 4, DfES, 2002: 23-26) but also the workforce that deliver such a service. In recognising the vital importance that initial training, recruitment and continuing professional development can play in raising the quality of service delivery, this report addresses one of the key issues raised in the introduction to the Albemarle Report - that of credibility and value, both from other education professionals and the general public.

In conclusion, *Transforming Youth Work* offers an opportunity to raise the status, quality and availability of youth work in such a way that young people must benefit. It has tried to maintain the distinctive nature of the youth worker role, whilst recognising the demands placed on all agencies operating within the broad education arena to promote citizenship, educational attainment and employability. T*ransforming Youth Work – Resourcing Excellent Youth Services* is a framework that can offer as much freedom to diversify, or provide innovative approaches to working with young people as has always been the case, only now it is protected through a funding formula and a Governmental commitment to deliver an 'adequate and sufficient' youth service.

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William Clemmey, Betty Hadley and Martin Lambourne
Resources for Courses:
A Training the Trainers Toolbox (PC/MAC CD Rom)
Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs, 2001
£120.00 Commercial & Statutory Organisations (inc p&p)
£60.00 Voluntary Organisations (inc p&p)

Sean Harte

Resources for Courses aims to share information, exercises and resources useful for instructing those who are, or will be, involved in the delivery of training. Consisting of a collection of materials accumulated through several years of experience working in the field, the CD Rom has been developed as a user friendly aid to the trainer by gathering together a significant collection of resources into a readily usable and easily editable format.

The content of the CD Rom is supplied in both *pdf* (Portable Document Format – readable using Acrobat Reader, also contained on the disk) and *rtf* (Rich Text Format – fully editable and can be opened with Word etc.). This excellent idea could prove invaluable as it allows the trainer to make adjustments and alterations, and to easily incorporate these materials into prepared sessions while maintaining a consistent format throughout. Whilst I certainly find this to be an advantageous feature, perhaps a paper based alternative may have appealed to the less technically advanced trainer.

Indeed, whilst the contents of the disk are easy to navigate using simple hyperlinks and the backward/forward button, they are cumbersome for initial access unless you have definite knowledge of what you require for reading or printing purposes. Swift browsing or skimming of the whole package proves almost impossible because of the format, although accessing a specific section is effortless for anyone with a basic knowledge of computer use. I feel this could detract from the usefulness of this pack, especially for those who are involved in trainer instruction in a modest capacity and cannot spend a relatively lengthy initial period becoming familiar with the content.

Resources for Courses is well organised and easy to follow due to the simple structure. A short introduction is followed by an index for each of the materials covered. Well-defined sections are available for training sessions on sixteen topics including advocacy, groupwork, how adults learn, identifying training needs and portfolio building. Each of these sections sub-divides to suggest readily usable warm ups, exercises and handouts. The exercises are clearly explained covering aims, method and possible variations and are well supplemented by the handout section. The topics

covered are relevant, if not essential to training theory and application, the exercises are not new in the main, but they are however tried and tested and very well illustrated.

A miscellaneous section covers general advice and background information on training, from a definition of training and its benefits, through the use of icebreakers and practice placements, to the importance of debriefing exercises. These passages stand alone as an informative instruction manual on the art and practices of the trainer, giving a thorough grounding in theory whilst being accessible enough for a novice to understand and apply. Use of technical jargon is limited and where applied is clearly explained helping to clarify learning and to absorb relevant detail.

The final collections of material on the disc are the units from the authors own training the trainer programme. Units cover assessment and evaluation, designing training, delivery, management of programmes, equal opportunities and the use of portfolios. This information, whilst not specifically intended to be a ready-made course, has been accredited through the OCN *(Open College Network)* and as a framework would prove a considerable time and energy saver for anyone wishing to develop such a programme.

All the material contained in *Resources for Courses* is reproducible having secured copyright permission where required. This is a great advantage to commercial organisations and training departments who can reproduce and use exercises without fear of infringement.

The nature of this product, coupled with the broad range of topics covered and abundance of practical exercises make it impossible to give anything other than a very subjective appraisal of their usefulness. Moreover, the exercises contained within it obviously vary in their quality and value, some of which you will undoubtedly own, or have utilised previously. However, certain sections do stand out, particularly notable are the contributions on communication, including the `ten golden rules` and giving and receiving feedback which whilst basic supplies a worthy and stimulating insight.

Certainly the idea behind *Resources for Courses* is not only highly functional, it is one given consideration by many trainers, most however lacking the time to collate the many resources they have at their disposal. The authors have carried the burden of work in compiling, assembling and publishing a plethora of trainers tools in order to make life easier for training deliverers. It certainly seems that their effort has been worthwhile as they have contrived a highly functional product. Much of the material in *Resources for Courses* would be very useful to cover knowledge specifications and practice

exercises for students of structured programmes such as *City & Guilds 7306* Teacher Training Course or similar. The use of the CD Rom format whilst innovative and giving flexibility, including the option of internet based upgrades, does have certain drawbacks. It can prove annoying to read articles more lengthy than a page or two from a screen and this could lead to continuous printing, somewhat defeating the object of the CD Rom product. There was also a problem in accessing hyperlinks in the evaluation and assessment sessions, this is frustrating, though it may be an isolated fault.

Overall, *Resources for Courses* would make a welcome and reasonably priced addition to the accoutrements of a full-time trainer instructor. With an abundance of articles, exercises and handouts to choose from, short sessions or full programmes can be easily developed and adjusted with a minimum of effort. However, a more casual or one time user may find that this product whilst potentially useful, takes a little too long to browse and is somewhat awkward to appraise and thus becomes disregarded in favour of hardcopy material.

Sean Harte *is a trainer and youth work practitioner.*

Kenway and Bullen
Consuming Children: Education, Entertainment, Advertising.
Open University Press, 2002.
ISBN: 0335202993
£17.99 (pbk)
pp 224

Peter Hart

The 'problem' of consumer culture has been attracting increased attention thanks to books such as Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* and Naomi Klien's *No Logo*. Alongside this a growing academic interest in children's rights and the difficulty of defining 'child', 'youth' and 'adulthood' can be detected. Consequently the authors of *Consuming Children* are building upon a growing volume of material.

The authors focus on how advertising has spread into children's lives, paying special attention to the ways this is changing family relationships,

schools and education. *Consuming Children* is structured into two 'halfs' and four themes. The first, roughly up to chapter four, concerns itself with the 'historical and theoretical backdrop' looking at different accounts of consumerism and how childhood evolved as a socially constructed category. They then proceed to recent developments which briefly and, it has to be said somewhat confusingly, sets the context for the second half, the motivation for writing the book. Everything from chapter four onwards concerns itself with education. They look at how and why companies target schools and curricula, and why schools are choosing to become commercially run institutions.

The first theme running through the book is that of 'semiotics', the process of using symbolic imagery to promote an idea or message rather than using text. Producers have become more interested in 'style, form and image' rather than substance and usefulness. The value of a product, it is argued, now rests on an image determined by the quality of the advertising and marketing. Young people, it is usually assumed, are particularly susceptible to a products image, especially when its symbolism 'contradicts order'. It is irrational, unclean and taboo but it has taken over everyday life. Even in relation to schools the uniforms and brochures portray a style and image that is more important than the content or practicality of either.

Second it focuses on the forming of identity through consumerism. The authors believe commercial interests 'play a major role in shaping personal and social meaning and identity'. Such interests can manipulate people, young and old, into believing the image sold to them can give them a new, adaptable identity.

Third the authors look at the nature of child and adulthood - the changing roles and relationships of both. This theme draws heavily on Postman's (1994) *Disappearance of Childhood* that argues the mass media now teaches children most of what they need to learn, therefore reducing generational differences. The bulk of their discussion is on the blurring of generational boundaries, which they believe started when advertisers began using TV to 'talk' directly to children. For example adults in children's programmes are frequently portrayed as immature, irresponsible and problematic, while child characters are shown as 'miniature adults' with similar interests, language and sexuality but somehow possessing a superior view of the world.

Finally the book concerns itself with education as a commercial target and schools as commercially run institutions. Parents are attracted to toys, programmes and software promising an educational element and success

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at school. Meanwhile schools are seen by businesses as, places for promotion and profit. However, sponsorship rarely promotes equality for unsurprisingly wealthier suburbs secure greater sponsorship. Business funding also means schools use their image to 'sell' themselves to parents, potential students, and more importantly funders.

There are longstanding debates regarding how much advertising influences young people, but the effects are clear when looking at current fashions that encourage children to embody materialism and self-centredness, whilst operating within a strong peer group context. Many aspects of growing up are being turned into a socially acceptable, apathetic, business sponsored exercise that erodes the distinctions between youth and mainstream cultures blurring the point of 'total integration'. The behaviour, attitudes and language of children and adults are now increasingly indistinguishable due to a media and social obsession with 'youth'.

It can be argued that 'pester power' and increased spending is a way for children to regain autonomy. Also it is unfair to blame the loss of children's innocence purely on consumerism. Also many adult 'secrets' are given away by field workers trying to reduce childhood ignorance. For the sake of their rights it is important that much of this innocence and ignorance is lost. Nevertheless it is important for young people to learn about the problematic nature of consumerism, and this cannot be taught solely, if at all, in a formal school setting where increasingly there is an obvious conflict between sponsorship and anti-consumerist lessons. This is why the main message informal educators should take from this book is a warning that we need to resist allowing our work to be constrained by the need for predictable and quantifiable results. We should not be 'product' driven, as the process of conversation, dialogue and learning must, to be effective, be based on individual need and not commercially dictated. The dialogue must be voluntary and democratic – not sponsored.

Although on page five the authors acknowledge that the reason young people are taken in by marketing is because they are taken seriously by businesses. Adults rarely seem to believe the solution is to embrace children's rights and acknowledge the adult-like features they possess, rather it is to try and redress the balance, to re-create a time when adults had complete control over young people (if that time ever existed?). If books like this don't recognise children are not inferior to adults then there will never be a serious debate about how to combat consumerism. It is impossible to prevent child consumer culture while adults see fit to carry on their own materialistic lifestyle.

Overall the authors deliver a readable and informative book that tackles a range of issues relating to consumerism, Kenway and Bullen drawing on research from numerous disciplines create a 'well rounded' feel for their case. The book is easily related to practice, although focussed on schools, and serves a warning to all concerning the relationship between education, in any setting, and the drive for profitability.

Peter Hart, *Community and Youth Work Studies Unit University of Durham.*

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Mark Cieslik and Gary Pollock, eds
Young People in Risk Society: The restructuring of youth identities and transitions in late modernity
Ashgate, 2002
ISBN 0 7546 1694 0
£39.95 (hbk)
pp 188

Mike Waite

The editors' aim in this collection is to present some recent research on young people and relate it to the context of what they describe as late modernity. Through looking at aspects of the impact on young people of the 'New Labour' government's social policies, they hope 'in a modest way to contribute to a new youth research agenda'.

Their introduction provides a brief overview of social trends that need to be further unpacked and used to inform policy review work. Discussing 'risk society', they pinpoint the key contribution of Ulrich Beck, who has shown how people have become more 'reflexive' or 'self conscious' about their daily lives and personal practices as they attempt to manage their experience in a world where traditions, values and certainties have dissolved and become fluid.

In a move towards discussion of concrete policy that will relieve some practitioners and others reading this book, Cieslik and Pollock position Third Way politics as an attempt to reshape residual values of social justice on the terrain of neo-liberal values and individualism to which we were all taken during the last quarter of the twentieth century. This enables them to identify the design of the 'Connexions' service as being about working with young people as individuals as they are required to manage

'what are now much more fragmented and extended transitions through education, training and work'. There's also a passing - and strangely uncritical - acknowledgement of the extent to which 'community safety' has come to colonise and occupy the area of youth policy and youth work.

The bulk of the book consists of eight short papers - twenty pages or so each - focussing on specific issues or case studies of young people attempting to manage particular areas of their lives. Although they are of variable quality, any one of these chapters will be of interest and use to practitioners who are themselves dealing with or interested in the particular issue with which it deals.

Nichols' piece deploys a more narrow conception of 'risk' than the fairly abstract one usually at play in the book. He shows how outdoor adventure activities, sensitively led, helped a group of young people look at moving beyond drug use, and provided 'a catalyst for changes in self-concept and the development of new trust relationships'.

Shildrick, writing on current patterns of youth culture and illicit drug use, provides one of the most careful chapters in the book, successfully linking theoretical consideration to empirical analysis. She effectively casts doubt on the practice of youth culture observers being enthusiastic about the concept of post-modernity, and suggesting that the growth of diverse consumer- orientated youth cultures and lifestyles is a good, emancipatory development. Unfashionably, but properly, she insists that we must not lose sight of the way that structural and large scale socio-economic factors impact on and affect young peoples lives, and constrain and determine their choices.

Other chapters further explore the interplay between individual experience and broad policy and social developments. Percy-Smith and Weil conclude a close study of some young peoples' experience of *New Deal* with sensible proposals 'to develop a genuinely more client centred and less bureaucratic service' which is 'more responsive to the problems of disaffection and disadvantage that many unemployed young people experience'. Heath's piece, based on even more closely observed and acute consideration of individual's experiences, generates useful insights into how young people, particularly young women, might be supported as they handle the 'negotiation of intimacy' as they change where they live and who they live with.

More theoretical chapters look at how received models of thinking about youth in terms of transitions from childhood to adult status have now to be revised. As the editors state, it's now commonly seen that 'the increasing

length and diversity of transitions has increased their complexity and the scope for young people themselves to make more decisions about their lives'. The debate about how to see and relate to the transitions young people are involved in must, though, take full account of a critical consideration of individualisation. Cieslik and Pollock cite other authors who see that 'young people may now experience the impression of greater personal autonomy … but these impressions mask the underlying structuring of young peoples lives'.

With social policy pushing practitioners more and more to focus on the 'client' as a bundle of individual needs, rather than as someone who experiences the effects of broad social trends together with many others like themselves, a critical understanding of individualisation is urgent. We live and work in times when social problems are widely discussed and understood only in terms of their impact on individuals. The myth is promoted – and accepted – that individual lifestyle choices are the proper ground from which to address these social problems.

Whether this expensive book will play a big part in resourcing practitioners to debate this issue is questionable. This review has reflected the sometimes abstract and jargon-riddled language in some papers. And readers are continually reminded that the editors' main intention is to contribute to academic youth studies and only indirectly, through that, to help influence work 'on the ground'.

Mike Waite, *Head of Community and Recreation Services, Burnley Borough Council*

Perpetua Kirby with Sara Bryson
Measuring the Magic
Carnegie Young People Initiative, 2002
ISBN 0 900259 47 7
Free (pbk)

Dave Ireland

Those of us in youth and community work who view the government's recent interest in promoting young people's political involvement as merely shifting the deckchairs on the sinking ship of representative democracy should be heartened by this little book. Government is rightly concerned about the decline in voting by 18 to 25 year olds and the

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widespread scepticism about politics and politicians. It wants to encourage more young people to get involved, through forums and focus groups and is requiring schools to include citizenship as part of the national curriculum. *Measuring the Magic* is a compendium of research, the great majority of it from British sources, relating to young people's involvement in public decision-making over the last ten years or so. As the researchers say, the evidence they have gathered is long on process, but short on impact. In other words we know a lot more than we used to about good practice in participatory processes, but there is, as yet, little to show that young people are having much effect on public decision-making.

Young people's participation in democratic processes has always been a thorny issue for youth and community work and since it has become a sexy issue for governments it is often youth workers who are called upon to ensure that young people participate in democratic exercises. As the researchers point out, the government drive concentrates solely on the part played by young people who are 'being encouraged to become a greater part of institutions, mimicking their formal processes'. However no-one will be surprised to learn that 'the institutions themselves are not questioned'. Quoting earlier research, Kirby and Bryson point out that 'authentic participation should be *inclusion*, in which the systems change to accommodate young people's participation and values, rather than *integration* in which young people participate in predefined ways in predefined structures'.

This captures the problem faced by many youth and community workers. Having woken up to the government's agenda, agencies imagine that contacting the nearest young people's forum for an opinion, or wheeling in a group of young people to a conference constitutes participation. Thus, organisations with little experience of involving young people are sometimes surprised at the outcomes of such practices. For example, inviting a group of under-25s to contribute to a draft plan for drug and alcohol education drew the unexpected demand by them for Draconian measures to counter dealers on the streets. At another strategic planning event staged to demonstrate inclusion, a big concern for the young people was for more varied vegetarian food at lunch-time. Both demands were legitimate but not quite what the conference organisers had in mind. Managers of services need to make explicit their expectations of young people, and the workers who support them, so that they can adequately prepare for such events. 'Movers and shakers' must also accept that young people do not always show their gratitude for such invitations by

conforming to an adult, liberal consensus about the outcomes. In the scramble to ensure that young people are listened to appropriately, as the government demands, organisations often over-play the regard they pay to the voice of young people and some established groups get badly over-consulted.

Measuring the Magic examines the evidence for what works in supporting young people in public decision-making and will be a great aid to those already active in this field. It gives an insight into what many workers know intuitively, but may find it difficult to demonstrate to line managers and managers of other young people's services. Good participatory practice, for example, needs to have clear aims and objectives established from the start followed by support and training to make it happen. Too often, practitioners are put under pressure to produce results in an unrealistically short time frame. Evaluation of such work is often weak, the researchers contend, because practitioners do not always have the necessary training to do the job effectively; and good self-evaluation is essential to this work.

Measuring the Magic is in part a workshop manual of participation and the researchers have examined the evidence on the various processes employed by different organisations. They assess the impact of that work in changing outcomes and go on to identify gaps in evaluation and research. The work is comprehensively referenced and there is a detailed list of useful contacts and publications at the back. Some interesting snippets of research are illuminating and show how small is the body of knowledge that informs this work. For example, Kirby and Bryson indicate that the old favourite of grown-ups, the youth forum, is one of the least popular methods of consultation among young people, and the demand for forums almost never comes from young people themselves.

Kirby and Bryson state early on that their book is aimed at researchers, practitioners, decision-makers and young people, yet they make no concessions at all to young people in terms of style and content. This exemplifies one of the key dilemmas in trying to cater for a very wide audience, whether it is in a book like this, or at a conference or planning event. Involving young people meaningfully may mean sacrificing some formality, structure and procedure. The difficult trick is to pull it off without patronising the young people. Kirby and Bryson have not attempted it with this book and they maintain a cool, detached and academic perspective throughout. Thus, it is not very likely that many young people will take naturally to *Measuring the Magic*, even if they are interested in the issues. Incidentally

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the one young person I consulted thought the title 'a bit cheesy'. No, this book is primarily for practitioners and will be most useful as a guide to good practice, and as a gateway to further research and other agencies in the field. It is also free to enquirers.

Dave Ireland *is a youth officer working in Cornwall.*

Fiona Factor, Vipin Chauhan and John Pitts (eds)
The RHP companion to Working with Young People
Russell House Publishing, 2001
ISBN 1 898924 52 X
£19.95
pp 260

Nathan Ward

'The ultimate book for youth work students who have an essay due in tomorrow and the library closed half an hour ago' should be one of the advertising quotes on the back of this book.

Instead it boasts 'clear and rigorous critical analysis, underpinned by contemporary social policy debate'. This is interesting when the average chapter size is 7.6 pages long. With each of the 32 chapters looking at either different contexts of youth work (for example working with Black Young People, school based...) or different 'types' of young people (for example unemployed, homeless...).

I thought I should 'test' the book and see how much of a companion it would be to me. For this I thought of a young person that I have recently worked with and went to 'look them up' in my companion. A good place to start, I thought, would be the contents page. The young person I had in mind was:

- *Black*
- *Lesbian*
- *Girl / Young Women*
- *Lived in a rural area*
- *Effected by 'Community Safety'*
- *I worked with her in a group setting*
- *Part of my work involves using peer education*

- *Part of my work involves giving her information*
- *Part of my work involves ensuring her rights are being met and that she should be part of decision making processes*
- *In the Youth Justice System;*
- *Currently out of school*
- *Sexually exploited through prostitution*
- *A drug user*
- *Has mental health issues.*

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It was at this point I thought that instead of reading all fourteen chapters that related to this young person, I could ask her (prior to meeting up) if there was anything in particular she would like to talk about. From this I could just read the relevant chapter.... Cross-referencing would a good idea for this book.

For all of my cynicism, there are in fact some useful glimpses at different aspect of youth work. For example John Pitts' chapter on 'Youth Crime, Youth Justice and Youth Work' provides a very useful oversight of how the youth justice system has developed in this country. Obviously due to the breadth of the issues covered in the book there will be something in it for everyone who has an interest in working with young people. However that may not say a great deal.

If we think what youth work is about though, it is in a way depressing to have the *Yellow Pages* to working with young people. It is as though we have reduced young people to objects that can fall into certain situations or contexts. And we, as the super heroes of society have the answer and will sort it all out if the government will only give us half a chance and a bit of funding that lasts more than three years.

Part of me wants to say 'Who cares if a young person is a lesbian or exploited through prostitution?'. Of course I care if a person is involved in prostitution, however it doesn't matter whether they are thirteen or thirty. If I believe that prostitution is not conducive to human flourishing, then it applies across the board. Am I to see the young person as a prostitute or a human being who I want to help grow and flourish in that growth?

When we focus in on what society categorises as the 'big issues of the day' I think we are in danger of both missing 'the moment' but more importantly missing the young person themselves.

As Emerson once said; 'When the act of reflection takes place in the mind, when we look at ourselves in the light of thought we discover that

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our life is embossed in beauty.' If we even think that there is a grain of truth in this, shouldn't we as youth workers set our eyes higher than the tabloid themes for today's society? Whether a young person has ADHD or a PhD, I am not going to radically change the way I work with them.

This book does not bring anything new to the area of youth work and part of me thinks that it detracts from the serious task of working with young people. If a young person asked what sort of books I read to help me with my work, there are many books I would lend them with pride, knowing its contents ascribe great value to both the work and them as a young person. I don't however think this would be one of those books.

Nathan Ward *is a Prison Chaplain and parish youth worker.*

Jill Clark, Alan Dyson, Nick Meagher, Elaine Robson and Mary Wootten
Young People as Researchers – Possibilities, problems and politics
Youth Work Press 2001
ISBN 0 86155 252 0
£6.50 (pbk)
pp 76

Ruth Lister, Sue Middleton and Noel Smith
Young People's Voices – Citizenship education
Youth Work Press 2001
ISBN 0 86155 260 1
£6.50 (pbk)
pp 60

William Clemmey

The introduction to these books claiming they were 'a series of fresh sparky ideas' raised my expectations. However, my initial hope was soon dashed.

The authors of *Young People as Researchers* 'believed we had to involve young people themselves in the research projects - not simply as subjects but as participants.' Whilst young people are possibly the most heavily researched group in society it is the professionals who control the interpretation and the reporting of the research. The book contains a series of reports from different projects which, apart from one, failed to live up to my expectation of a young people's led research project. The exception is HAYS (Horn of

Africa Youth Scheme) Project which worked with a group of refugee and asylum seeking young people from the Horn of Africa. A youth worker and a researcher worked with seven young people who were given training in research techniques and also chose the subject they wanted to research. An accredited training course for adults was used giving the young people the skills to carry out the research. This compares favourably with the Routes project where a mornings 'training' was given and the researchers then wondered why the young people had 'failed' to carry out the task. The project itself took thirteen months with over 2000 hours of youth worker time and 800 hours of young people's research time. The HAYS report includes evaluation from the young people sadly lacking in the other reports. A concluding comment is that 'Young people should be involved from the beginning... They should participate before any decision is made that affects how projects are designed and run'. Sadly none of the other projects quoted in the book lived up to this hope.

The Real Deal Project used young people as Policy Consultants. Nobody consulted the young people about what the five core themes should be, rather ironic since one topic was government and the decision making process. In fact the only involvement of the young people is that they were being asked for their views! Most youth workers probably obtain better results any time they hold a discussion group. When one of their conclusions is that 'The size and composition of groups matter' you realise that none of the researchers did group work theory at college. Yet the researchers claim it was a success.

In another project the researchers 'discover' the use of a values continuum game to aid their research – something again that many youth workers have employed for years. The researchers devised problem page letters and here again they could have involved the young people in devising them. The Routes Project looks at the transition of young people to adult life. They hoped to use disadvantaged young people to interview their peers, but they had difficulties in recruiting. Their star case study is of Beth who turns out to be a 24 years old social research student. Students on a youth and community course would have helped them to achieve far better results than they did.

The Youth Perceptions of Citizenship and Security in Russia, Germany and the UK project report used brainstorming and focus group techniques with young people involved as group leaders at a symposia. Nothing new there. The article would have been improved by giving details about the

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German research partner who had 'a junior team of researchers working alongside full time researchers'.

Sadly apart from HAYS the other projects maintained 'the power imbalance between the researcher and the research subjects' which they were hoping to overcome. The researchers finally condemn themselves with their ultimate get out clause 'Research is a highly technical process which many professionals spend an entire lifetime perfecting. Perhaps unsurprisingly ...some young people lack the skills, expertise and attitudes to become involved in anything other than a peripheral role'. So why not call in the experts and get some youth workers involved from the start? They question 'how objective can young people be in research which is essentially about their own situations'. This is not something they would even mention if they had been researching using adults. Ultimately it seems that the pressures felt by the researchers to ensure that their research techniques are credible to the rest of the academic community mean that their shallow attempts to involve young people in that research are doomed to failure.

Young People's Voices – Citizenship education takes as its starting point the Crick Report *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*. Sadly Crick failed to consult young people and so these authors aim to set the record straight by interviewing over 100 young people about what they think about citizenship.

Since this book follows on from *Young People as Researchers* I expected that this research would actually involve young people but this is sadly not the case. The book is 'based on findings which represent a small part of the first year of a three year project'. By the end of it I wondered why they had bothered to produce it as a book rather than an A3 leaflet and it makes me wonder what they will be doing for the next two years. The study involves two groups: the 'insiders' – those who had been through the educational system up to degree level and the 'outsiders' who had left school with no GSCEs and were mainly unemployed. This branding exposes the researchers protestant work ethic bias - that it is better to be educated and have a job in society. This comes out in the analysis of income levels between the two groups. Both do not have a lot of money but the insiders are excused since 'it is hardly surprising since they were all students.' The researchers reinforce the stereotype that it is acceptable for a young person to be a poor student but not to be a poor young person on benefits. They misuse statistics 'only a very few said that paid work was unimportant.' On checking this turns out to be 8 people, higher than

five other lower categories which are quoted in full. This apparent bias needs re-examining by the researchers.

Schools are not preparing young people in any way for future life. If schools are currently 'failing non academically inclined pupils. This has an implication for how citizenship education is introduced into the curriculum.' The young people wanted schools to provide better advice on jobs and job seeking, more information about the range of jobs available and information about the realities of the competitive labour market and working life. So at least we know there is a role for the Connexions service! The book usefully sums up its key findings on pages 33 and 51 which with a short introduction and conclusion would have been enough for me.

A young person perceptively questions the point of having a say at school especially in the light of the lack of consultation in the workplace. It made me wonder whether the great emphasis on schools councils, youth forums and youth parliaments is in fact raising young people's expectations about their ability to bring about change which the majority of adults do not have the option of doing at work anyway? Will this then lead to a more frustrated work force in the future?

'There was no evidence that engagement in voluntary work at school increased the likelihood that the young people would volunteer subsequently.' Running as we do a large Millennium Volunteers project I hope that the Department for Education and Skills do not pick up on this 'fact'. If true it begs the question as to why so many young people will be expected to undertake voluntary work at school from September 2002. The report concludes that young people's emphasis is 'on the practicalities of being an adult: getting and holding down a job, managing their finances and dealing with the system as it affects their everyday lives.' Something every youth worker, I suspect, is aware of and did not need a report to discover.

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Colin Heywood
A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times.
Polity Press, 2001
ISBN 0 7456 1732 8

Keith Cranwell

'Childhood as an analytic term is too familiar... . We all "know" what we mean by childhood' (Davin, 1999:15). Our memories and experiences of childhood inform what we think ought to be part of the study of the history of childhood. At one level the difficulties of retrieving childhood from the past have turned the study into an exercise in nostalgia whereby we attempt to piece together scraps of information and distant recollections into meaningful statements to prove that as a society we have progressed in our treatment of children. Where there is a paucity of data from the past there is the temptation to view childhood from the perspective of a series of dates and events that pinpoint the appearance of the ideas that have transformed children's lives. The use of autobiography or literary reminiscence of childhood becomes a 'last-ditch explanation for the more extraordinary anomalies' of the past (Sutherland, 1969:73). When there are no fixed definitions of childhood its historical study has to be bound by the contexts of place and time to bring it to life.

The criticisms made over twenty years ago about the study of women's history as not worth bothering with 'because the lives of women have somehow always been the same' (Beddoe, 1983:7) can be observed in the way the study of the history of childhood is marginalised and overlooked today in childhood, youth work and social history courses. Heywood makes a strong claim that knowledge of childhood has relevance to a wide range of academic study and has set out to provide the grounding that someone new to historical analysis will find accessible. The narrative of childhood he develops does not shrink from the fact that there are elements of ambiguity and contradiction. In his critique of childhood history he uses the phases of development in our own childhood to explore the ambiguity and contradictions in different historical periods and culture. It is a central point within the work that social and economic conditions determine the issues and importance of different features that effected children's transition from childhood to adulthood. In this way, Heywood enables us to consider that childhood is continually rediscovered whether it is at the beginning of the Medieval period or the beginning of the twentieth century. Also in drawing on evidence from Europe and North

America he provides some interesting insights into the comparative analysis of childhood.

In the first part of the book Heywood acknowledges the debt historians of social history owe to Aries the author of *Centuries of Childhood*. In the 1960s, this work uncovered childhood for sociologists and historians who were then inspired to use his work to look further into questions of childhood. What Heywood provides is an account of Aries work and its shortcomings whilst at the same time illustrating Aries' idea of a cultural construction of childhood that opened the field to allow a more radical approach to the study of children in society today.

In following Aries thesis about the conception of childhood, Heywood concentrates on how medieval societies viewed childhood showing that, in this period, the child and adolescent was progressively able to take their place in adult society. He also provides evidence that supports the idea that a separate, if limited, children's culture existed in medieval times. By offering evidence of the existence of a conception of childhood from such an early period of Western history Heywood is leading us away from considering childhood in terms such as 'innocence' and 'weakness' or that childhood could be said to have been 'discovered'. Rather, what is being suggested, is that we need to consider the existence of competing conceptions of childhood and that interest in children 'ebbed and flowed' across the different periods. Heywood approaches these competing conceptions by organising the historical material according to the 'ages and stages' which each period has stamped on its understanding of children's development. For example, the binary constructs of age/sex, dependence/independence Heywood suggests have been used to fashion the images of children that a particular culture and time wishes to impose on children. It is these themes that are addressed by figures like Rousseau, Locke and G. Stanley Hall whose ideas were turning points in thinking about children conditioning cultural responses to meeting their needs. The nineteenth-century idea of the long childhood and adolescence as advocated by G Stanley Hall is central to the Heywood's thesis about the changing nature of childhood. The history of childhood he presents is shown to have gradually led to the separation of the world of the child from an intense interaction with the adult world. At times this has improved the life of children as in alleviating the harsh conditions of work and at other times it has cut off the child and adult from sharing in communal life.

In part two Heywood uses the process of growing up to organise the historical evidence of childhood. By looking at parent-child relationships at three

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points in a child's life and the style of child care that infants received in different cultures at separate historical periods Heywood is able to explore the origins of arguments about child development. The cross-cultural approach seamlessly draws parallels between different child-rearing practices from different cultures to illustrate points of difference as well as continuity across time and place. In particular the chapter on child care of infants gives a well argued and balanced assessment of such practices as wet-nursing which today we consider as something of an abhorrent practice.

In the third section Heywood takes the story of childhood outside the home and looks at children and work, health and education. The strengths of these chapters are that they provide a sound overview of the evidence of the issues that faced families when they had to make choices between school or work for their children and the treatment that a child faced in work and school. The evidence that Heywood gathered on these topics had, at times, a contemporary ring.

Heywood's review of the evidence of child mortality reminds us that the historical study of childhood need not rely only on the fragments of writing about children's lives. The use of empirical evidence about children's health highlighted the importance of environmental changes over the impression that it was changes in medical practice that led to the decrease in child mortality. In this section of the book Heywood quite concisely introduces the variety of research methods that historians use to uncover social changes. Any student needing an historical introduction to the topics of health or education can find the main debates expressed and extensive references to draw upon.

It is a mark of the scholarship in Heywood's work that one is left wishing for more detail or greater depth in specific areas or even for different historical periods. However, the comprehensive notes and bibliographic sections provide the signposts for further study.

This book is an invaluable addition to students on childhood studies, play, youth work and early years courses who wish to ground their concept of childhood in an historical analysis of the topic.

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Priscilla Alderson

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The sociological study of children, young people and childhood has expanded rapidly over the past decade, and in this book are valuable examples of research that are working towards new approaches.

Children and young people are increasingly likely to have some experience of family change. As one boy in the book remarked, `We are a normal divorced family'. There is a growing concern in social and legal policy to listen to children's views and to their 'ascertainable wishes and feelings' in the words of the 1989 Children Act of England and Wales. The UN 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child has important articles on children's participation, on their right to express their views freely on all matters that affect them, and on due weight being given to their views. Yet there has been little research into children's own views about changes in their family life and how these affect them.

The book reports on two research projects with 117 children and young people aged 4 to 22 years, most of them living in Yorkshire, in the late 1990s. (Their ethnicity is not discussed.) Interviewees talk about their daily life following their parents' separation and divorce, their relationships, step-parents and co-parenting, and their varied living arrangements. The researchers aimed to investigate and analyse children's daily living experiences, their agency within families, their moral standpoints and values in relation to family life, and how children's perspectives might influence current policy debates.

The research methods included interviews, talking about vignettes, drawing, mapping relationships, and interpretative analysis of the data. The qualitative methods are clearly justified in an appendix, and in the fine data gathered from interviews, drawings and maps. Tom, aged 11, drew his parents' two houses and between them a high wall with himself in two parts, one on each side of the wall. A tiny door at the bottom of the wall is only big enough to let the children through; his parents cannot get past the barrier between them.

The introduction explains how the two studies grew from the authors' previous research with parents who were going through separation and

divorce, and outlines the new sociology of childhood in Europe and the United States. This moves beyond traditional research about family life, when it was assumed to be too intrusive and difficult to talk directly with children and young people so that their voices were not heard and adults presumed to speak for them. Research has documented the serious negative effects for many children and young people when their parents separate. Yet the authors aim to move away from these older dominant narratives of harm to children and young people who are seen as their parents' helpless dependants and even possessions.

The children and young people in the studies tend to think of families in terms of relationships between `people who love each other', rather than in terms of structures such as 'blood relatives'. They are resourceful in dealing with separation, moving and often living between households, negotiating and managing relationships with their parents and the new adults and siblings in their lives.

Chapter 5 reviews the children's moral reasoning, in response to vignettes such as whether a boy's mother should insist that his father pays for swimming lessons when the boy lived with his mother but saw his father often. Their comments are analysed in terms of the ethics of fairness, of care, or of respect, and as moral conversations. I found this interesting chapter rather disappointing in two ways. First, the analysis is based on feminist ethics. Important and innovative as this is, it is not necessarily any more respectful of children's moral competence than traditional masculinist ethics is. Second, the discussion is abstracted away from the children's own immediate experience which, I have found, yields more potent, mature and diverse reflective comments from them, and a richer sociological analysis than hypothetical vignettes can offer.

Chapter 6 on citizenship is controversial. References overly rely on feminist and family literature that discounts children's rights. Children's advocates such as Bob Franklin and others are quoted only as stating reservations about children's rights (p 107). The 1998 Human Rights Act is not mentioned. Rights are framed as inevitably individualistic and divisive: `What children want is social recognition, respect and inclusion rather than simply legalistic rights.' The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child resolves this supposed dichotomy between respect and rights but, in this book, the Convention is only glimpsed through a few misleading and secondary references. The authors reject children's rights in favour of a citizenship model, though the problems of applying a public formal impersonal concept such as citizenship

within private family intimacy are not resolved. Marshall's 1950s notions of civil, political and social citizenship are invoked, but they raised difficulties for women let alone children. The Convention's 3 Ps, provision, protection and participation rights, which provide a more logical analytical framework, are not mentioned.

The researchers acknowledge that they did not talk directly about rights `at all' (p 122). They then report that the children did not use rights language, and assume that the children would reject rights as too narrow to achieve the rounded complexity of their varying wishes. However, other researchers have found that although many children do not mention rights explicitly, they use other language to talk about rights to respect, justice and care as their key concerns.

The chapter on co-parenting reviews advantages and problems for the young people. Some generalisations are based on limited evidence, such as the warning against parents and children being `friends' (two negative examples), or being `allies' (one `manipulative' example). The concluding chapter gives positive examples: Jake's view of adults and children `helping each other' (p 172) is quoted, though cautiously. Readers are assured that this does not mean `a new form of tyranny by children' or `importing highly legalistic or unrealistic principles' into family life.

The skilful, sensitive data collecting has produced rich accounts of distressing challenges to family life, when intimate details are probed by public officials, and when children may be more mature than their parents. The young people seem to have valued sharing their views and reflecting on their lives with an interested listener. Differences between children and parents' perspectives are carefully examined, leading to the conclusion that seeing the child's point of view `quite simply changes everything'. Disappointingly, the authors seem to step backwards into a more conservative adult-centred position during the data analysis. On many pages, if the reader mentally replaces the word `children' with `women', the arguments seem out-dated and unjustifiable; underlying assumptions about children's inferior dependence are revealed that are challenged by the data but less so by the analysis. Examples of children being thoughtful participating agents could be rather more emphasised.

How does this book inform policy? Some of the young interviewees' responses are sad and moving. Should researchers question them? And should such research be funded, or be heeded by policy makers? There is the risk of distressing intrusion. Yet, as the authors say, to silence children

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can be unethical and disrespectful, and prevents policy makers from taking proper account of their interests. The authors aim to be non-judgmental, to recognise each child's unique perspective, and to remember the powerful constraints on children's lives that complicate the power imbalance between adults and young people. In these respects, their work acts as a reminder and a reaffirmation of high standards for policy makers and practitioners.

The book also reveals fallacies in common prejudices that children are inevitably inadequate and in need of being 'socialised' by adults, showing instead that they can be moral, reliable and loyal. This dispels arguments that adults cannot, need not and should not listen to them respectfully, whether the young people want to make decisions about their lives, to influence decisions, or leave others to decide for them. The authors analyse how young people can be trapped and silenced, and warn that it is essential to alter these hostile legal structures, to avoid forcing young people into unwanted and unhelpful involvement with them. The authors conclude with recommendations for improving the services and responding to young people's diverse and often unpredictable wishes. They suggest that listening to children's collective views, as reported in their several books for instance, may promote progress more effectively than trying to hear individuals' views – although children's views will inevitably be filtered through adults' perceptions.

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Michele Borba
Building Moral Intelligence
Jossey-Bass, 2001
ISBN 0 7879 5357 1
£18.50
pp 316

Sean Harris

Borba, a former classroom teacher, promotes *Building Moral Intelligence* as the complete step-by-step guide for raising moral young people. Using the book as a guide, Borba informs parents that they can teach their children the 'Seven Essential Virtues of Moral Intelligence' needed to overcome the negative pressures of daily life and act according to sound moral judgements.

Building Moral Intelligence responds to the hotly contested issue of how parents might develop good character in today's children and Borba conveys the notion that good character constitutes strong 'moral intelligence'. She believes moral intelligence is underpinned by seven core virtues which parents have a responsibility to teach and nurture. These seven virtues are defined as empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness.

The author dissects each virtue with enthusiasm and continually highlights the notion that such virtues help young people navigate the ethical and complex challenges of everyday life. *Empathy* is the author's starting point, which she regards as the key to the successful learning of other moral virtues. This is the virtue that promotes an awareness of others, to act morally in relation to the emotions or outlook of others. These emotions flow into the second vital virtue, *conscience,* which Borba believes fortifies your child against forces countering goodness and enables them to act morally. The third is labelled as *self-control,* which readers are informed helps children become self-reliant through being aware that they can effectively control their actions. Borba continually reminds readers that she has purposefully ordered the seven virtues into a logical teaching sequence, she points out that these first three virtues form the *moral core* to which the other four can be related and then effectively taught and learnt.

Respect is the forth virtue which the author suggests leads young people to treat others as they themselves wish to be treated, Borba implies that young people with increased knowledge of this virtue are more likely to respect not only others but also themselves. Following from this, parents are instructed to teach the value of *Kindness* and promote greater compassion for others. By developing the sixth essential virtue, *Tolerance,* Borba believes young people can be encouraged to treat others with true respect and kindness, stand up against hatred and respect people primarily on the basis of their character. This leaves the reader to develop the last essential virtue in their child, *Fairness,* which increases a young person's moral sensitivity towards others. Borba stresses that this final virtue underpins behaviours and attitudes that seek to treat all people equally and sensitively. Although *Building Moral Intelligence* leaves the reader with some sense of completion, they are informed that moral growth is an ongoing process in young people and that during the course of this other additional virtues will be sought and gathered.

I approached *Building Moral Intelligence* with little enthusiasm, particularly with the image of seven Americanised youngsters grinning wholesomely

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at me from the front cover! The book, however, proved insightful and thought provoking. The step-by-step structure makes reading the material readily accessible and fast flowing, thus making this an approachable resource for those who prefer an accessible and easily digested approach to contemporary research material. The same method of writing is adopted through the author's analysis of each of the seven essential virtues, making the read consistent and focused. For each of these Borba discusses a contemporary 'crisis of character' and details a thorough definition of each virtue and its relationship to current moral panics and contemporary debates. In addition each section provides the reader with a self-test to evaluate their own child's virtue strength. This tool is supposed to help you assess how well a given young person is presently achieving the virtue and to pin point any areas that may be hindering moral growth. Whether one can effectively measure the strength of such virtues is open to discussion. Borba provides each reader with many ways in which to build and develop a particular virtue in their children, offering a range of approaches one might take to continually evaluate and reflect on behaviour. Throughout this scaffold *Building Moral Intelligence* pushes very heavily for the reader to educate through process; in doing this, the material often fails to acknowledge those styles of learning and teaching aside from curriculum, process and outcome.

Building Moral Intelligence draws on a vast web of contemporary psychological research and literature. In doing this Borba continually delivers a convincing argument for teaching the seven essential virtues to young people. The theoretical material throughout the book is easily devoured, however, at times there is further need for greater analysis and insight into current research and literature. Despite this the guidance and recommendations Borba offers regarding further reading and research pleasantly surprised me. There is a detailed section at the back listing appropriate material and resources readers might find useful to assist in the teaching and supporting of each virtue. This includes details of suitable literature, web sites, films and agencies.

Building Moral Intelligence joins an escalating volume of research revising the importance of parental roles in contemporary society. At the bare minimum, Borba conveys a need for effective education to take place in the home environment from an early age. Despite this, *Building Moral Intelligence* often fails to highlight the importance of education outside of formal settings. An in depth analysis is often needed, which could address the development and continuity of moral education amongst peers and those working in the informal education field.

Although the material is aimed primarily at parents, educators of many kinds will no doubt find this helpful. *Building Moral Intelligence* offers an insightful account into key concerns relating to the contemporary development of young people. In addition to this, at the very least *Building Moral Intelligence* offers some practical insight into how adults might seek to morally guide and educate young people.

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Diana McNeish, Tony Newman and Helen Roberts (eds)
What Works for Children?
Open University Press, 2002
ISBN 0 335 20938 6
pp 299

Marilyn J Gregory

My response to this book is shaped by my personal and career biography. Currently working full time as a social work educator, I grabbed it with alacrity, at first tending to agree with the cover blurb about 'research reviews [being] helpfully laid out ...' and thinking that the book would be 'of practical use' at least I thought, giving examples for my students of current and up to date research about effective interventions with children. Sixteen years of practice as a probation officer, court welfare office and latterly practice teacher means that I am aware at first hand of the value of research evidence in informing practice. For example, in preparing welfare reports in contested residence or contact cases, myself and colleagues would cite research studies indicating harm to children caused by witnessing violence against their mothers, to challenge the frequently advanced position that the father's violence to the mother should have no bearing on his application.

Of course, the *selection* of evidence in support of an argument implies a theoretical position and value base, which in my case were (and are) informed by feminist-led research into the effects of domestic violence and a commitment to social justice. The *context* in which that evidence is presented is also crucial. In the example I give here, my authority as

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Court Welfare Officer was strong. I was respected by the Judiciary and treated with due respect as an expert witness. I often had the misfortune to observe my statutory social work colleagues receiving less respectful treatment when they presented reports before the same court. The treatment they received was not about the quality of the evidence they presented, but about the *attitude* of the legal profession - social workers were not liked, their media representation followed them into the court and they were treated as off-comers. Their reports, no matter how well evidenced, were less likely to attract a positive response from the court.

The *nature* of evidence for practice is key to its reception by those whose behaviour and decision making it is meant to influence. Which brings me to the evaporation of my alacrity for this book. I suppose I should have been alerted by the title to the nature of the evidence that was likely to be contained within its pages. To take my court case example just one stage further, had the expert witness been a medical practitioner who could refer to 'hard', 'scientific' evidence in the form of, for example, randomised control trials, their opinion would be accepted much more comfortably. What this book does is to contribute to the trend for outcome-led, policy driven, evaluation studies, based on positivist methodology, to be presented as the best foundation for the development of social work practice. To be fair, the editors engage in a brief discussion of the meaning of effectiveness and the nature of evidence, but conclude that critics of the kind of 'evidence based practice' proposed here must base their practice on ideological conviction, and, therefore are adopting an authoritarian stance.' Their position is further supported by the 'sound economic sense' of targeting interventions in ways which are likely to attract the kind of investment made in the national Sure Start programme (£550 million). We are also told that the 'restructuring of the Probation Service' was based upon 'an accumulation of findings from controlled trials that have provided strong support for some approaches and rather less for others' (p 5). The Fagan Likelihod Ratio Nomogram is given as an example of a technical tool that might appear at first to be inaccessible because of its title. However when we realise that it refers to a caution against using indicators that have provided useful information for one population (i.e. children who have been abused) to diagnose another (i.e. the general population), we can see that it is a useful evidence-based tool (p 5). The irony for Probation practitioners in these two statements is that the evidence base for the restructuring of the Probation Service is based on a population of (mainly North American) 18-25 year old white males (Utting et al, p 181). Cognitive behavioural

interventions are now being applied on a vast scale to all Probation Service users, including the substantial minority not from the population from whom this evidence was derived.

Continuing structural inequality as the underpinning issue for the families with whom social workers work is acknowledged in all of the chapters of this book, yet, with slightly different justifications, we are invited to choose 'service level' interventions which prioritise cognitive behavioural programmes derived substantially from North American evidence. Before health and social care in this country follows the Probation example of fitting the cognitive behavioural template over all of its service users, social workers must take a critical, thoughtful and anti-oppressive approach to 'evidence' for practice with which they are presented. It is useful to remember that in the United States, health care is private, with even the most basic level of provision inaccessible to many of the clients with whom social workers work. The level of hostility there to the kind of *'socialised'* health and social care we value in this country should not be under-estimated. In that climate, interventions involving changing the behaviour of families and individuals, which can be measured by randomised control trials are prioritised, and not surprisingly deemed more effective.

As I left one of my students at the local social services office which in the 25 years since I completed my training has not changed from the dismal, toyless, under-resourced embarrassment it was then, I reflected that the hard pressed colleagues with whom I left my student might find much of the evidence about the circumstances of service users in this book very valuable. But that the way they use it may be as a call for better resourcing for their work, including comfortable, bright, child centred working conditions, and enough social workers in post to find the time to read this, and other research. The part of this book I liked best was the final chapter: 'Last Words: The views of young people.' It seems these have not changed in 25 years either. They would simply like their social workers to be reliable, be caring, and above all to listen to them and respect their wishes. I suggest colleagues begin this book at the last chapter.

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Charlie Cooper
Understanding School Exclusion: Challenging processes of docility
Education Now Books, 2002
ISBN 1 871526 55 8
£10.00 (pbk)
pp 144

Avril Howarth

This is a classic example of the 'nouvelle cuisine' style of educational research. On the plate there are three or four different ingredients, too small on their own, too small when taken together. That is not to criticise the quality of what is presented in this book, rather to suggest an opportunity missed. Recent years have seen significant numbers of exclusions from school. Evidence shows a continuing rise in the number of recorded exclusions, with developing education and other social policies doing little to halt this trend. With a growing awareness of the long term financial and social deprivation which all too often follows those who were excluded at some time in their school career, the issue has attracted considerable attention from professionals, media and the Government. Legislation in this area has been informed by a succession of influential reports – in particular from the Social Exclusion Unit. However, changes in legislation and constant restating of the Government's commitment to reducing exclusion seem to have made little impact on the number of exclusions taking place.

A detailed analysis of Government initiatives to reduce exclusion, set in the economic and political context, would be a very useful addition to the literature. The author is right to point out that successive Governments have brought forward proposals to tackle exclusion, and the questions that arise from this could usefully have been developed. Why do politicians seek legislative solutions to every problem? Are Government protestations of concern about exclusion genuine, or do they consider the permanent damage to the life chances of a small group as economically necessary? Can we learn lessons from other countries?

The aim of the research reported on in this book is to build on existing studies by exploring the nature of school exclusion from the perspective of excluded pupils and their 'lived realities' through qualitative participative research. The size of the project needs to be acknowledged. The research examined the perceptions of eight 11-16 year old pupils, their parents and/or carers and professionals working with those pupils. The main text provides the narrative of the focus groups and interviews with the partici-

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pants. The analysis compares perceptions of the respondent groups. It would have been helpful to distinguish between literal, interpretative and reflexive readings of interviews. More generally, exclusion research tends to focus on pupils or groups of pupils most over-represented in exclusion statistics, the more economically and socially disadvantaged, it would have been useful to find out how and why the young people were chosen for the research sample.

The first part of the analysis of data is described as comparing perceptions of respondent groups. The author seeks to draw out some explanatory significance and to identify common themes – building upon the work of Hayden (1997), NFER (2000) and Hayden and Dunne (2001). There are some interesting and revealing responses on the causes of exclusion and on 'tackling challenging behaviour' by teachers and support workers and the reflections by pupils in explaining their behaviour. The descriptions of the respondent groups are valuable. The sample size is clearly not sufficient on its own to justify anything other than the broadest of generalisations, but when taken together with previous studies, and studies to follow, will help to develop a substantial research base. The evidence available is concentrated on a small number of problematic cases. The recommendations and conclusions are interesting and radical but no robust conclusions can be drawn. The book is interesting and suggests that it is worthy of further study and investigation but it is not conclusive in its own right. It is an indicator that if the findings were replicated in other areas, then it may highlight a pattern. The value of this study is in setting out a methodology for a larger structure in order to consider the findings.

Acknowledging that the sample size is, in itself, too small for quantitative analysis, it might have been more useful to present the perceptions of the respondent groups as ethnographies, without comment. It is certainly important for those researching this field, and for policymakers, to understand exclusion as it feels to the excluded pupil, their parents and/or carers and professionals working with those pupils.

The final chapter, described as the second part of the analysis, begins to investigate the sociological context of exclusion from school. Foucault's work is an obvious starting point, but it would have been interesting to develop the notion of schools as 'spaces of regulated confrontation' (Bourdieu, 1991), or indeed, to look at the emerging work on the 'cultural geography' of schools (Smyth and Hattam, 2002).

The book left me with a number of serious questions, not least as to why we exclude a child from school in the first place – as the experience is damaging not only to the child but the parent and school staff? The focus on reasons for exclusion is of obvious interest, but perhaps of greater interest would be on those schools that seek to avoid exclusion and the strategies they have in place.

Avril Howarth, *Education and Community Development Manager, Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership.*

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Annette Hayton and Anna Paczuska (eds)
Access, Participation and Higher Education: Policy and practice
Kogan Page, 2002
ISBN 0 7494 3836 3
£22.99 (pbk)
pp 274

Ian Sinker

Having a combined professional and personal interest in the issues, I found Hayton and Paczuska provided a timely contribution to the debates surrounding contemporary higher education, the wider context within which it operates and the challenges it faces. A professional interest comes from the experience of teaching in the sector, primarily in the area of youth and community work (an area of HE that provides a microcosm within which many current issues are emphasised). A personal interest arises from being a parent of two potential entrants into HE, and the resultant desire, and privilege, of attempting to make some provision for them.

In common with many higher education colleagues, since moving from the professional field three years ago, I have spent many hours discussing

and agonising over such complexities as how to widen participation whilst maintaining academic rigour and standards, and how we can support non-traditional entrants without the risk of setting them up for failure. Hayton and Paczuska have produced a comprehensive and coherent picture of the sector as it faces these, and other challenges, and bring together an impressive range of contributions that engage with a number of the key and pressing issues.

In establishing a starting point they remind us that current involvement exceeds 30 per cent of UK school-leavers and that the majority of students are now women. From this they explore the realities of implementing the Government's target of reaching a rate of some 50 per cent of school-leavers, alongside the additional desire of including a greater number of first generation entrants. They ask why, at a time when many institutions are attempting to make access for adult returners easier by offering more flexible access to courses through initiatives such as part-time routes, the numbers of those participating in HE from 'working class and some ethnic groups' has not significantly increased? Why is it that some 70 per cent of children from 'professional' families access HE compared with 17 per cent of those from 'unskilled manual backgrounds' do?

The recurring issue throughout the publication is the perpetuation of this lack of balance regarding the social background of HE participants. Whilst some of those 'groups' who were historically under-represented in the sector, particularly women and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are now better represented, what is highlighted is that whilst HE has expanded and developed it has not significantly varied in this expansion from its past. Those who can be assimilated into this structure seem to be able to participate but this does not apply to all. They claim that '...despite the changes, higher education is still strongly influenced by the values and practices of the past.' Thus, it is suggested, those from non-traditional backgrounds are absorbed into a system that has met the needs of more traditional students previously but may not be able to meet all of their needs in their assimilation into it. This in part is seen as a cause of the continuing under-representation of young people who come from working class families or backgrounds.

Utilising these questions as a starting point the editors then broaden out the focus and facilitate a useful review of the historical development of HE and an examination of the system itself. They identify a number of key issues that need addressing to enable a further widening of participation.

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These include issues of:

- *selectivity, recruitment and admissions*
- *inequalities*
- *cultural rejection of higher education*
- *higher education funding*
- *teaching and learning*
- *student finance*
- *institutional change.*

From a discussion of these issues a number of 'lessons', both practical and ideological, emerge relating to how it might be possible to achieve the required expansion in the capacity and capability of HE to meet the government's targets. For as the editors note regarding widening participation it remains an important way to 'secure social justice and equal access to the world's wealth'. In drawing these issues together one can be left in little doubt that, for the editors, what is required to implement broader access and participation in HE, are fundamental and comprehensive changes in the system. These are needed in the medium and longer term, to accompany the shorter-term initiatives to widen participation now. To achieve these the sector needs to demonstrate a strategic and comprehensive approach to this policy area rather than a reactive and piece meal one.

On conclusion one was left to consider a simplistic yet fundamental question: do many young people from working class backgrounds not fit the HE system or does the HE system not fit them? The editors suggest that experience has disproved the notion that only some young people can attain high standards, given the right environment and structure. Unless we are to collude with a deficit approach then, as suggested by the contributors and editors in this book, the way forward involves radical changes in the system. Thank you Hayton and Paczuska for crystallising this choice.

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Tom Carnwath and Ian Smith
Heroin Century
Routledge 2002
ISBN 0 415 27899 6
pp 216

Tracy Shildrick

This is a comprehensive, thought provoking and informative book which should appeal to a wide audience. There is a lot to commend the book and the chapters cover a wide range of issues from the manufacture of heroin to the relationship between heroin and crime. The authors claim to provide a 'dispassionate and objective review of heroin' (p 2) and they go some way to achieving this with chapters that are comprehensive in their coverage of the key issues. The book has an unusual authorship with one of the authors being an ex-heroin user himself, although there is little reference to any personal experiences in the text. The early chapters deal with the history and manufacture of heroin, as well as exploring the different types and uses of the drug. These chapters are packed with 'facts' and make interesting and informative reading. They are mostly descriptive, as one might expect, although a little more critical discussion would have been useful. Subsequent chapters deal with the control of heroin, personal experiences of the drug, heroin and health and the treatment of heroin. All are well written and cover a wide range of literature and sources.

A major strength of the book is that it highlights many of the less discussed aspects of heroin use and raises issues which do not necessarily fit with dominant perceptions and ideas about this drug. For example, in the chapter which looks at the link between heroin use and crime there is some useful discussion pointing out that many heroin users do not commit crime to support their drug use. Throughout, the authors make an excellent job of raising issues which tend to get sidelined or ignored and the book is very useful in this respect.

Unfortunately this also leads to a criticism. The authors make clear at the outset that they believe that the anxieties associated with heroin 'are exaggerated and that it is quite likely that it will be decriminalised in the not too distant future' (p 2). Indeed a key theme of the book is that it is 'possible to remain perfectly healthy both physically and mentally, even if you use heroin every day for most of your life' (p 73). Whilst such a view may not be incorrect, it can be misleading when not located within a broader discussion of the wealth of literature which documents the

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very damaging consequences of heroin use, both for many individuals, their families and, more generally, for society. It is well documented that heroin is often closely related to a wide range of social problems, including ill-health, unemployment, criminal activity and homelessness, with many users exhibiting some of the most robust measures of social exclusion (Johnston et al, 2000). Whilst the authors do not deny any of this, these sorts of issues are, perhaps, worthy of more detailed discussion.

The book draws in a wide range of literature from a multitude of sources. At times, however, the sources employed are a little obscure, and in certain instances some of the more interesting points are not backed up by evidence. For example, the authors argue that heroin is becoming more generally accepted as a drug and in support of this view they suggest that 'some young Muslims have claimed that because it is not explicitly banned in the Koran, heroin is a better drug than alcohol' (p 66). The evidence given to support this claim is a newspaper citation from a young Muslim man stating 'drugs are everywhere now' (p 65/6). This is a rather unusual claim which seems to contradict much of what we currently know about patterns of drug use, and as such it would have been helpful to see some more substantial evidence in support of this claim. The authors conclude that heroin will be legalised in the not too distant future and some of the evidence which they present to support this view is reasonably compelling. There can be little disagreement that many of the problems associated with heroin use stem from its illegal status. Nevertheless, it might be folly to assume that legalisation is the answer. As Bean (2002) points out we must not assume that to make the drugs market legal would result in the disappearance of the illegal market. It is very likely that drugs traffickers would continue to work by undercutting the cost of legal drugs.

I think ultimately the authors' personal viewpoints lead them to over emphasise the factors which support their opinions and as such this book is not as holistic in its coverage of the field as first appears. That said, I do feel it has much to offer and will provide a great deal to think about for anyone with an interest in drug issues.

Tracy Shildrick *University of Teesside.*

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