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Extending Entitlement and Missed Opportunities in Wales

John Holmes

This article gives an overview of Welsh youth policy, concentrating on Extending Entitlement *(2000) and critically analyses its framework and implementation. It reviews the role of* Extending Entitlement *in the context of* Learning Country: Learning Pathways 14–19, *which is now seen as the dominant youth policy in 2005.*

Keywords: entitlement, social Inclusion, partnership, learning, employability.

At the time of writing, the expected Green Paper on youth in England is yet to be published. As part of the process of influencing policy Tom Wylie, the Chief Executive of The National Youth Agency (NYA) has published his five tests by which he believes the Green Paper should be judged. His first test is that 'things to do, places to go' should be turned into an explicit set of entitlements for young people (Wylie, 2004). In Wales the language of entitlements is already familiar in youth work, following the publication of *Extending Entitlement* in September 2000 (NafW) detailing 10 key entitlements for young people of 11–25 years in Wales (Annex 1). In Wales the current main talking point in youth work is the proposal to cease funding the Wales Youth Agency (the WYA being the equivalent body in Wales to The NYA in England) by the end of 2005. The plan is to incorporate the roles of this ex-quango into the Welsh Assembly Government's Education and Lifelong Learning Department as a new Youth Support branch of the Youth and Pupil Participation Division.

It is *not* the intention of this paper to argue that there is a causal relationship between a youth entitlement agenda and the closure of bodies like the WYA. However, it is intended to explore the implications of *Extending Entitlement* in Wales, both in principle and with reference to how it is working out in practice, and to argue that when an entitlement agenda is framed within current New Labour social inclusion and governance priorities it can undermine youth work. The aim is to identify the barriers that have to be faced if an entitlement agenda and youth work can prosper together. It is the contention of this paper that these barriers have been insufficiently recognised by government within Wales.

On the face of it, an entitlement agenda does just what youth work principles argue should happen. It starts with the rights of young people and this leads to proposals for changes in the institutions that fail sufficiently to provide opportunities or entitlements to young people. This clearly fits with the youth work emphasis on empowerment and equal opportunities. It can also lead to the recognition that the youth service, alongside other

services to young people, is failing sufficiently to deliver the 'entitlement' that young people should expect because of a lack of resources. In Wales the case was made in *Extending Entitlement*, (NAfW 2000: para. 6.13) that the reduction in core funding prior to 1997 to local authority youth services (para. 6.10) alongside the shortage of qualified youth workers (paragraph 6.16) was one of the main reasons for this failure. Such recognition was greeted with great optimism and hope in Wales at the time, being seen as a long awaited basis for the expansion of youth work and youth services in coming years. The positive atmosphere was enhanced by comparing policy developments over the border. In England, Connexions increased funding but seemed to be targeted at a new profession rather than youth work, and this profession was based primarily on a deficit model of young people (of a shorter age range of 13-19 years) rather than their entitlements (DfEE,2000).

The state of the youth service in Wales in 2000

Certainly the youth service in Wales was in need of development in 2000, being in even more of a reduced state than the English youth service. Partly this was as a result of both the geography and administrative structures in Wales. The highly uneven distribution of the population of under three million, with over one million along the M4 corridor, means that many of the mountainous rural areas have difficulty in providing accessible local services. Whilst it is foolish to rely too much on statistics, especially when it is hard to make a clear distinction between youth and other services, it is a stark figure that the average (median for English Local Authorities) amount spent per head of 13-19 population in England in 1999-2000 was £145.38p but in Wales only £60.50p for the same year (DfEE, 2001; Wales Youth Agency, 2002). In addition, the move from eight counties in 1996 to 22 unitary authorities left small services such as the youth service very weak in some parts of Wales. It can be argued that there is no such thing as a Welsh youth service, but rather 'a disparate organisation devoid of a collective identity' (Rose, 2004). The diversity is increased when the voluntary sector is included. In 2003, I presented a paper on the role of the youth service in Young People's Partnerships around Wales, and the major impression gained from this exercise was the diversity of the responses to *Extending Entitlement*. These varied from the view that the entitlement agenda had already being in existence and followed by local youth services, to *Extending Entitlement* being a threat to the continuation of youth work. Some valued the lead role of the Welsh Assembly, others resented this involvement, both in principle and in the way they were involved.

In Wales, youth work has to a greater extent than in England being linked historically with schools and teaching, often in community education frameworks. The relatively small number of full time specialist qualified youth and community workers paid on JNC pay and conditions, reflected a weak distinctive youth and community work profession. Despite the considerable efforts of the one (up to the mid 1990s) JNC national qualifying course in Wales to promote innovative coherent training across Wales, directly linking part time qualification training delivered locally with national qualifying training, the numbers of nationally qualified youth workers was less than 50% of full time workers, even after 2000 (Rose, 2003). This survey finding compares unfavourably to an equivalent figure of over 90% in England, and partly reflects the difficulty of the one North Wales national qualifying course making inroads in a country traditionally divided between north and south. Since the

mid-1990s new courses have opened in Newport, Cardiff and recently in Carmarthen, all in South Wales.

The Entitlements and Young People's Partnerships

The entitlement agenda in Wales was set out in the original report (NAfW, 2000) and developed following consultation in the *Direction and Guidance* (WAG, 2002). The latter detailed the basic entitlements of young people in Wales, the environment in which interventions should take place (as listed in Annex 1), as well as extending the membership of the Young People's Partnerships (YPPs) in each of the 22 Local authorities. The original *Extending Entitlement Report* had proposed three key elements (NAfW para. 10.8.2)
– Chief Executive office of local authority
– Local Authority Youth Service
– Voluntary Sector, Careers Service, Schools, Colleges, Training providers, Probation, Employment Service and Health Authority
This listing seemed to reflect the importance placed on the agenda, with Chief Executives expected to chair the YPPs, the central role of the youth services and the need to build partnerships across all services to young people.

By the time the more detailed guidance was published the potential contributors to the YPPs had grown to 30 plus in each local authority, with the addition of community education, leisure, community safety, economic development, community development, transport, Job Centre Plus, and housing. Rather surprisingly the local authority youth service was not guaranteed representation in that only 3 of the local authority corporate managers responsible for youth service, education, social services, and housing were to be included. However a representative of Council of Welsh Voluntary Youth Services (along with 4 others from the voluntary sector) were guaranteed representation. It would appear that although youth work can approve the 'rights' approach of the entitlement agenda there is a risk that the voices of relatively small statutory youth services become lost in partnerships dominated by much bigger players in work with young people. Young people themselves were not given membership of the YPPs but the expectation was clear that processes of consultation needed to be developed to listen to the voices of young people. The key roles of the YPPs were to review existing provision in the area, identify gaps, ensure 'joined-up' thinking, and develop plans for the future based on the ethos of the entitlement approach. The implication of this for youth work will be picked up below under 'Partnership Working'.

Social Inclusion

Whilst the ten entitlements can be seen as covering the range of rights for young people they cannot be understood outside the social inclusion framework of New Labour, both in the UK generally and in Wales. The entitlements are numbered below for ease of referencing, this not being the case in the Assembly documentation. Yet it is interesting to note the order (which is the same as the original) in which they are listed, with the New Labour emphasis on 'employability' coming through in 1 and 2. The original *Extending Entitlement Report* (NASW, 2000) followed, and recognised the importance of other key

documents relating to New Labour's position on young people. Of greatest importance seems to have been the Social Exclusion Unit's report *PAT 12* on young people (SEU, March 2000) and the *Bridging the Gap* (SEU, July 1999) report on 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment. Thus the social inclusion agenda is central to YPPs in Wales (NafW, 2000 paras.2.3-2.7) as well as to the Connexions service in England (DfEE, 2000 paras.1.1-1.5 and in particular 2.4).

The setting up of the Social Exclusion Unit in 1997 in the Cabinet Office signalled the importance of social exclusion in New Labour Government policy. Given the historical emphasis in youth work on social inclusion (albeit using different language) it is initially surprising that it took three years to develop a role for youth work, despite the promotion of other forms of education during the 1997-2000 period. The origins of youth work are diverse, but most youth workers identify with the role of enabling successful transitions to adulthood, and much of the 'social rescue' tradition in youth work originating in the nineteenth century (see Davies, 1999) recognised the risks young people faced in terms of poverty, unemployment, exploitative employment, breakdown of family ties and the lures of commercial leisure provision. Often the value of youth work in the nineteenth century (and continuing to the present day) was stated in moral, usually Christian terms, which had a duty to ensure that young people were not 'lost' by the threats that came with industrialisation.

There is an alternative tradition in youth work which has argued that the threats faced by young people can only be overcome by fundamentally challenging the society of which they are a part, and that inequalities, poverty and lack of opportunities can only be overcome by challenges rather than inclusion. The purpose of youth work, as agreed by practitioners (but not the government) at the Ministerial Conference in 1992, to develop a youth work curriculum stated:

> ... *to redress all forms of inequality, to ensure equality of opportunity for all young people to fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and members of groups and communities* ... (quoted in Williamson, 1997:156)

This suggests the need for a radical re-structuring of society. Only after this statement did the agreed purpose move onto the more conventional 'support young people during the transition to adulthood'.

However, this form of radical youth work has always been marginal, and some believe that it is always aspirational rather than real (Williamson, 1997:156) At the time of the Ministerial Conferences, it was suggested that the radical agenda was more relevant to multi-cultural urban contexts than to Welsh traditions (Williamson, 1997: 158). It can be argued that this position led to difference in the purposes in *Welsh Curriculum Statement* (most recent edition 2002, WYA) which, whilst starting with 'promote and actively encourage equality of opportunity...', leaves out any reference to redressing all forms of 'inequality', includes 'transition to adulthood' and significantly adds 'expressive' as a pillar of youth work with reference to 'cultural identity, bilingualism, heritage.....'(pp 5-6) . This represents another important form of inclusion within Welsh culture.

Within the social inclusion framework, within which most youth work can operate, there are different models. There is a social democratic model (or discourse) emphasising redistribution of wealth, power and status- as key to achieving social inclusion (see Levitas, 1998). Some youth workers have identified with this tradition in advocating such measures as lowering the age of voting to 16, arguing against the removal of benefits to 16-18 year olds, or more generally promoting the voice of young people through youth councils and forums.

A second model of social inclusion puts emphasis on moral and appropriate behaviour, and has close links to the character-building work dominant in the origins of youth organisations such as the YMCA, Scouts and Guides, Boys and Girls Clubs. It is argued that this moral tradition, often emphasising 'social rescue' has increasingly been replaced in youth work by an educational framework (Davies, 1999: 2). The modern version of this approach, whilst still stressing the importance of moral behaviour and responsibilities, has emerged in the idea of the 'underclass' which was promoted in early New Labour (around single parents and young offenders) but appears to have declined in emphasis in more recent pronouncements. Whilst the underclass term is less used the perception of young people as dangerous and in need of rehabilitation is strongly embedded, as can be seen in the emphasis on Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and dispersal orders targeted at young people.

A third model of social inclusion, and the dominant one in New Labour thinking is based on 'social integration', which on the face of it would seem to fit well with youth work's emphasis on 'transition to adulthood'. However, in practice 'social integration' in New Labour has come to mean an emphasis on paid work and the educational/training qualifications to gain access to the labour market (see Levitas, 1998, in particular pp. 128-177). This 'employability' agenda does present problems for existing traditions of youth work.

Whilst responding to issues raised in conversation by young people about 'employability' may only present problems relating to the level of workers' knowledge, it can cause greater problems if youth work is expected to reinforce the prescriptive world of schooling and training. If youth workers are expected to reinforce compulsory attendance, pre-determined curricula, and increasing surveillance of young people who do not conform to this model of transition, by being involved in monitoring truancy, illicit sexual behaviour, drug misuse and criminal activity, then it is unclear if this is still youth work. This is if the role of youth workers is defined in terms of extending young people's entitlements. It is significant that there is no mention of such 'problem' behaviour by young people in the 10 entitlements listed (see annex 1 below) and that the entitlements most closely related to 'employability' (i.e. 1 and 2) whilst stating that provision should be 'tailored to their needs' does not, in my view, sufficiently recognise the extent to which young people find schooling and training oppressive. These entitlements will be further analysed below.

It is true that many youth workers and youth services have been pushed by insufficient core funding over a number of years towards funding for project/issue based work targeted precisely at these problems (Crimmens et al, 2004). However the dilemmas that these approaches raise for youth work should not be underestimated by policy makers

nor by other services to young people. Leading commentators have argued that the very term 'youth work' is no longer valuable (Jeffs and Smith, 1999) because the term 'youth' has come increasingly to have negative, problem-based connotations. Drugs, crime, homelessness, family problems, unemployment, soccer hooliganism are all primarily seen as youth problems, even though they are clearly generic. Even the idea of 'transition' can be interpreted as setting up adulthood as the positive against the negative state of youth. Jeffs and Smith argue that the voluntary relationship (for young people to initiate and terminate any association with a youth worker) and the educational purpose of the work are at risk. They argue for the replacement of 'youth work' by informal education in order to reclaim and extend the person-centred, voluntary and positive educational tradition of the work.

It is critical if youth work is to continue to be valued by young people, and youth workers are to have clarity about their role, that youth work continues to struggle with boundaries, and does not fragment into an amorphous and unclear 'work with young people'. Youth work must remain in starting with broadening opportunities for young people, celebrating lifestyles and achievements despite being concerned with difficult, risky transitions. It must remain open to exploring youth sub-cultures that challenge adult expectations of conventional lifestyles. It must be remembered that the emerging and changing identities of young people as young people, or in taking on adult roles, are considerably broader than the 'social integrationist' model based on employability. Whereas most young people are keen to get a good job, youth work is still primarily defined around that social space where young people can be themselves *apart from* the pressures of adult defined institutions such as school and work. This is recognised in *Extending Entitlement*, most notably in Annex 3 reporting the results of the focus groups in which both the diversity of responses were noted (particularly between 'engaged' and 'disengaged' young people), and the dominant theme of 'lack of facilities for young people and their desire to have a place which they can control and they can meet without undue interference' (NAfW, 2000 Annex 3: 3).

This would suggest that even those young people who were 'engaged' in terms of school achievement wanted this additional social space and had this in common with those seen as 'disengaged', who started with a more critical view of school, training and the relevance of the 'employability' agenda. The risk for youth workers taking a lead role around 'employability' is that it will undermine the positive relationships that youth workers normally have with young people, in particular those who are not achieving in terms of education and training.

This is not to say that youth work may not have a lead role in terms of social inclusion in relation to wider 'social integration'. It must be remembered that a key role of youth work has been to offer opportunities for association, for young people collectively to find their own voices and roles both with each other and in relation to adults, when their world comes into contact with adults in the community. Through this process youth work reinforces community, and helps to build alongside other community activities what has been called 'social capital' (Putnam, 2000). In particular 'bridging social capital' can enable young people to be outward looking and extend their boundaries (what Putnam calls a sociological WD40). In so doing it can have a major role in overcoming the disaffection and alienation of young people but does this indirectly by including people in community activities, rather than targeting them as 'troubled' or 'troublesome'. Targeting young people

as an age category or as disaffected in terms of their particular needs always runs the risk of labelling them, and reinforces negative identities. Promoting social capital through youth work may indirectly have more value in promoting employability than targeting young people directly around employability. It would be hoped that policy makers would see the value of reducing disaffection and alienation in itself, and even recognise that the adult society is often causing the resentment of young people. To emphasise employability over other aspects reinforces a view that the fault lies with young people and it is they rather than the adult society that must change.

The strength of youth work has always been to identify the strengths of young people, to emphasise the positives of individuals, and bring them together with adults in ways that can lead to reinforcing them as members of groups or communities. Unfortunately it would seem an opportunity was lost at an early stage in the development of *Extending Entitlement* in that the original plan to link YPPs to Community Partnerships was dropped in favour of an overarching framework of Children's and Young People's Partnerships. Whilst Wales has led the way in the UK in terms of a Children's Commissioner to listen and advocate for children, this has been done in the context of previous child abuse scandals and may well reinforce perspectives stressing the risks faced by young people from adults rather than what they have in common. This raises the broader question of the nature of partnerships in Wales.

Partnership Working

Just as important in *Extending Entitlement* as the theme of social inclusion is that of partnership working. The job descriptions relating to servicing officers of YPPs stress the role of developing partnerships, and 'eliminating unnecessary duplication'. The stress on partnerships reflects the New Labour desire for 'joined-up thinking'.

The above section on social inclusion demonstrates that despite the close links to youth work there are a variety of models, some of which are more problematic for youth work. The same is true of partnership working. A comparison between Connexions and *Extending Entitlement* should demonstrate this. In England the partnerships created around Connexions are the means to the creation of a new profession of personal advisors. The weaknesses perceived in the range of services to young people, and in particular the careers service and youth service (reflecting the social integrationist employability agenda), led to what many in their respective services see as a 'forced marriage' with the aim of creating a new type of worker combining the strengths of each, and avoiding their respective weaknesses.

The policy is significantly different in Wales with *Extending Entitlement* explicitly rejecting the Connexions model arguing instead for 'improving the support provided by existing services and improving co-ordination' (NafW, 2000, para. 10.5). Some ambiguity was introduced by the use of the term Youth Support Service (also used in England) but in general, building better relationships between existing services is clearly seen as the best way forward. To develop this type of partnership requires 'strong partners' with each partner recognised as having a distinct role by other partners *as well as* new roles emerging through partnership.

This recognition of the individual role of partners can be difficult to achieve particularly for relatively small services such as the youth service, compared to the 'big players' such as schools, colleges, police, health services. It can be made doubly difficult when the youth service is unsure of its identity, with large numbers of unqualified workers and induction and in-service training weak. Youth workers need to be clear about their role, including the boundaries to this. Explaining the purpose of youth work is never easy because of its lack of a clearly defined specialist role but it is essential. If partnership is to work it requires a commitment to diplomacy, respect, reciprocity and exchange by all partners. Whilst this cannot be guaranteed even when youth workers are clear themselves it is almost impossible with confusion.

To work in the YPPs to clarify *existing* roles before moving onto new roles can help to avoid unnecessary duplication. However, it is not advocated that this should occur to the extent of allocating one key contact person to each young person (dependent on their identified primary needs). To do this as in England, where personal advisors are bidding to be the key contact person for young people, could result in the removal of a key entitlement of young people i.e choice. Youth services know the importance of diversity even within the limited youth work field. Although sometimes leading to conflict, diversity does result in a range of services to young people. It would be far worse if a young person is allocated to a key worker only to discover that they did not relate well. It could be argued that this should not occur with appropriate selection and training but youth workers know they can build relationships with some young people, whilst other workers are better with other young people, despite their professionalism and commitment (see Smith, 2001).

Equally important, is the issue of information sharing. It is important that young people do not have to repeat their story to a whole range of workers or, worse still, that no worker feels it is their responsibility to act and so a young person 'falls between services'. However, it is also important that information is only kept and passed on with young people's agreement, and much that is shared by young people need not be kept on file (if it was young people will become cases and the level of bureaucracy will multiply). Transition to adulthood involves a series of attempts to move in new directions, many of which young people identify as false starts. Not all these need recording and if a young person feels it is appropriate in making a fresh start to contact somebody new they should have both the choice of workers and the choice to leave 'baggage' behind. This approach requires a clear distinction between most young people and those deemed seriously at risk from abuse. In the latter group an identified key worker (normally from personal social services) responsible for making decisions about intervention clearly needs to continue.

Another issue for the youth service in partnership is whether youth work is perceived primarily as an ethos, as a way of intervening or as an organisation delivering services in its own right. Although the youth service could and did identify with the entitlement frameworks which puts the emphasis on services being responsive to young people, there was a danger that youth work was primarily being valued in terms of the ethos/process which could be applied to the delivery of other services, and it was this that would be its main contribution to the proposed youth support service. Whilst important this would ignore its role in terms of service delivery, particularly club/centre/project work. It can also make it difficult to promote partnership based on equality in that the role of the youth

service would be fundamentally different from other services. It would seem to be important to recognise that the youth service, unlike other services, has a dual role in terms of service delivery and as a style of intervention, which can be applied to some other services. However partnership working will be helped if the youth service recognises that the ethos of youth work is *only one* ethos appropriate to working with young people. Whilst agreeing entirely that the youth work ethos can extend more into other services, youth work must also be modest enough to recognise the value of other types of ethos that are held by other services eg caring, advising, counselling or even controlling behaviour which is destructive to others or young people themselves.

Youth Work involvement in YPPs

If the above arguments are accepted relating to entitlements, social inclusion and partnership working, then it follows that there are opportunities, and threats for youth work in YPPs. Some areas of work can be clearly identified as areas of strength for youth work, whereas other create problems, some which can be overcome with creativity and others cannot. It should be helpful to look more specifically at the areas of entitlement identified in the documentation (see Annex 1). It seems clear that the final three points relating to the environment in which the work takes place are ones which youth work can fully endorse as appropriate for youth work. Youth workers should be able to contribute further examples of good practice of developing the voices of young people and recognising potential and actual achievement. What is less clear is whether all other services to young people, in particular those intervening as a result of negative behaviour by young people, can create this environment to the same degree.

When it comes to the ten basic entitlements listed it is harder for youth work to sign up with equal equanimity to all ten. Youth work should have few problems in agreeing that they have a key role in ensuring entitlements to the last five, but for a variety of reasons numbers one to five can present problems.

All ten entitlements relate to opportunities for young people's learning and clearly youth work, in being educational, values learning and has promoted a broader conception of learning. However just as terms such as social inclusion and partnership working hide different, even opposing, models, so does the term, 'learning'. The ESRC funded research into 'The Learning Society' included an analysis of the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999) which underpinned much of the New Labour thinking and led to the Learning and Skills Act in which the new arrangements are included in legislation (differing in Wales and England). Frank Coffield (2000) describes how it was agreed that at least ten different models of learning are included in *Learning to Succeed* and how these often crossover and are in conflict with each other. Without going into detail it is clear that the emphasis on

- skills growth
- personal development
- social learning
- local learning societies
- learning markets
- social control

● self evaluation
● centrality of learning
● a reformed system of education
● structural change

are all different but can all be linked to *Learning to Succeed*. It is clear that youth work fits some of these much better than others. In particular 'personal development', 'social learning', 'local learning societies', 'a reformed system of education' and 'structural change' can be seen to be relevant to youth work as a form of informal education.

Returning to the ten entitlements, numbers eight to ten express the roots of youth work, and what most young people are attracted to in their involvement with youth work. Numbers six and seven represent the growth in more recent years towards giving advice and support in settings where young people choose to be. This recognises the ability of youth workers both to combine attractive presentation of information (eg Canllaw/Online, although this has now been moved from youth work to the Careers Service) and partnership working, involving referral when more specialised, individualised advice is required.

Although the line between entitlement six and five is not great, and youth workers may well move from six to five, it is less likely that youth workers will themselves have the specialist knowledge on careers or educational courses, but still have a clear role in relation to the 'personal development' and 'social learning' aspects of these. Referral is more likely to be needed in relation to five. In information shops, schools and college settings where youth workers exist in multi-agency teams working alongside career advisers, teachers, lecturers, counsellors, there is more opportunity for the referrals to operate smoothly.

The problematic nature of three and four are for different reasons, relating to resource issues not sufficiently allowing the range of opportunities across Wales, nor the levels of quality and accessibility that all agree is necessary. This problem was recognised in the original *Extending Entitlement* document (NAfW 2000 Para. 6.13).

Entitlements one and two present different problems and brings us back to the issues discussed above relating to the 'employability' agenda of the social integrationist model of social inclusion. The central issue seems to be whether youth work can be involved without losing its identity. The involvement of youth work in formal education (including basic skills), training and other forms of skills development can be beneficial to all but if youth workers are expected to be ancillary workers to teachers and trainers then this ceases to be youth work. Too often it seems the real value of the youth worker, as perceived by social inclusion policy makers, is as somebody who can build relationships with difficult young people but the process and outcomes in relation to the meaning of social inclusion remain unchanged. In Wales *The Learning Country* initiative and in particular *Learning Pathways* for 14–19 year olds (WAG, 2002) was developed alongside *Extending Entitlement*. *The Learning Country* initiative proposes alternative routes for non academic young people, essentially trying to gain parity of esteem for more vocational, practical pathways through schooling and so increase skill levels and reduce the levels of disaffection with schooling. Whether this will be more successful than previous failed attempts to achieve parity of esteem is uncertain, but what is clear is that youth workers are seen to have a role, albeit a secondary one, as 'learning coaches'. This role is constructed in terms of enabling young people to make

appropriate individual choices, and around involvement and participation. Yet it is clear that its success will be measured by achievement in qualifications, albeit with a shift to more vocational ones. In this approach the potential contribution of youth work to develop alternative responses to conventional schooling and training process and outcomes may well be lost.

The emphasis on targets and outcomes is demanded of all public sector employees by government in the name of greater accountability, and this is also the basis for the incorporation of the WYA, into the Welsh government. For youth workers in Wales, as elsewhere, this emphasis has become a frequent complaint in relation to the increasing difficulty of actually doing their job. There is thinly veiled frustration from government and civil servants that youth workers should be expected to be treated any differently from anybody else, and although it is hard to prove, this seems likely to have led to a reduction of the role expected of youth work. Certainly the role expected of youth work in the *Learning Pathways*, 14–19 programme is a far cry from the high hopes generated by *Extending Entitlement*. Whilst the voluntary sector may be expected to have more say in setting its own outcomes, any youth work that is funded by government must be measured against government set targets, and if this is resisted then others will be found to be learning coaches, or other youth work related roles. Such a position, whilst understandable, fails to appreciate the problems posed by narrow social inclusion targets for youth work which can undermine the relationship and trust built up by youth workers with young people.

Underlying this debate is the question of governance and the nature of youth work compared to other services to young people. Whilst *Extending Entitlement* clearly demonstrates a commitment to the youth work approach as an ethos of working with young people, it is an approach which in essence believes that a balance needs to be struck between listening and responding to young people (primarily as customers of services) and government (as deliverers of policies on which they were elected). The role of youth workers, as with other professionals, is to deliver these services and ensure they work effectively with each other. Whilst this position raises issues about the autonomy of all professionals it raises particular issues for youth workers who are starting closer to the interests of young people and who, unlike other professionals, have no clear specialist role (in relation to young people as pupils, patients, offenders, etc.)(Drakeford, 1998).

It is too early to summarise the work of the YPPs in relation to *Extending Entitlement*. A *Progress Report* up to March 2004 (WAG Youth Policy Unit) suggests that a wide diversity of issues have been addressed in the twenty two YPPs, focusing on the involvement of young people, out of school activities, and joint training for workers with young people. There is some evidence that the YPPs have not yet taken up the key strategic role originally envisaged, have not responded sufficiently to the ten entitlements and that although 14-19 learning pathways agendas are linked, the latter is being driven primarily outwith YPPs, and outwith youth work. The lack of legal status of YPPs, as entities in themselves that can hold budgets, with WAG funding for their priorities being channelled though one of the partners, inevitably limit their roles.

An interim analysis would seem to suggest that the original aims of extending entitlements to all 11 to 25-year-olds in Wales are being pursued across Wales but the Welsh Assembly

Government want to see results in terms of social inclusion focused on employability. As a result they are shifting their emphasis to the *Learning Pathways 14–19* agenda, and in the process the role for youth work is being marginalised primarily to school inclusion work. Whilst broader youth work aims are continuing, in both the local authority and voluntary sectors, the Assembly's commitment to make this a priority has diminished.

Annex 1 – Ten Entitlements

Every young person in Wales has a basic entitlement to:
1. Education, training and work experience – tailored to their needs;
2. Basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote social inclusion;
3. A wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship;
4. High quality, responsive, and accessible services and facilities;
5. Independent, specialist careers advice and guidance and student support and counselling services;
6. Personal support and advice – where and when needed and in appropriate formats – with clear ground rules on confidentiality;
7. Advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings;
8. Recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment;
9. Sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop talents; broaden horizons and promote rounded perspectives including both national and international contexts;
10. The right to be consulted, to participate in decision-making, and to be heard, on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives

In an environment where there is:
1. A positive focus on achievement overall and what young people have to contribute;
2. A focus on building young people's capacity to become independent, make choices, and participate in the democratic process; and
3. Celebration of young people's successes.

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Youth Policy and Social Inclusion

Critical Debates with Young People

Edited by Monica Barry, Stirling University, UK

Many young people lack status, rights and power because they fall between the two stools of protection and dependence as children and autonomy and self determination as adults. They are often considered by their elders to be rebellious and troublesome, and labelled with phrases such as 'underclass youth' and 'dangerous youth'.

This book critically examines discriminatory attitudes towards young people and looks at the 'problem' of adults rather that the 'problem' of young people. Rather than focusing on the problems that young people present to others in society, this book emphasises the problems that young people face from others. The authors ask searching questions about society's capacity and willingness to be more socially inclusive of young people in terms of policy and practice, and explore the extent to which young people have access to status, rights and responsibilities as young adults. The book takes an holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to identifying and analysing the factors which promote and exacerbate the social inclusion of young people, with contributors examining important themes and issues such as:

- citizenship • teenage pregnancy • drug use • unemployment • education • youth offending • homelessness • youth transitions • rights

The book is unique in that young people have also contributed their views on the issues and on the chapters in this book. Each young contributor describes their direct experiences and critically comments on the academic contributions, suggesting ways forward for a more inclusive society in the future.

Youth Policy and Social Inclusion will appeal to a wide audience, including students, practitioners, policy makers and academics in the field of social policy, social work, sociology, youth and community work, criminology, economics, education, housing and politics.

A curriculum by any other name ...
The Parallels between Youth Work and Criminal Justice

Monica Barry

This article highlights similarities between the imposition of a more formalised curriculum approach in youth work and the rapidly increasing use of 'What Works' principles in criminal justice. These shifts in recent years, in particular towards curriculum-based groupwork programmes, have resulted in policy and practice in both youth work and criminal justice becoming less in tune with the views of young people about what they need and want from such services in order to improve their life chances and to feel better integrated into society. The article explores their views against the backdrop of these recent changes, drawing on a qualitative study of youth work participants in Wales and two qualitative studies of young offenders in Scotland. It concludes that for such services to be truly effective, policy makers must genuinely consult with young people about what they themselves deem important to resolve the problems they face in the transition to adulthood.

This article exposes the striking similarities between the debate within youth work of the imposition of a curriculum and that within criminal justice of the imposition of a *What Works* agenda, notably in relation to young offenders in Scotland[1]. At the heart of both debates lies a perceived shift in emphasis away from the needs of young people themselves, towards a rhetorical, evidence-based professionalism based on the directives of politicians.

A dictionary definition of the word 'curriculum' would suggest a course of study, a programme or plan of activities. However, since the late 1980s, the word has taken on a new meaning, firstly within formal education throughout the UK and then within the youth work sector. The implication of such a curriculum is that the programme would not only be imposed and 'taught', but would also be stringently monitored and measured according to 'learnt' outcomes (Ord, 2004). This journal has demonstrated in recent months the highly controversial implications of such developments within youth work, in terms of curtailing professional discretion, focusing on the manifestation rather than the root cause of problems and failing to take on board young people's wishes and concerns. This article broadens the debate by highlighting the fact that youth work is not alone in having this shift of emphasis imposed; criminal justice has also taken on this mantra in recent years (Kemshall, 2002) with an equally mixed response from practitioners and offenders alike (Barry, 2000, Mair, 2004, Smith, 2005).

The following section of this article briefly summarises the curriculum debate within youth work before exploring how that curriculum-style agenda has emerged within criminal justice in the UK since the early 1990s. The views of young offenders in Scotland about what constitutes effectiveness in their eyes are drawn upon to demonstrate the discrepancies between what seemingly works for policymakers and what works for young people. Despite the fact that young people in the criminal justice system do not 'choose' to be there, it is ironic that their views about criminal justice interventions have possibly been elicited more systematically in recent years than have the views of young people who voluntarily participate in youth work interventions. However, one such study of youth work participants, described below, highlights the possible discrepancies between what young people want from youth work and what the curriculum agenda expects workers to deliver.

Young people's views of youth work

In one of the few studies to date of young people's views about youth work, Williamson (1997) identifies four key 'needs' of young people: association ('somewhere to go'); activities ('something to do'); autonomy ('space of our own'); and advice ('someone to talk to'). In his qualitative study of 15-19 year-old youth work participants in Wales, Williamson sought views on the extent to which youth work currently addressed young people's needs. Whilst many of the young people spoke of developing social skills and a greater sense of responsibility and self-understanding, others felt that youth work provision should offer more practical answers to the questions of what to do and where to go during their leisure time. Participative activities offered within a youth work setting were seen to be helpful in offering them a feeling of autonomy, control, achievement and self-confidence; factors which were seen as important to young people in the transition to adulthood.

According to Williamson, two of the core principles of youth work are participation and empowerment. However, he suggests that older young people (e.g., over 15 year olds) are unlikely to participate in youth work *unless* empowerment, autonomy and flexibility are key features of that involvement. The youth work curriculum highlights a dichotomy between on the one hand the traditional principles of participation and empowerment and on the other hand the 'new world' managerialism within youth work which requires planned (and therefore potentially inflexible) and imposed programmes of work. Williamson concludes from his own study that existing youth work provision can adequately address young people's needs without necessarily requiring a rigorous curriculum of accredited programmes.

Whilst it is acknowledged by Williamson that young people's agendas have also to fit with the agendas of other key stakeholders within the youth service, it is nevertheless the case that without young people's commitment and participation, such a service would rapidly become surplus to requirements. Indeed, Williamson notes the concerns of some within the profession who felt that:

> the pendulum had swung too far away from young people's agendas: youth work practice was being shaped more from the top-down than from the bottom-up, giving a lie to principles of participation and empowerment and alienating a key target age group (15–19) in the process (Williamson, 1997: 82).

One of the more heated debates in youth work is about the curriculum's propensity to focus almost entirely on outcomes and thus to ignore or play down the importance of process. A focus on outcomes within a youth work curriculum may well appeal to young people who participate in youth work services, just as a focus on outcomes appeals to young people in the criminal justice system (McIvor and Barry, 1998). However, it seems that whilst the professional protagonists argue over the meaning and value of youth work, few researchers have actually asked young people what they think of the service. Williamson's study was a rare exception to the rule and more such studies are required, although a further study including young people's views of youth work is currently in progress (Spence, 2004, pers. comm).

The curriculum controversy within youth work

Whilst the above study of young people's perceptions of youth work has demonstrated that young people want practical 'outcomes', as they see it, of participation, a meaningful relationship with workers and flexibility in the youth work setting, much of the recent controversy over the curriculum has focused on methods rather than outcomes of youth work – the 'how' rather than the 'what'. In his critique of recent developments within youth work, Ord (2004) expresses concern about the emerging policy emphasis on teaching as a prime method of undertaking youth work. He argues that 'teaching' is top down and that a curriculum as such undermines or ignores the 'interpersonal dynamics of the youth work process... the building of a relationship of voluntary participation or mutuality' (Ord, 2004: 53). This is a moot point since neither Ord nor his critics have specifically cited the views of young people involved in youth work about what they themselves think of the 'interpersonal dynamics' of youth work. For example, it is unlikely that young people would suggest that they cannot be effectively taught by someone with whom they have a voluntary and mutual relationship. What Ord does not make explicit is the fact that it is the *groupwork* element of a youth work curriculum that is at issue, not the level or style of 'teaching', since he concludes that within youth work: 'workshops... will become the norm... Youth workers will end up ticking boxes relating to knowledge or skills... and fail to engage fully with the young people in an equitable relationship' (Ord, 2004: 58).

Merton and Wylie (2004: 65) argue that: 'a mechanistic, routinised approach would be the kiss of death to youth work'. Williamson (1997) goes further in suggesting that whilst political and financial support for youth work requires a concomitant level of conformity to local curriculum guidelines which gives structure to the work, such conformity and structure can also result in bureaucratic rigidity. Jeffs (2004) also supports the contention that youth work does not need a curriculum to stimulate the educative processes of self-questionning, doubt, self-activity and dissent. Youth work curriculum developments are 'not inspired by hope [but] are products of their time... Cooked up to meet the expectations... of the inspectorate, politicians and managers' (Jeffs, 2004: 57). He further acknowledges that New Labour seems 'determined to curb the autonomy of professionals' (2004: 56) so as to retain continuity and control over the process, and that practitioners are likely to fall into line – as have criminal justice workers to a greater or lesser extent. They do so because of fear of being 'de-professionalised', of drifting aimlessly, or of being pushed. Robertson (2004) suggests that the fear of workers goes deeper than de-professionalism: '... if we don't get our house in order they'll do it for us... if we don't come up with the goods we'll cease to exist' (2004: 77). Stern

(2005) suggests that much youth justice policy results from the UK having a very acquiescent civil society which fails to criticise government policy. Given this seeming professional concurrence with government youth policies, therefore, there is a likelihood that such policies will continue on a trajectory that is totally divergent with the perceived needs of young people themselves. The remainder of this article explores this divergence of views in relation to young people within the criminal justice system.

'What Works' and National Standards in criminal justice

The criminal justice *What Works* agenda developed in the 1980s in response to the criticism that 'nothing works' from a rehabilitative perspective in reducing offending (McGuire and Priestley, 1995) and that a greater focus should be placed on a more centralised, administrative approach to law and order (Harris, 1996). Large-scale quantitative studies, notably from North America, have over the last twenty years or more increasingly influenced policymakers in the UK to focus on cognitive behavioural approaches to offending. Such approaches have almost totally ignored the wider social environment within which, and often because of which, offending behaviour takes place. A set of needs and risk factors were identified by academics as a result of meta-analyses of these quantitative studies which seemingly enabled offending behaviour to be predicted, contained and modified. Trotter (1999) suggests that evidence-based practice, that is practice which is based primarily on research findings, has to work with the presenting problem (offending) rather than wider socio-economic concerns because the presenting problem is more amenable to measurement and evaluation. It is also politically more expedient to blame and change individuals rather than to blame and change social structures. Thus, since the 1980s there has been an increasing focus on the offender's behaviour rather than circumstances, that has allowed psychology (which focuses on the individual) rather than sociology (which focuses on wider socio-economic factors) to become the theoretical mainstay of criminal justice policy (Kendall, 2004). And yet it could be argued that offending behaviour is a manifestation of troubles external to and beyond the control of the individual (Barry, 2004).

To ensure that probation officers (in England and Wales) and social workers supervising probation orders (in Scotland) were made accountable for and could demonstrate effectiveness in their interventions with offenders, National Standards were devised in the late 1980s and early 1990s to set out procedures and guidelines for various criminal justice services. Although officially termed 'guidelines', National Standards remain focused on prescribing assessment procedures, requiring standardised groupwork programmes and specifying outcomes, often to the exclusion of the wider circumstances for individual offenders. Assessments focus almost entirely on risk of re-offending, groupwork programmes by definition cannot be tailor-made to individual needs and the primary outcome of interventions remains one of changing behaviour -- reducing the frequency or seriousness of offending – in order to protect the public (Robinson and McNeill, 2004).

National Standards are seen as a framework and checklist for workers to ensure that they address offending behaviour with their clients. Whilst they focus predominantly on the presenting problem, in Scotland they do leave some discretion with the social worker to address other client needs, such as personal or social problems (McIvor, 2004), but only

where these directly contribute to offending or affect community integration. Scotland has not become as centralised or specific in its programming of offender work as in England and Wales and it has been suggested (McIvor, 2004, Robinson and McNeill, 2004) that this is because criminal justice social work in Scotland is still tied into generic social work departments wherein social justice is a founding principle.

The following section draws on the views of young offenders elicited from two qualitative research studies undertaken recently in Scotland[2] – known here as the *Probation Study* (McIvor and Barry, 1998) and the *Desistance Study* (Barry, 2004). Although the empirical data come from one particular jurisdiction within the UK, namely Scotland, with its own system of criminal justice legislation and practice, the views of offenders north of the Border are nevertheless similar to those of their counterparts in England and Wales in highlighting the importance of the relationship with, and the practical and emotional support offered by, probation officers (Barry, 2000). This similarity of views is notable given the seemingly more welfare-oriented approach within Scottish criminal justice compared to England and Wales.

There are two elements within the perceptions of young offenders generally about criminal justice which are highlighted in these two studies. One is the consensus evident amongst young offenders across the UK about what works for them in reducing offending. The other is the fact that young people's views often differ starkly from the official view of what works in helping reduce offending.

Young people's views of criminal justice

There is still no clear understanding about why young people start and stop offending. For this reason alone, it must be extremely difficult for workers to state categorically that the supervision and support they give is going to reduce offending or enhance social inclusion. However, whilst young people themselves are equally unclear as to why they start and stop offending, they do have some insight into what they want from supervising social workers to help them reintegrate into their communities, and it is argued here that policy makers, practitioners and academics could benefit further from listening to young people's advice. In fact, *listening* is the one factor that the majority of young people say is crucial if social workers are to help them to lead law-abiding lives: 'It was great to know there was someone there to listen to me and to understand where I was coming from' (22 year-old woman, *Probation Study*).

One view held by many offenders, irrespective of age, is that social workers can do little to change actual behaviour, and that such motivation to change must come from the offender him or herself. This commonly-held view, epitomised by the following two quotes, is not one that has been taken on board by the What Works protagonists, who deny the need for personal motivation when promulgating cognitive behavioural approaches: 'You can only change yourself. Nobody else can change you' (17 year-old man, *Probation Study*).

I don't think I would have changed at 17. I don't think I was ready to talk about anything that had happened to me or anything. I just don't think I would have changed ... until the person's ready to talk about it and settle down... they have to be ready for it. They have

to be ready within themselves... ready to see the light (23-year-old woman, *Desistance Study*).

However, whilst young offenders thought social workers could do little to change behaviour, they thought social workers could do much to support them both emotionally and practically with other problems in their lives: 'Well, I wouldn't say the probation order helped, but if I needed to talk to somebody, you know, [the probation officer] was there (22-year-old woman, *Desistance Study*).

Offending was primarily seen as a by-product of other issues for young people, such as poverty, boredom, discrimination or homelessness. Many offenders see their offending behaviour as a consequence of, rather than a precursor to, their current circumstances – a symptom rather than a cause. However, the official view of *What Works* focuses on the symptom (the offending behaviour), whereas offenders themselves would like more of a focus on the cause (boredom, lack of income, addictions, discrimination). Their offending is more often than not precipitated by their wider socio-economic surroundings. Supervision of a standardised or curricular nature therefore often seems irrelevant to individual offenders, because it focuses on reacting to previous behaviour rather than offering constructive advice about future opportunities to change.

Many respondents suggested that providing leisure and educational activities, information and advice were crucial components of social work intervention. Support in the form of drug rehabilitation centres of drugs awareness training were also seen as important, since much youth offending was seen as a consequence of drug or alcohol misuse. In this respect, proactive and earlier intervention was seen as more effective than responding retrospectively once an offending lifestyle had become the norm.

A young offender's relationship with his/her probation officer is invariably deemed as one of the most important factors in the success or failure of a probation order (McIvor and Barry, 1998). Yet that relationship is being eroded by the changed remit of probation officers to manage and monitor their clients rather than to assist them towards improving their circumstances. The characteristics of a good or bad social worker are listed in Figure 1. These characteristics, based on the views of offenders in the *Probation Study* but mirrored in other similar studies in the UK, are divided into four parts: characteristics that are helpful and unhelpful from an emotional perspective and those that are helpful and unhelpful from a practical perspective. This diagram exemplifies the importance of dialogue, discretion, understanding and informality within the professional relationship between worker and client, and yet these factors are now being eroded within the imposition of curriculum-style criminal justice interventions.

For the majority of these young people, a constructive relationship between social worker and client was one built on trust, friendship, openness, caring and an easy-going manner. A difficult relationship was one where the social worker was authoritarian, judgemental, rigid or distant in their approach. Encouragement and praise from social workers were crucial to improve self-confidence and to motivate these young people to stop offending:

[I gained] a wee bit of confidence in myself. Just with [my social worker] ... saying that I

was good staying out of trouble for this amount of time. I felt a lot more confident than what I was. I thought I was a loser, the only thing I could do was steal things, but he made me feel a bit more confident in myself (22-year-old man, *Probation Study*).

Figure 1: Offenders' perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful features of the social worker's approach

HELPFUL

Easy to talk to
Calm, relaxed, friendly
Treated as equal
Give me options   Treated with respect
Put things in perspective   A good listener
Knowledgeable   Tactful/trustworthy
Influential   A friend
Straightforward
A motivator

PRACTICAL SUPPORT   **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

Inexperienced   Domineering
Did not understand the problem   Too busy
Too 'empowering'   Too intrusive
Treated as a child
Did not care

UNHELPFUL

Source: McIvor and Barry, 1998

I connected with the people there... I got on well with the staff... I liked [the social worker], although he was English... but he seemed a nice enough person so I let him basically get inside my brain. If you felt you wanted to ask something, he said 'ask away, I'll answer as truthfully as I can'. And the older I'm getting, the more I'm feeling... [he] is an exceptional man. I could really connect with him (24-year-old man, *Desistance Study*).

These views highlight the importance to young people of the supervisor/supervisee relationship, and yet *What Works* principles pay little heed to this key element of probation supervision. Indeed, Andrews (1995) identifies several factors which he considers are 'promising targets' based on the *What Works* research, yet these factors focus only on the individual and ignore the importance of social and professional interaction between worker and client:

- changing antisocial thinking;
- improving cognitive behavioural skills;
- reducing substance misuse;
- changing other attributes which are linked to criminal conduct.

These factors also ignore the socio-economic and political context in which behaviour and personality development take place and they do not address extraneous factors. Having identified these promising factors for change without having consulted offenders themselves about what seems promising to them, Andrews (1995) then suggests a list of 'less promising' targets for change. These are:

- increasing self-esteem (without simultaneously addressing antisocial attitudes and behaviour);
- focusing on 'vague emotional/personal complaints' that have not been linked to criminal conduct;
- improving living conditions (without simultaneously addressing antisocial attitudes and behaviour);
- increasing conventional ambition in school and work (without offering concrete support to realise those ambitions).

These subsidiary factors acknowledge the need to address more practical issues for offenders, but only in association with an emphasis on individual factors, thus still maintaining that the individual rather than the wider society needs to change. The promising factors are also deemed more measurable than the less-promising factors, and as such are more attractive to policy makers.

However, none of these factors was drawn up in consultation with young offenders. On the contrary, they seem totally at odds with the views of young people in the criminal justice system. The vast majority of respondents in the two studies cited in this article suggested that social workers need to focus on six key factors in order to work effectively with young offenders, the first three of which specifically focus on the relationship between worker and client:

- to talk and listen to the young person;
- to build a trusting and genuine relationship with the young person;
- to encourage and praise rather than blame them;
- to focus on the future rather than the past;
- to take into account background problems; and
- to offer practical help with addressing problems such as homelessness, unemployment and drug abuse.

Not one of these six factors is acknowledged in Andrews' promising and less promising factors cited above, nor are they given any credence within current criminal justice policy. Indeed, the criminal justice 'curriculum' of accredited groupwork programmes, national standards, personal responsibility and surveillance positively discourages the formation of a genuine and constructive supervisory relationship, and young people have sensed this shift in emphasis, as the following quotes demonstrate: 'It's not just ten to fifteen minutes in the office once

a month. [The social worker] has got to be someone who wants to help' (19 year-old man, *Probation Study*); 'He's getting paid for nothing. He's getting paid for coming to my house for ten minutes, sitting talking a load of piss and then going away' (18 year-old man, *Probation Study*).

Young people are not immune to the recent changes that have taken place in criminal justice. They have learnt the 'jargon' of probation work and now increasingly know how best to 'behave' within the supervisory relationship in order to avoid being breached for non-compliance. I have argued elsewhere (Barry, 2000) that offenders – perhaps regrettably – now distinguish two types of supervision: one 'proactive', where the supervisory relationship offers the individual practical or personal support; the other 'reactive', where supervision means 'staying out of trouble', surveillance and enforcement. Whilst the threat of further punishment for failure to comply with an order was seen by the majority of young people in these studies as a positive incentive to 'play the game' according to the 'reactive' type of supervision, there is also much criticism levelled at the use of breach as a threat to compliance since the outcome of breach procedures can often further embroil young offenders in the criminal justice system. As one 18 year-old man suggested: 'It just gives you more rope to hang yourself'.

The misappropriation of 'What Works'

Thus, young people's views of what works are very different from the official view of what works. The official view is that one needs to address anti-social thinking, increase cognitive behavioural skills and generally change the behaviour of the individual, and all preferably within a groupwork setting. The young offender's view is that one needs to talk and listen to the individual, give them more constructive, practical advice, increase their opportunities for employment, education and leisure, and give them more of a stake in society. The official view seeks to change or contain individual behaviour and in effect sees young offenders as problematic and 'set apart' from the mainstream. The offender's view, on the other hand, seeks more proactive, practical and emotional support and stresses their need for integration within the mainstream.

In summarising the impact of a curriculum approach within youth work and criminal justice, three key problem areas emerge:

● national standards, place unnecessarily rigid boundaries on professional discretion and encourage a 'tick-box' mentality amongst workers rather than the building of meaningful dialogue between worker and young person;
● groupwork programmes, irrespective of their often being inappropriate to young people's intellectual and maturational capacity, also restrict the adoption of an holistic and tailor-made approach to young people's problems; and
● focusing on changing the presenting behaviour through 'education' fails to address the root cause of many young people's problems.

These three problem areas are briefly examined below.

National Standards

The political emphasis of *What Works* on performance-related targets, evidence-based practice and scientific measurement has resulted in risk assessment and management becoming the main remit of practitioners within criminal justice. Bessant (2004) argues, ironically, that risk promises certainty: risk-based practice appeals to agencies and governments alike because it offers 'the illusion' of objectivity and precise diagnosis, whilst reducing professional discretion:

> *This 'relieves' practitioners from what can be experienced as the burden of responsibility that sometimes comes with exercising professional judgement. Practice informed by 'the science of risk' also sits comfortably with those whose 'interest' is oriented towards management or control and who prefer a sense of certainty (Bessant, 2004: 71).*

Likewise, Douglas (1992: 27) has suggested that risk has a 'forensic function' that allows crime to be taken out of its social context and to be associated more with the legal than the welfare system – an attractive proposition for politicians and policy makers alike. Risk also focuses attention on the individual rather than the socio-economic or political context within which offending behaviour takes place. No government wants to accept the possibility that crime results from adverse social circumstances and the party line is therefore to focus on the manifestation of those circumstances within an individual's behaviour. Therefore, such behaviour can be monitored and contained rather than overcome, and a greater emphasis can thus be placed by the state on protecting the public and restricting the discretion of practitioners. In England and Wales, for example, the Youth Justice Board set aside £45 million over three years for Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes – programmes which Pitts (2001) argues will reduce the capacity of probation officers to take an holistic approach to the needs and problems of young people. Pitts notes that New Labour requires practitioners to sing 'from the same hymn-sheet... with optimum efficiency, economy and effectiveness' (2001: 5), and he refers to this shift in emphasis as resulting in 'a "one-size-fits-all" national (correctional) curriculum for offenders' (Pitts, 2001: 11).

Groupwork programmes

Mair (2004: 2) suggests that the *What Works* 'juggernaut' that has transformed probation practice in England and Wales implies a medical or deficit model of deviance that only education of a cognitive-behavioural nature can ameliorate. *What Works* principles rest on cognitive behavioural approaches not only because they are easier to measure/evaluate than less structured approaches, but also because they tend to lessen the need to emphasise the wider social and economic context, a facet of the *What Works* literature that has received much recent academic criticism (Kendall, 2004, McIvor, 2004, Rogowski, 2003/4, Smith, 1998):

> *While offenders may benefit to varying degrees from structured interventions aimed at changing their attitudes and behaviour, such benefits are likely to be limited and shortlived if attention is not similarly paid to their wider social and personal needs. Greater emphasis correspondingly needs to be placed upon social inclusion and upon putting 'people' back into the equation by recognising the importance of the supervisory relationship in enhancing offenders' motivation not to reoffend (McIvor, 2004: 305).*

It could be argued that the mainstay of both the youth work curriculum and the criminal

justice curriculum, namely groupwork programmes of an 'educational' nature, focuses on commonalities within behaviours at the expense of the wider difficulties young people face as individuals in society. Equally, groupwork programmes operate in a socio-economic vacuum and cannot differentiate between individuals, in terms of level of risk, needs and circumstances. Thus such programmes discourage workers from addressing individual problems. There are also high drop-out rates from accredited programmes (Spencer and Deakin, 2004), which has resulted in the government halving the numbers required to undertake accredited programmes (Gorman et al., forthcoming).

The presenting behaviour

Criminal justice policy now depends too rigidly on measurable outcomes relating to changing the individual's behaviour rather than his/her circumstances. In Scotland, the *Reducing Reoffending* consultation document (Scottish Executive, 2004: 19) states that criminal justice policy's goal is: 'a seamless management of sentenced offenders which focuses on public safety and challenges offenders to change their offending behaviour'. Whilst one of the aims of 'rehabilitation' is 'to assist offenders to overcome drug or alcohol addictions, homelessness, lack of employment and other difficulties' (ibid: 8), the onus is on individual offenders to make the right choices amongst limited existing options. There is no mention of wider structural change which will broaden those options. Offenders must change, rather than their external circumstances, and according to Rogowski (2003/4: 60): 'the overall effect of current youth justice policy and practice is correctional early intervention, deterrence and punishment'. New Labour has continued the Conservative line of implying that young people exclude themselves as a result of their behaviour rather than are excluded by their social and economic circumstances.

Discussion and conclusions

What started out in 1908 as a criminal justice service whose aim was to 'advise, assist and befriend' offenders has now been revamped to 'confront, challenge and change' offenders (Home Office, 1998: 7). It could be argued that the 'epistemological fallacy' suggested by Furlong and Cartmel (1997: 114) in relation to youth transitions equally applies to criminal justice policy: namely, that the individual is blamed for inadequate extraneous factors, such as employment opportunities, housing or state benefits. Such problematising and criminalising of young people seems to fit equally well into the managerialist, punitive mould of recent youth policy more generally (Barry, 2005).

Smith (2005) suggests that in Scotland, devolution of political power has allowed crime and justice to become more political even though overall crime rates seem to have fallen. The welfare approach of the Scottish Children's Hearings system was put into question by policy makers in recent years and that unique youth justice system is currently under review. Indeed, the Scottish Executive has already introduced pilot youth courts with a view to rolling these out across Scotland. Smith (2005: 218) expresses concern about these developments when he suggests that: 'Rather than extending the welfare principle to an older age group, this would extend the punitive principle to a younger one'. Indeed, Gittens-Bernard (2005), one of the young people contributing to the debate on youth justice in an edited volume on *Youth Policy and Social Inclusion*, agrees with Smith that New Labour cannot be seen to be soft on crime

for fear of becoming unelectable:

> ... *the politicians are trying to protect the older generation rather than trying to put straight the young offenders. Instead of helping the offender, who may come from a disadvantaged family, to gain education opportunities and teaching them awareness, politicians feel that they should help the adults/victims due to the fact that they are taxpayers* (Gittens-Bernard, 2005: 230).

McIvor (2004: 324), amongst others, retains some optimism that Scotland will continue to resist 'the narrow empiricist agenda' of England and Wales. She argues that whilst probation in England and Wales has become more 'top-down', punitive, centralised and target-oriented, in Scotland social work with offenders remains more 'bottom-up' – 'engendering a sense of common ownership of the effective practice agenda' (McIvor, 2004: 309). McIvor's optimism may be shortlived, however, if the government continues to pursue a rigid curricular approach to criminal justice interventions with young people which deny them a voice, a personal identity and a shared stake in society.

Thus, there has been an implicit shift in focus from a proactive approach to the development of young people to a reactive approach to the management and containment of them. The linguistics of whether the method is called a 'curriculum' (as in youth work), 'What Works' (as in criminal justice) or a 'new authoritarianism' more generally (Jeffs and Smith, 1996) does not detract from the fact that the government is intervening in youth policy in new ways that stigmatise young people, undermine professional discretion and exacerbate the problems that youth work and criminal justice services have always aimed in the past to alleviate.

To conclude, offending is not a problem of young people but a problem for young people. It is the manifestation of wider problems that can only be addressed adequately through constructive dialogue with young people to refocus youth policy and practice. The key principles in youth work of participation and empowerment are, regrettably, never likely to apply to criminal justice, but there is still hope that the punitive and restrictive agenda of *What Works* might yet be replaced by a more proactive and sympathetic response to young people's problems of adaptation or integration within society. However, without listening to young people's wishes, the theoretical underpinnings of any curriculum will continue to be misplaced and the resultant practice potentially divorced from the reality of young people's lives.

Notes

1   Although there are also shifts within youth justice (under 18 year olds in England and Wales; under 16 year olds in Scotland) towards a more curriculum-focused agenda, this article focuses on data relating to young people aged 16-25 who have been involved in the criminal justice (as opposed to youth justice) system in Scotland.

2   These data are taken from a study in 1997 of 65 probationers about their current probation orders (the *Probation Study*) and a study in 2001 of 40 current and previous offenders (who had also been on probation in the past) about why young people start

and stop offending (the *Desistance Study*). Both samples had had experience of probation under the new 'regime' of a *What Works* curriculum. The sample for the *Probation Study* ranged in age from 16 to 50, with 54 per cent aged 25 or under. In the *Desistance Study*, the age range was 18 to 30, with 73 per cent aged 25 or under.

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Being with Another as a Professional Practitioner
Uncovering the nature of working with individuals

David Collander-Brown

The heart of youth work is the relationship between worker and young person. This article considers in some detail ways in which this can be used. It refers to the manner in which the relationship is lived within everyday youth work settings in order to enable reflection on practice.

Keywords: counselling skills, youth work settings, relationships, 'being with' people.

In all the new, technical language about targets and outcomes, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that it is the relationship between young person and youth worker that is central to youth work. Although a practitioner may undertake a range of other tasks through which young peoples' development can be effected it is the relationships on which most of the work hinges. All direct actions or interventions depend on this relationship, which is about the connection between two people. 'Relationships develop only when the persons involved pay attention to one another' (Barry and Connolly, 1981: 47).

Effective work with individual young people is extremely skilled. It draws on a range of different roles and capacities and goes through different stages in which the relationship between young person and the worker is the central holding and unifying core. Building face to face skills in youth work cannot be done impersonally and the maintenance of professional awareness requires of the worker personal exploration and reflection with a trainer or supervisor. The title of this article, *Being with Another* points to the quality of process in this work. It is not simply a task *centred* way of working. The *uncovering*, is not a final description of method, but an examination and exploration of several interlocking processes.

Clearing the Ground

Building a structure is a useful metaphor for understanding work with individuals. The first job is to clear the ground before digging foundations. One important part of this clearing involves clarifying the distinction between working with individuals as a youth worker and working as a counsellor. Although there are many shared features, there are some important differences. There can be confusion because of the shared skills, language, ideas and comparisons used by counsellors and a range of other professionals, including social workers, involved in one-to-one work. Of course there are some aspects of counselling

which are directly relevant to youth work. For example youth workers do important work with individual young people in crisis, such as bereavement, the breakdown of a relationship, or expulsion from school. It is because of the youth work relationship that the affected young person will seek out or make use of an opportunity to talk with a youth worker. Here the idea of *first aid counselling* describes the focused thinking and listening which the worker uses to respond effectively. However, the phrase rather muddies the waters, it is important to distinguish between counselling and the use of counselling skills. An individual seeking counselling does so consciously. A young person talking with a youth worker who uses counselling skills may think of this as 'just having a chat.'

Further clarification is needed about individuals and groups. Counselling is an essentially private matter, which takes place uninterrupted behind a closed door. One to one youth work does not take place that often with isolated individuals, as young people tend to function in groups, it is important to recognise this factor. It is perfectly possible to work with an individual within a group, although in that case a complex mêlée of factors are interacting simultaneously. The group, as a setting for work with individuals offers a particular kind of context, which adds these factors and thus allows both rich alternatives and potency for individual work. But that is whole new chapter, at least, in itself.

Counselling usually occurs within predetermined time periods. In youth work with individuals, defined here as *being with another as a professional practitioner*, there is no set time span. I once did some quite intensive individual work with a cousin of a member who happened to be visiting and came to the club for one night. After an activity with intermittent conversation, we talked on for perhaps half an hour. Another time, similarly important conversation took place with a young woman who sat next to me during a long train journey. No contact was continued with either of these two young people. These conversations were important for quality, not quantity. It is probably not possible to define the youth work way of *being with* in terms of time scale, setting or even content. Rather the task of *being with* a young person is a way of working that is held in the mind of the practitioner. Human interaction is complex and subtle and in work with people effective encounters are underpinned by the underlying thinking and self-awareness of the professional practitioner.

'Being with' Situations

Successful work depends a great deal upon preparation. To begin to dig the foundations of successful work it is necessary to consider attitudes and understandings that underpin *being with* a young person. The practitioner at work keeps an eye out for needs, for patterns and for opportunities. For example a project worker may notice in the body language of Jason as he comes into the project, that he seems to act differently from usual. His shoulders are hunched, he hardly speaks and his eyes do not meet hers. Jason may be more isolated and quieter in a group. These are clues to his state of mind. His body language may be 'speaking' something that cannot at present be put into words. The worker's awareness has been alerted. Awareness is the central capacity in 'keeping an eye out.' It is from this that the reflective practitioner operates. It underpins the process of *being with* a young person.

Concern with the healthy growth and development of individual young people is just one aspect of youth work. The youth worker also directs attention to groups, neighbourhoods and communities and towards families. It is within these contexts that something about the behaviour of an individual can jump out, can attract the worker's attention. Growth and development may not be consciously on youth workers' minds as they seek to involve young people in enjoyable activities and interactions. For example, a youth worker might be working with a group who are going to play a game. In working out who will be on whose team, suddenly deeply held feelings emerge. A recently joined member, Aaron, begins to express himself violently at the idea of not being with another young person as teams are chosen. In such a situation the reflective practitioner will look for a way to deal with this question and the conflict that could ensue. The worker notes the nature of the strong feelings that have shown themselves to be a part of Aaron and will immediately, or subsequently reflect upon this and add to it other evidence about Aaron. This leads to greater awareness of Aaron in other situations. The worker is then likely to begin *to be with* Aaron in different way. It is often, at least to begin with, that this kind of worker awareness springs from an issue or problem. The young person says something or acts in such a way as to alert the practitioner. Worker focus is then intensified, the quality of attention goes up a gear or two. The practitioner becomes differently conscious of *being with* this young person.

Awareness is the starting point for the work of *being with* a young person and given this, the worker will then keep an eye out, attending to Jason or to Aaron with this different level of consciousness. But this *being with* is also about hunches and not knowing. In each example the workers do not know what is happening for Jason or for Aaron. They simply noticed something different, were surprised and wondered what might have effected the young peoples' moods and behaviour. The awareness of the workers had alerted them to something un-named that needed a different level of attention.

Donald Schön, in his seminal work on reflective practice, captures this experience of wondering, in his writing about the professional practitioner in action.

> *The Practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation he finds uncertain or unique.* (Schön, 1983: 68)

Here we have the starting point for this process of *being with another* as professional practitioner: the awareness and often confusion, puzzlement, surprise and uncertainty, which goes with the question, 'What is happening here with this young person?' Once the practitioner's awareness is aroused, further questions and factors begin to emerge. In the situation of Jason or Aaron, for example, the practitioner will seek to make sense of the situation in terms of past behaviour and available information. The information may not be clear. It may be just a clue, a whisper. Perhaps some half conversation over-heard about the father being in prison again. Perhaps there have been rumours about some changes in the group he hangs around with. Such information or clues do not amount to explanations; they are just *possible* connections, valuable nuggets to be put away, perhaps of no use on this occasion, but maybe of value later.

Information and fact are essential for the worker to proceed and begin to fill the knowledge

void. Surprise, puzzlement, confusion and uncertainty are feelings. These feelings are closely associated with lack of knowledge but they are still feelings. As such they may have other associated emotional links and meanings for the practitioner and thus affect the worker's responses. It is therefore vital to attempt to make some sense of the complex area of understanding, managing and using feelings in work with individuals.

To return to the example; if it is unusual for Jason to come into the project looking as he does it is likely that something has happened. The natural tendency is to want to know what has happened. However, one of the fundamental principals of *being with* another person is that the focus of attention must be primarily on *the experience* of the person, not on what happened. The aware practitioner is asking, 'What have Aaron or Jason made of their experiences?' 'What is its meaning to them?' Losing sight of this principal is often the cause of failure in the capacity to work with an individual. If Aaron is new to the worker and the project there is no previous pattern to build on. Is this normal behaviour for him in a group or has something happened? The practitioner begins to ask all sorts of questions about the person and the situation.

Choosing A Role

Having awareness raised of Jason or Aaron or any particular young person, does not mean that the youth worker will choose to do anything, or anything at that time. Whether or not to act or intervene, the nature of intervention and its timing, are choices to be made. Having made the choice, the next skill put to use is that of choosing a role. This involves recognising which roles are open to the worker, which is most appropriate and how it might be expressed. For example, in the context of the peer group or in the course of an activity, it may be inappropriate to make a comment or ask a question. The youth worker must understand the significance of the group context. It may be the young person's body language communicates 'do not come near me.' It may be that the worker has other matters to attend to and becomes aware of the young person only in passing. But given that the professional practitioner is concerned about what is happening for an individual, it is important to adopt a role and express the concern effectively.

The question of role concerns the nature of *being with* for the worker in different situations. For example what role is the worker in when stationed behind the coffee bar? Then when a young person stays there and wants to talk does the role change? What role do they adopt when someone turns up out of opening hours, or approaches the worker in the street during off duty time without indicating why they have sought the contact? What role should the worker adopt in response to significant changes in the behaviour of individual young people, or when someone comes into the youth office in tears? What happens to workers when for some reason they find themselves focused on an individual with a range of questions about this young person emerging? What is their role in trying to respond in these different situations?

What other personal factors come into this mix? A particular worker might encourage or resist the closer contact involved in working one to one. This might depend on what the worker feels about the young person in question or on how they see their role. Here we

inevitably enter the territory of self-awareness. The youth worker's own thinking, their frames of reference, their 'state of mind,' and their feelings, are all interlocking factors in consciously choosing a role. The reflective practitioner will need to develop awareness of these factors and use their understanding appropriately to deal effectively with the situation of the young person.

External factors also impinge on role choices. There may, for example, be several other important tasks, such as finishing an important report, which the worker must prioritise, rather than give time at that moment to a young person. The worker might be 'off duty' with no formal responsibility. Individual crises for young people can emerge at any time and judgments have to be made and responses given in a very short time. It is therefore essential that workers know that they have a choice and the immediate choice is their own. Here we bring the question of task as well as choosing an appropriate role. These questions become, with practice, a conscious professional action. This is all part of *reflective practice*.

Some situations are pressing and there is little time to explore and reflect upon role possibilities. For example, Tina rushes in in floods of tears, as the worker is about to leave the centre for the Juvenile Court to act as a character witness for Sam, a club member for several years. Tina explains that her mother, who used to be a part-time worker in the club, is about to walk out and leave her father. Tina is devastated and has not gone to school trying to patch things up. Her younger brother, aged 9, is missing having walked out of the house two hours earlier soon after the bombshell hit the family. Clearly both Sam and Tina (not to mention her young brother) are important. The worker wants to respond to both. It may not seem that the question about role is very relevant here, in this emotional pressure house. But it is for this very reason, when feelings are running high, that the question about task and the role of worker and particularly the worker as manager comes in so useful. Because issues of task and role are essentially about management the worker needs to make use of their self-management skills to see their way within this pressure.

The question the self-manager asks here is about what is important, what is urgent and what is infused with the fog of strong feelings. Strong feelings tend to confuse. They can seem to energise and provoke an imperative to rush about and try to solve problems. But in the example, both situations are important. Though there may be an urgency about Tina's brother it is unlikely that anybody can change the parents' relationship quickly. Dealing with that will need to take its course with perhaps some support, or pointers to other forms of support, in the next few days. Tina, with recognition and feedback about how distressing this is, may best be employed looking for her brother. They are going to need each other. There may also be some question about contact with the school, depending on Tina's relationship with the staff there. But this can wait. The situation with Tina then, though just as important as that of Sam, can be seen as not urgent, whereas talking on behalf of Sam in the Juvenile Court will not wait. That is urgent.

In the middle of competing demands and emotional pressure it is important that the practitioner can *manage both the self and the situation*. So the questions, 'What role am I in here?' and 'What is my task?' help the professional practitioner to be in the right place at the right time mentally and emotionally as well as physically. Had the Juvenile Court visit not been a pressing task and the worker was just doing some filing, Tina's visit would still have

prompted a question about role, but the options for *being with* Tina and the immediate responses would have been different.

Finding the Setting

It is not always possible for youth workers to access an appropriate quiet room for uninterrupted one-to-one work. It is one of the skills of youth work to consider and adapt settings and to consider the possibilities for providing a setting which offers safety and where the focus is on the young person. The closed door, intensive focused setting may be, in any case, too much for some young people, so a more informal ordinary space may be appropriate. These are matters both of judgement and of just checking with the young person, involving them in the process.

Finding the setting, the place for conversation, is in one sense a mutual experience, a task that worker and young person achieve together. The suggestion 'Lets go in here?' or 'Shall we go for a walk and talk?' if taken up, is already a beginning. Getting a coat, a few moments wait, perhaps some agreement about where exactly to go and for how long are all small joint connections, small markers of *being with* each other. For a counsellor the client is asking for counselling, so something is already happening. For the youth worker this is less likely to be the case. Their individual work starts further back. But it remains the case that in order to focus attention on the developing youth work relationship, finding a confidential space where the conversation cannot be overheard is often essential. Making space might mean walking together around the streets, or going into a place with lots of people, like a café or shopping centre.

Building a Working Alliance

With these foundations in place it is possible to begin the process of constructing the one-to-one relationship. This task, as in physical building, has many interlocking stages and elements. Rapport is being built throughout the process of finding an appropriate setting and choosing a role. The development of rapport which involves mutual trust and emotional affinity is key to the working relationship.

In most cases the worker will be known to the young person. However, as illustrated in the case of Aaron, this is not always the case. It is possible to establish in a very short time, what is known within counselling as a *working alliance*. This *working alliance* is the essential ingredient in effective one to one working, but the time it takes to establish can vary greatly. It is not the same thing as rapport, although it is closely linked. Rapport can be established with someone at a party, but that does not imply a *working alliance*. It is likely that in the case of Tina, who arrives in distress and tears to seek out the worker, that the working alliance in those initial moments is easily and quickly established. With Aaron and with Jason this will take longer. The *working alliance* means that there is an implicit acceptance of and relaxation of defences, an implicit acknowledgement that, at least for the moment and in this situation, worker and young person are going to work together, in different roles towards something that will support the young person. This is rarely explicit: it just happens

that the relationship reaches that stage.

Although at one level 'it just happens', at another building a *working alliance* may take considerable time, effort and skill by the worker. The principle is not related to one of objective time, but to the possibility of a young person accepting the physical safety and emotional security of the situation. This highlights what might be called 'the moment' which is difficult to define or predict because it relates to the inner world of any given individual: people become ready to talk when they are ready. There is some inner process or order which might be understood through the ancient Greek idea, which is also important in Christian biblical theology (see John 1: 1-12), of logos time, the cosmic order, 'when things are ready' (Boardman et al, 1992). Logos time is distinct from chronos time, or clock time. Without diverting into philosophy or religion this explains a coming together of factors which both connects the inner and outer worlds and is otherwise difficult to catch. Perhaps the nearest contemporary concept is synchronicity.

Once worker and young person are together in a setting that is as appropriate as it is likely to get, what happens next? How does the practitioner begin? There is a sense in which the process has already begun. But the 'how do I begin?' question still remains. A straight question – 'Why are you in a mood, Jason?'- will ensure he closes down even further. It is, of course, best that young people are able to speak for themselves what is going on for them, to tell their story. So the beginning is most often finding ways for the young person to give voice to their experience. Open questions are most often used in this work, though there are occasions when 'closed questions' are likely to be more appropriate.

As in the case of Jason or with Aaron the first step is 'hearing' the unspoken communication. Both of them are making it clear that something is not right for them. But they are not able to say so in words, they are 'saying' it in their actions. Responsiveness to this communication is most often in signalling understanding by using the same language to make a bridge with the medium of the story. This is often body language. The hunched shoulders, the head down and air of depression can be recognised ('heard') as a way of saying 'I am not at all happy, something is wrong.' But how to respond? The reason, that asking Jason the straight question – *why are you in a mood?* – closes him down, is because though this question seems to be about Jason it actually starts with the need of the questioner to know the answer. So the question is not really about Jason, it is to satisfy the questioner's curiosity. What is more is that it is likely that Jason will experience such a question as an accusation. Why are you in a mood? – sounds as if he should not be in a mood. The question certainly does not start where Jason is. In working with an individual to develop a working alliance, to begin to build rapport, the key is to start with the other. However, Jason may not know why he feels like he does, he may not even realise very fully how he actually feels; or certainly may not be able to put his feeling into words.

The starting point is not therefore to find why Jason looks as he does, that may emerge later. The initial steps are taken to open up a channel of communication. A verbal communication that starts with where Jason is might say 'You're looking pretty fed-up, Jason.' But this requires Jason to recognise, in words, how he feels. So an alternative is to communicate in the language of the body. An approach that bypasses verbal communication uses the same 'language,' adopts the same posture as Jason, or aspects of

it. This is called *mirroring*. Here the worker's body *matches* or *mirrors* that of Jason. Body language takes a different route to the brain than verbal language and is much quicker. It is most often unconscious, bypassing the conscious mind. So this non-verbal communication would be 'heard' by Jason instantly. Words could follow – 'feeling really fed-up is horrible.' It often makes more of a bridge to make a comment than to ask a question, but the two might be combined in the form of a statement that also can be taken as a question.

What makes this communication is not only what the worker does, but also the response of the young person. This again may be in the language of the body – a slight relaxation or opening up of the shoulders, for example, or raising of the head. Observation is essential to try to discern the language and the meaning of response. The practitioner's own response is then modified in the light of this. The exchange, the communication begins to be established.

There is no correct right way to achieve this personal connection between two people. It is part of the particular relationship. There are many different possibilities, a considerable subtlety, and a unique quality to each relationship. Each finds their own way to express this connection. But what is common is that these steps lead towards building *the working alliance* which is a particular kind of relationship. Without the sense of joining together to work at something any subsequent wise words are of no avail. The practitioner is not necessarily trying to find anything out, at this stage. Though it is likely that all sorts of initial information will be forthcoming, this is not the focus.

In the process or writing this article, I happened, in the course of my day job, to have an example of developing a working alliance. P, who is 16, had come in for an individual session saying that she could not do her work at school because she, as eldest, had to look after 5 siblings, her mother M was always criticising her and they had arguments. P told me that she needed to get out of the flat and have a place of her own in order to continue her school work. Finding another room or flat, without any financial backing, was of course neither easy, nor necessarily desirable. The first step, it seemed to me, was to work with mother and daughter about their relationship. My aim was to help her to function as a daughter, as a student, as a reasonable elder sibling and as a 16 year old young woman, in the context of this family. In my subsequent home visit to meet with her mother, the remainder of the family were present. M had to empty their main room of the children and her partner, not P's father. Though I had the early stages of a working alliance with P, I had to begin my relationship with M as a male stranger in her family room and, as far as she was concerned, from the point of view of a hostile daughter who was effectively saying what a bad mother she was. This was the setting and the 'being with' situation in which I found myself. My role was at least partially set, as the bearer of bad news. The starting point for my relationship with this woman was the message that her eldest daughter felt she was not being a supportive and proper mother. It seemed difficult not to provoke in M hostility and denial or even collapse. How on earth might I to begin to establish a *working alliance* with this woman whom I had just met and whose mothering my very presence was criticising, at least implicitly?

Realising this I started by thinking about what this woman's experience might be. Her role in life for 16 years had been as a mother, with six children altogether. Her eldest was turning

out to be stubborn in finding her own way in life. She was also going through adolescence. I approached the building of rapport and of a working alliance initially by speaking with admiration of M's considerable abilities and work in raising six children. But I could not avoid the main purpose of my visit for long. So I began by stating that what I was here to say may be difficult, it was not good news. I then outlined the facts of her daughter's visit to talk to me. I went on to try to add some meaning to this in terms of the difficult thoughts and feeling her mother must be having, that struggles at adolescence though seeming so intense and fraught are actually normal. This quite complex communication was made more difficult by the fact that English was clearly not M's first language. I also said that I would guess that she M would not see things in the way that P did, but would have her own way of experiencing what was happening between them. I encouraged M to interrupt me and express her feelings and thoughts. As the process developed I watched carefully for signs of tensing up or of softening on her face and in her body. What happened when I spoke of her daughter, when I spoke of how I imagined M's position, or when I spoke generally of adolescence and its effects on M? I watched how she responded as well as listened and reflected back, in précis form, what she said. Where I sensed there was tension or resistance I often gave voice to it. 'I imagine you feel hurt and perhaps angry that your daughter both feels these things and what is more speaks to me, a stranger, of you in this way?' It was this last part, the speaking to someone else of family matters, which allowed M's face and shoulders to relax the most. As it emerged later it was the sense of shame and the associated confusion and anger, which were so significant to M. Allowing this hostility towards me to be brought out into the open gave permission for M to agree and put something of these feeling in her own words and we did establish the early stages of a working alliance. This is working with resistance, which we will unpick a bit later. But from this as an example, the allowing and indeed encouraging the hostile feelings, uses the idea of supporting the resistance.

Returning to the case of Aaron or Jason, here it is even more unlikely that either is able to communicate in words. It is unlikely that either would be able to put into words how they felt; except perhaps as a verbal attack on anyone who asked! So how might a worker match or mirror someone like Aaron or Jason? And do so without words? There is a story from the early 1960s of the club leader at the Mayflower Centre, a pioneering settlement in the East End of London. On one occasion entering the snooker room the worker came across a very angry young man cursing and hurling a snooker ball through a window. With hardly a pause the worker picked up another snooker ball and similarly hurled it through the window, shaking his fist and saying 'sometimes I get so angry I cannot find words.' Here was mirroring to a surprisingly high degree. But apparently communication between them was established. Words were then found and soon after the young man was able to express his anger and pain through tears (Burton, G.1967). This is not to suggest that workers should throw snooker balls through windows but the story illustrates rather dramatically the process of beginning to build a working alliance and also the process of *matching*. It is worth noting in passing that the worker had instantly decided on his role. The title of the book in which the story is told *People Matter More than Things* does rather indicate where his priorities lay. He was not going to be the club manager protecting the building. His role was as worker with this young man. The drama had suddenly created a setting. With this, his role and therefore his task, was clear. He went on match the young person in order to build an empathetic bridge, this working alliance. Here it is possible to see how workers

might build a working alliance with a resistant and an aggressive young person.

It was not snooker balls, but in fact I did have occasion to throw milk crates about. S was a young man who came each week to the project at which I worked as part of a group. He was sometimes lively and involved and other times seemed quite quiet and sullen. On this occasion he displayed considerable aggression. S did not want to do what the group was doing and went outside and kicked walls to begin with followed by anything he could see. Then he picked up the plastic milk crates we used for games and started to hurl them at windows. Fortunately the design of the building had included toughened glass, so they bounced off. But this irritated him further and he tried to throw them harder and looked around for other implements. I went out to him, complimenting him on his strength and accuracy. To have tried to stop him would clearly have been counter productive. I then became the target of the milk crates. They were mostly dodgeable, and sometimes catchable (though if I did not catch cleanly it hurt!) and I began by throwing them back. But I did not want to hurt him, as S clearly in those minutes had wanted to hurt me, and my efforts turned out to be rather half-hearted. It was not possible, it seemed, to turn this into a game, which was my first idea. I then realised that it was not a game for S. It was expressing something associated with hurt and damage that was inside him and which had no other voice. So I changed to hurling milk crates myself, at walls and at structures that were not going to suffer. Something then began to alter. Looking back after the event I realised it was as if we were communicating about angry feelings. S's body posture changed, he tossed his last milk crate over the wall and said, 'I'll play the game now.'

Human beings want deep connection with others, to be listened to and understood. So building rapport generally comes naturally and begins as undivided and thoughtful attention is given to another. What we have explored above are exceptional experiences. The point is that the professional practitioner in the process of beginning to be with another person notices the gradual establishment of rapport. However, rapport can break down. Such things as loss of confidentiality or breaking through boundaries can suddenly knock away the carefully built rapport. Careful attention is needed for this to work over time.

Resources – 1. Using theory

To respond to the sudden aggressive demands of someone like Aaron, the silent powerful communications of Jason, the acting out of S, or the deep feelings of P and M, practitioners need to draw on deeper wells of resource. There are two I will comment on here. One is the well of theory the other of our own emotional life. There are several areas of theory that are useful. For example, theories of adolescent development can be useful. The normalisation and contextualisation of the developmental process in adolescence helped me support M in her puzzlement of what was happening to her daughter (Raynor, 1986). However, one of the most significant theories for one to one work concerns the question of *resistance*.

Resistance is a controversial psychoanalytic concept derived from Freud's early work on the unconscious mind. From the idea of resistance different structures of the mental processes have been formulated and different forms of therapy used. The psychoanalytic method Freud developed between the 1890s and 1930s was of an unconscious life expressed

through behaviour and dreams (Freud,1900). His method was to interpret unconscious behaviour in order to bring it to consciousness. Resistance described the process blocking this conscious psychological awareness. Freud later recognised that this very process of resistance 'was itself a means of reaching the repressed and unveiling the secret of the neurosis' (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973 :395) Others have subsequently taken this notion further. The gestalt ideas developed in 1960 by Fritz Perls suggest that resistance can be used because it tells a story. 'You know you're getting somewhere when resistance comes up!' This is an essential element in psychosynthesis. In *The Unfolding Self*, Brown (1983:87) suggests that, 'Resistance only erupts when something is about to happen.' The idea expressed in that title, that there is a self which is trying to find expression, is essentially hopeful. However, the developmental movement involves change. It is necessary to move from the present and often comfortable position to a new, uncertain and perhaps uncomfortable emotional or psychological place. The psyche, like the body being ejected from a comfortable chair, does not want to move and change, so it resists.

> As we move towards a new paradigm of understanding about ourselves and our world, our old beliefs are challenged. They come to the forefront of our awareness in conflicting thoughts, emotions and physical responses resisting new truths (Brown, 1983:87)

This resistance is not a sign of a coming battle for supremacy but a striving for understanding and cooperation.

> Somehow (our) resistance must be acknowledged as of value and included in our change. The old belief needs to be embraced within the new paradigm, for they hold truth (for us) as well. Paradigm shift means movement towards an expanded belief system, not the substitution of one belief for another (Brown, 1983:88).

In the example of S hurling the milk crates, I was a long way from understanding everything that was going on for S or what was going on between us, but I did manage to understand his 'language' sufficiently to respond in the same language – hurling things with real aggression as a mean of communicating. It both gave permission for his feelings of rage and matched or mirrored them. So resistance needs to be acknowledged, its role given its value. It is often possible in some way to give the resistance its own voice, its own expression. Working with resistance in this way also supports the development of the working alliance.

A colleague of mine adapts this principle in his work with groups. One example expressed briefly illustrates this approach. When a game of football threatened to get completely out of hand because the rules were constantly being broken he began to take it much further, pushing people over and picking up the ball. When the group complained he stopped, looked shocked and hurt and said, 'Oh, I am sorry I thought, because of so and so and so and so, we were not obeying the rules. Are we going to play to rules or not?' They continued to play this way, without rules, for a while till it ceased to be fun. The group then worked together to agree some rules. This is skilled work with a group but it draws on the theory of supporting the resistance relevant in work with individuals.

Resources – 2. Understanding and using feelings

The other deep well of resource in this process of *being with another* is the worker's feelings or emotions. There are two fundamentals about the inner life of feelings. Firstly, feelings are different from thoughts and secondly, people have feelings about everything. In one-to-one youth work, the worker's feelings are put to use, almost entirely, in an indirect way. Principled workers only very rarely speak of their own feelings because much of the exchange is explicitly or implicitly about the feelings of the other. These are complex enough. Introducing the worker's feelings would make the task almost impossible.

In building a working alliance workers begin to understand *the story* of the other. As a child when read or told a story I remember the blank anticipation. I had no idea what was coming and my mind was free and waiting. It was as if I made or found the *space in my mind* for what was to come. This image, of *making a space in the mind*, illustrates what happens next in the process of *being with another* as a professional practitioner. Here the worker tries to allow the outer events and the inner experiences, the story to unfold. Each person has their own unique story comprising both life events of our lives and the way the individual experiences and attempts to make sense of those events over the life course. *Being with* someone, involves gradually gathering up aspects of this combination of events and understandings so the sense of their uniqueness begins to unfold. No-one ever fully understands what it is like to be another person.

One to one work involves engaging with another. We can use an engineering image. When a cogwheel engages with another cog exactly the right space has been engineered to accept the cog so it can 'fit' together, move it on and do its work. Something similar happens in the *being with another* in one to one working. There is a space in the mind of the worker that is not filled up with the anticipated issues, with the required knowledge and the right answers. The worker does not know what the young person will want to talk about. Of course, from previous knowledge of the young person or their situation, the worker may have a very good guess at the topic. But this is a guess. The worker does not know how the young person wants to tell their story or what particular part is of concern to them at that moment. The worker's position of 'not knowing' is very important. In fact it is essential for the encounter that the worker thinks of this as new territory. The space in the mind of the worker is for both the facts of the situation and the emotions. The facts and the feelings inter-relate and sometimes blend together but they need to be understood, at least by the practitioner, as distinct elements. In following the story it needs to make sense, to add up; or at least to begin to do so. Where it does not it is generally the case that feelings are caught up in it all somewhere. The practitioner needs to receive the sometimes strong and often contradictory feelings that the young person has about the situation they are describing.

Not only does 'space in the mind' allow the story and the feelings about events to be heard and taken in, it also allows for some response of recognition to be made. The young person has found their voice, has been able to begin at least to say what is going on for them, they need to experience having been heard. The experience of someone really listening to you and conveying that they understand is very powerful. Just this experience can in itself lead to change, without any further work, but even if that is not the case, the significance of this

part of the process is that the young person has the experience of feeling understood so far. Counselling skills training calls this process 'summarising' or 'reflecting back' the outlines or a paraphrase of the main point. Simply repeating key phrases or words does the trick. With skill, offering a metaphor or an image of what has been said can add further to the process.

The Pressure to Act

But it is often not just 'the story'. There is an accompanying demand for action or change. When P came to me originally hard on the heels of her explanation of the conflict with her mother was the urgency to find her somewhere else to live. In the situation with Aaron and his disruptive behaviour and with S and his clear desire to damage something there is, particularly on a worker with wider responsibilities, a powerful pressure to act, to do something, to stop things getting worse, to ensure discipline is maintained. In some frames of reference it would be highly desirable to 'jump on things quickly' in order to prevent problems escalating. This view is of course a valid one. Practitioners do have responsibilities to the whole – including other club members, the programme, other workers, the building and equipment. Within the one to one situation the pressure to act may seem overwhelming and irresistible. I felt I had to do something about S, to stop him smashing things. Yet I could also see how desperately unhappy he was. This sense of something being wrong is true of all the above examples and the natural response is to try to make things better, to take away painful, confused, hostile or angry feelings. Hence the pressure to act. This implicates that other well of resource – the worker's own feelings.

Self-awareness involves managing personal feelings. Workers must recognise those internal feelings that bring 'pressure to act'. Something happens which I call 'the DSN moment!' That *do something now* state of mind which seems to compels action to change the situation immediately. DSN moments often are accompanied with waves of strong feelings. Recognition of the DSN moment is central to not allowing it to take over. It was an almost overwhelming feeling that I wanted to do something now and stop S from his aggressive acts and attempts at wanton vandalism. Had I tried to stop him by opposing with equal force (even if I could have found it from somewhere) who knows what further aggression and violence might have been unleashed and damage caused to the building, to myself and in fact most importantly to S. But I just glimpsed in time something of the desperate pain and anger that S was expressing through his actions. As a result my DSN moment could be delayed for a few moments and my strong feelings put on one side for the time being. In its place arrived a more tentative feeling of my way forward in trying to connect with where S was in his emotional state.

Using Supervision

There are very mixed experiences of supervision both in the youth service and throughout the helping professions. Good 'non-managerial' supervision, hung around reflective practice, is crucial to this work. Experienced practitioners still need help for example in standing back from all that is happening, in managing their own feelings, in comparing one dominating state of mind to other states which have been lost sight of, to help the

practitioner recognise the bigger picture. Without such support in reflecting on their practice not only is much potentially missed, but the work, in this case with an individual, can become, generally for the best of intentions, actually dangerous.

In Conclusion

Because learning about *being with* another as a professional practitioner is necessarily live and interactive, a written piece largely speaks to areas of attitudes, of knowledge and of understanding. It cannot hone skills. Other forms of training are required to develop skills and bring together knowledge and understanding with attitudes and skills.

This article has explored a particular part of professional practice. Its purpose is about learning and support, about developing awareness and about growth and development and relationships. This part of the whole process can usefully be defined as 'gathering their story.' It is difficult enough for workers to understand themselves, but nevertheless they must allow themselves to have *space in their mind* to gain a working understanding of someone else in relation to particular issues and at particular times. It is necessary to understand that the story is always unfolding, with always another chapter to look forward to. So workers should approach this gathering of the young person's story and in fact, the whole process of being with another, with a kind of awe and anticipation. In writing about *being with* another in inter-faith exploration, John V. Taylor, a former missionary and Bishop expresses the place of the listener in this way.

> *And so we enter dialogue with the humblest kind of curiosity in which expectancy and reverence and dread all have their place.* (Taylor, 1971:8)

Humility, curiosity, expectancy, reverence and dread are sound attitudes with which to approach the process of *being with* another. Interestingly Taylor, from an utterly different background and experience, comes up with a similar list to Donald Schön to whom I referred at the beginning. Though 'dread' may seem a little extreme, except maybe in a case of bereavement, for example, if workers see themselves as gathering another's story in working with an individual young person with humble curiosity, expectancy and reverence they will not go far wrong. Taylor points to a deeper responsibility as a listener to another story and way of seeing the world. He emphasis the significance and weight of responsibility of this work through this feeling of dread as we allow another's way of seeing their experience to enter into us.

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'Worth their Weight in Gold'
The Views of Community Youth Work Graduates in Northern Ireland on their chosen career

Ken Harland, Clare Harvey, Tony Morgan and Sam McCready

This article is based on the results of an investigation into the views of 264 Community Youth Work graduates throughout Northern Ireland from 1972 – 2001. The findings from this regional study provide important and useful insights into the Community Youth Work profession. This paper analyses the findings under the following separate but interrelated areas; Issues associated directly with career such as, fixed or permanent posts, self-image, reasons for entering or leaving the profession, 'variety' within the profession, problems with unsociable hours, curriculum and team work. The paper also highlights concerns around retention, management, gender and religious balance and the sustainability of projects due to short term funding trends and the volatile political situation.

Keywords: youth work, career, professional training, recruitment, retention, short-term funding

Youth Work in Northern Ireland

Within Northern Ireland there are just over 517,000 young people that fall within the Youth Service age range of 4 -25 years. The Northern Ireland youth population is the youngest in the UK, with those under 25 years of age representing 36% of the population. A reasonable starting point for our policy framework is the Education and Libraries Order (NI) 1986, and the Youth Service (NI) Order 1989 (succeeding the Recreation and Youth Service Order (NI) 1973), as the main statutory 'legal' provisions for the 'Youth Service', although there has been a Statutory Youth Service since 1973. *A Model for Effective Practice* (1987) has been revised and re-launched in 2003.[1]

Jeffs and Smith (1990) point out, '...in Northern Ireland policies such as centralised curriculum and contract bidding were initially testbedded by the Department of Education.' The Department of Education, which is responsible for the Youth Service in Northern Ireland has recently issued a *Draft Strategy Consultation Document* (July 2004) which is another important milestone in the development of youth work. However it should be noted that in Northern Ireland the local District or County Councils have no direct responsibility for youth work as this falls to five Education and Library Boards.

Another significant policy development in Northern Ireland is the recently launched draft

10-year strategy for Children and Young People (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister 2004) that includes ideas such as proposals to turn schools into out-of-hours multi-agency centres similar to England's extended schools policy. Other considerations include the setting up of an adolescent health service as well as a draft action around awareness raising on young people's rights. Inevitably in such documents you will not find funding commitments, although, importantly, the strategy was developed with a commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child's principles of provision, protection and participation.

Young people In Northern Ireland have grown up in a divided society that has significantly impacted on choice and opportunity. Many parts of this society, both urban and rural, are polarised and life is often characterised by sectarian hatred and suspicion which is dogged by on-going community strife. There have been ceasefires and peacefires, a *Belfast Agreement* (1998) which launched a thousand reviews including, for example, *A Review of the Criminal Justice System* (2001) and by far the most significant a *Review of Public Administration* that is due to be published early in 2005. We are now well into the EU *Peace II* funding (1999) which followed *Peace I* (1994). This European Union (EU) Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Regions of Ireland is *designed to embed the peace process at all levels*. The programme addresses the economic and social issues in the specific context of Northern Ireland's transition to a more peaceful and stable society. The implications for Community Youth York have been spectacular in that money has poured into areas in all shapes and forms. One outcome of this has been the emergence of three distinct but separate sectors in Northern Ireland, i.e. the statutory sector, a vibrant voluntary sector and a growing community sector. Crucially however, the influx of short-term funding has created an industry that cannot be sustained and a *funding precipice* is in view as the end of *Peace II* approaches. Moreover, tension is evident between the statutory providers and many of the voluntary and community groups who have filled a gap not normally dealt with by the Statutory Youth Service.

Background to the Research

In 1991 the University of Ulster published a report which mapped the career paths of over 250 individuals who had attained a professional Community Youth Work qualification at the University between 1974-1989 (McCready and Warm, 1991). The report was valuable not only in shaping professional Youth and Community Work training, but also in providing empirical evidence on a range of human resource and policy issues within the Community Youth Work sector.

A decade later, the Youth Work Training Board and the Department of Education commissioned the University of Ulster to conduct a similar study, this time aiming to map the career paths of individuals from Northern Ireland who had graduated in Community Youth Work between 1972 and 2001. The study was widened to include those from Northern Ireland who had graduated not only from the University of Ulster, but also from other universities and colleges throughout the UK and Ireland. The focus of the study was also broadened to collect qualitative data on perspectives of Community Youth Workers on their own profession.

Rationale for the Research

The research brief was based on the fact that employers in the field of Community Youth Work had increasingly expressed concern through the Course's Consultative Group (an advisory body to the University on the training needs of the Youth Work profession) that advertised posts were attracting few responses from qualified workers. The suggestion was that some qualified Community Youth Workers were not seeking employment within the sector or indeed may be leaving the sector. With a steady flow of graduates leaving the University there were reasons to believe that job opportunities outside *traditional* employment were proving more attractive. There was also anecdotal evidence that youth workers were expressing dissatisfaction with terms and conditions of employment and that there were murmurings of discontent about some employer's casual adherence to JNC.

Whilst employers identified a concern around recruitment, and in some cases retention of youth workers, the Community Youth Work team at the University were training an average of 40-50 new graduates per annum.

The challenge was therefore not only to look at the current career paths of Community Youth Workers but also to deduce from their comments other less obvious reasons for this inferred disillusionment with joining a profession. Furthermore it was deemed important to collate ideas and suggestions from practitioners in regard to enhancing the profession and reducing dissatisfaction.

The Sample

The target population for the research was primarily individuals from Northern Ireland who had graduated from professional training courses at the Ulster Polytechnic (now the University of Ulster). The population extended to those from Northern Ireland who had gained a professional qualification elsewhere. These included qualifications gained at Manchester Metropolitan; Westhill College, Birmingham; St. Martin's, Lancaster; Jordanhill Campus, Strathclyde, Glasgow; St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth; St. Patrick's College, Maynooth; Northern College, Dundee; North East Wales Institute, Wrexham and Moray House, Edinburgh. The target population covered all those who had qualified between 1972 and 2001.

Gathering contact addresses for as many ex-students as possible was a formidable challenge given that some potential respondents had graduated up to 30 years previously. However extensive phone calls and postal enquiries achieved a list of 540 individuals each of whom was sent a postal questionnaire. This was deemed the most suitable method of data collection given the geographic dispersal of former graduates. The self-completion questionnaire approach also offered anonymity for the respondent. In total 264 respondents returned the questionnaires providing a 49% representative sample.

Research Findings: Discussion and Analysis

The research questionnaire was comprehensive and involved a large number of respondents

representative of Community Youth Work either in the statutory or voluntary/community sector. Most of the questions were closed, for statistical analysis, although there were a few open-ended questions to allow for comments. The questionnaire was designed to elucidate information under the following six headings and related sub-headings; Issues associated with Community Youth Work as a Career Path; Management Issues; Training; Ideological Shift; the Influence of External Forces; and lastly Future Trends.

Issues associated with Community Youth Work as a career path

Self-image

Being a Community Youth Worker was thought to be a profession with a *'noble calling'* and what Davies (1999) refers to as a Service underpinned by a *'conception of charity as the proper and only framework for responding to those regarded as in need.'* But, conversely, there were comments that gave the impression that the professional self-image was not always as positive as the language of vocation implies. There were many respondents who believed that Community Youth Workers themselves have an important role to play in acquiring the professional recognition and respect they desire.

Respondents perceived that youth work was not always viewed as a serious profession when set alongside social work or teaching for example. This perception has continually dogged youth workers and is steeped in its history. For Jeffs and Smith (1987;1990) the reason Youth and Community Work has not emerged as a distinct profession is due to the failure of education and training institutions *'...to develop a strong theoretical base which would provide the occupation with a commonly understood identity and purpose.'* The debate goes back to the 1970s when Westacott (1976) identified a *'...growth, slow, haphazard and apparently without direction... (and a) difficulty in youth workers getting themselves recognised.'* This period saw a campaign by youth workers to get their professional status recognised along with a proper career structure and pay. Davies (1999) refers to the *'...blurring of the Service's identity'* during the 1970s. For Holmes (1981) there was a split within the workforce at this time that could be interpreted as *'... a debilitating identity crisis for the Service.'* While investigating the nature of youth work in Northern Ireland, Harland, Morgan and Muldoon (2005)[2] found that many full-time youth workers had difficulty with articulating youth work beyond relationship building and personal development. It could be argued that the limited perception of youth work as a profession may be a manifestation of the lack of a comprehensive professional body of knowledge that usually accompanies professionalism.

Irrespective of self-image it is significant that in regard to career paths over 75% of the sample saw themselves staying within Community Youth Work and only 6% expressed a desire to leave and move into an unrelated field.

Diversity within the profession

Since the Warm and McCready (1991) study which indicated that qualified workers were seeking and gaining employment in non-traditional youth work agencies, there has been

a significant increase in those employed in Community Youth Work settings outside of the statutory sector. The growth of the voluntary/community sector throughout the 1990s has increased into the new millennium. Respondents found themselves with a widening range of responsibilities and different demands upon their expertise. Huge variety in job titles revealed the increasingly multi-faceted feature of Community Youth Work in Northern Ireland. Sawbridge and Spence (1990) similarly found that *'salary, job title and qualification data was severely problematic for comparative purposes'* and actually found 50 different job titles used across one region in England. The lack of standardisation of job titles is undoubtedly connected to a growing and resilient voluntary sector and the fact that a youth workers skills and expertise are being recognised by non-traditional employers. Examples of this include the Probation Service, Youth Justice and Health and Social Services Trusts.

Youth work is exposed to diversion and colonisation. Jeffs and Smith (1987, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1998/99, 2002 and Smith, 2003) have consistently stressed *'that the Youth Service as a distinct entity was in great danger of disappearing'* and discuss how history and informal education unite as the special features of youth work. Davies (1999) in his fine history of the Youth Service in England litters his early pages with evidence of *voluntary association* as the lynchpin of our profession. It is important to note that as youth work drifts into the preserve of other professions e.g. probation, police, teachers, social workers, there is a danger of youth work losing its distinctiveness or compromising its overall purpose. This was also a key finding in the Harland et al (2005) study.

Gender, Age and Religious Profile of NI workforce
Of the respondents, 53% were male and 47% female. The research showed that females tended to be from younger age groups in the Service and at an earlier stage in their career paths. (For those under 35 years of age women outnumber men by nearly two to one). In the last three years of graduating students women outnumber men by three to two. New recruits to the Service, who are mostly female, are most vulnerable to the trend towards short term contracts. The inevitable funding precipice (predicted for 2006) will come and, potentially, the first to suffer will be the younger, mostly female youth worker new in the service.

Data indicated that in the early years of Community Youth Work training on the University of Ulster programmes, entrants to the courses tended to be mature males (over 23), with prior work experience. In the 1970s and 1980s career routes for new professionals lay predominantly in the Statutory Youth Service. Undoubtedly, this has contributed to the current over-representation of males in senior positions within that sector. At Director and Senior Manager levels males outnumber females five to one. Conversely, since the 1990s the main group of entrants to Community Youth Work courses have been females (under 21), often joining the course immediately after completing their A Levels. In recent years females have outnumbered males by as much as five to one on Ulster's full time degree Community Youth Work programme. This emerging gender pattern is reflected in other training courses in Northern Ireland such as social work and teaching. It does raise serious concerns in regard to future recruitment issues and the projected ratio of male to female workers entering the Youth Service in Northern Ireland. This may be a trend reflected across the UK and not just Northern Ireland.

In the research, the age categories were as follows:

14% of the respondents were under 29
19% aged 30–34
21% aged 35–40
21% aged 40–45
11% aged 46–50
11% 50–59
3% were over the age of 60.

If we extrapolate these figures and apply it to the workforce in general it can be suggested that 75% of the workforce is under 45 years of age.

As noted, what is also clear is that women are strongly represented in the younger age bracket (40% female under 35 compared to 24% male). Whilst 31% of the respondents are over 50 years of age, this divides into 25% male, 6% female. In only two of the last twelve intakes to the University of Ulster Community Youth Work courses have men outnumbered women. Whilst this may go a long way to redressing a balance whereby men outnumbered women on degrees through the 1970s and 1980s, it does not offer the Service the balanced workforce necessary for development and responsiveness to needs. Employers express concern about shortage of male applicants for jobs and in particular for detached youth work.

What compounds the picture in Northern Ireland is not just this lower number of men entering the profession but the decreasing numbers of males coming from the Protestant tradition. Only 33% of respondents in the research were from the Protestant tradition. In our situation of polarised and segregated communities it is more usual than not that a qualified worker will choose to work in their *own* community. This makes recruitment increasingly difficult for the community under-represented at entrant level.

If the clear majority of Catholics (55%) over Protestants (33%) in the research sample is representative of the field, this is unrepresentative of the Northern Ireland population which is roughly 55% Protestants to 45% Catholics. Some employers have expressed concerns over the difficulties they have experienced in recruiting qualified personnel (particularly males) for jobs within Protestant communities. Although there has been an apparent increase in Protestant applicants in recent years, the issue points to the need for monitoring recruitment trends and perhaps a more targeted approach to recruitment at entry level.

There can be no doubt from the findings of this research that the Community Youth sector in Northern Ireland has broadened significantly and career paths have consequently diversified. While it can be gratifying to see increasing proportions of graduates remaining within the sector there is considerable unease about the long-term sustainability of many aspects of Community Youth Work, particularly in the voluntary and community sector.

Funding and the nature of contracts
Of the statutory sector sample, 91% had permanent contracts. This compared with a voluntary sector figure of only 47%. The prevalence of fixed term contracts left many professionally qualified workers with feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability about their future. There were concerns that short-term contractual work seriously restricted what could be achieved with young people. Voluntary and community sector workers were frustrated

at having to complete cumbersome funding applications, often to secure not only the work of the agency but their own posts. Conversely, some respondents believed that this *'keeps workers on their toes'* and prevented them from stagnating in their current positions. Whereas permanent contracts fostered security and opportunity for long term planning, temporary or fixed term contracts generated feelings of insecurity and restrictive opportunities for long term planning. It is important to acknowledge that the high dependence of workers on temporary and short-term contracts is not exclusive to Northern Ireland (see Crimmens et al, 2004) and temporary contracts have increasingly become the norm in many professions.

From the survey, the average number of posts held since graduation was 3.1. It is a feature and expectation of Community Youth Work graduates that they will probably have an itinerant employment lifestyle. This was a trend predicted by Jeffs and Smith (1990) who forecast *'we are heading for a massive growth in short term contracting...part time job share and temporary employment'*. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) study into the extent and nature of detached and outreach work in England and Wales (Crimmens, et al 2004; Spence, Pugh and Turner, 2003) identified an over dependence on part time staff (50%) and volunteers (27%). *'The root of difficulties with staff is funding...some 47% had secure funding and were mostly in the statutory sector.'* The Northern Ireland research also mirrors the findings of the JRF study, in identifying how full time workers were increasingly being removed from face to face practice. Spence et al (2003) refer to the displacement of skills of full time workers leading to an imbalance in the Service offered to young people. The concern (and anticipated crisis in Northern Ireland) will occur when the funding precipice arrives (i.e. at the end of *Peace II* monies) and many short-term posts are no longer funded.

The *Peace I* funding package (1994) was targeted at the voluntary sector and did not allow direct applications for funding from statutory bodies. This was to change under *Peace II* (1999) whereby partnership bids (voluntary and statutory) were encouraged. However the bias of *Peace I* (1994) as a funding source for the voluntary sector established a trend towards short-term posts in the early to mid 1990s. Northern Ireland has traditionally been a place where charitable trusts made their funding available. This also favoured short-term injections of funding to pilot areas of innovative practice more traditionally associated with voluntary sector youth work. Distribution of this funding was not entirely controlled by government policy e.g. targeting social need. Nor did it discriminate on grounds of religious affiliation or ethnicity. But increasingly funding distribution maps have identified areas with no record of successful funding applications and areas of weak community infrastructure devoid even of submitting applications for funding. Many of these areas can be identified as housing people mostly from the Protestant tradition. Local politicians representing these areas have claimed discrimination by funders and called for a redressing of the balance. Yet what the mapping actually highlighted was what McCready (2001) identified as the Protestant community's discomfort with, and hardened attitude against, community development from the onset of the 'troubles.' *'Community development was seen as a means to bring about unwanted changes and right wing unionist politicians fed off this propaganda and often portrayed Catholics as enemies of the State'* (McCready, 2001). Catholic communities, on the other hand, had a strong tradition of 'going it alone' and a well-developed infrastructure and willingness to apply for funding that would enable them to be less dependent on state services and patronage.

Reasons for Leaving a Post in Community Youth Work

Eighty percent of respondents had pursued careers within either the voluntary/community sector or the statutory sector. Only 4% had left a permanent post for a temporary of fixed-term post. A move to a better job tended to come about through increased opportunities that arose from the massive influx of Peace funding into Northern Ireland since 1994 and in this context, job changes were more apparent towards the community and voluntary sectors than the statutory sector. Thus 16% had moved posts from statutory to the community/voluntary sectors whereas 5% had moved from the voluntary/community to statutory. Nevertheless, this demonstrates a low level of movement between sectors. The end of a contract was rated the second highest reason for leaving a post and acquiring a permanent position was rated third. Promotion and improved salary were also important reasons for leaving a post and 79% of respondents rated lack of support as either a major reason or an influence of some extent on them leaving a post.

Reasons for leaving the profession

Domestic reasons were given as the main response for leaving the profession, reflecting a number of factors relating to personal and family matters. Unsociable hours (53%) was third highest reason and it should be noted that twice as many female respondents stated unsociable hours had influenced their decision to leave the profession. 95% of respondents reported they were required to work during the evenings and 82% were required to work weekends. It is a trend that is unlikely to change in the future. This may be more significant to the statutory sector where it seemed that *four nights per week* was an insistence and not a guide. High stress levels were also a contributing factor across all sectors. Respondents referred to long hours, lack of career opportunities, perceived low status of youth work, deadlines for reports, having to justify statistics and lack of job security as some of the reasons behind the stress. Interestingly salaries were not cited as a major factor for respondents who left the profession (15%) although some respondents felt that salaries did not reflect the often stressful nature of the work. Notably, over half of those who chose not to enter Community Youth Work as a profession did enter a related profession such as social work or educational welfare.

Lack of management support was also highlighted as a key reason for workers leaving the profession. Different management cultures within organisations and agencies contributed to many within the workforce feeling unsupported and isolated. Respondents were concerned that managers may not use the same principles and practices they as youth workers use with young people. The management style seemed to preclude relationship building, personal development, partnerships and other building blocks of youth work which should be central to any management style and strategy. Davies refers to '*managerialist*' methods and styles of organisation in the post Albemarle period. Smith (2003) brings the issue up to date when he refers to the Service becoming '*commodified*' and exposes how '*bureaucratisation (in youth work) leads to the dominance of what is correct rather than what is right or good*' as a significant factor in determining practice. The researchers believe that the area of management is so important that additional research should be carried out in the near future.

Curriculum

Given the diversity of Community Youth Work (with a voluntary workforce of around 18,000 working in registered groups) and the emergence of three distinct sectors, the research

highlighted the increasing need for a coherent and co-ordinated Youth Service. Attempts to mobilise around a curriculum have been resisted (mainly from voluntary and community sectors) both on historical and ideological grounds. The current ongoing debate about curriculum in England highlights the potential destructive role an imposed curriculum can have. The debate about when it was introduced to the Service (Jeffs 2004; Merton and Wylie 2004) is much less relevant in Northern Ireland where there has been a curriculum since 1987. *Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice* (1997) was designed as a supportive framework and is broadly referred to as a curriculum framework. It is accepted that it is neither possible nor desirable to set out the content of a detailed curriculum to cover the breadth of provision in Northern Ireland. Basically the *Model for Effective Practice* is something to encourage youth workers *'to develop their practice, and see it as a tool that can be adapted or re-shaped to suit the situation in which they are working'*. Above all the Model is 'is not intended to lead to a single, prescriptive and inflexible curriculum framework'

Such statements enable the curriculum debate to be muted and, in fact, passed over in Northern Ireland. It is with interest that readers in Northern Ireland observe the verbal sparring between Ord, Jeffs, Merton and Wylie, Robertson, Brent and Davies (2004) in recent editions of *Youth and Policy*. On the one hand with envy as articulate academics, administrators and practitioners exchange views, and the other hand with dismay as lessons from Northern Ireland appear to be ignored in the exchanges. A curriculum in Northern Ireland has not led to an increase in resources from the state. The Merton and Wylie (2004) argument that it would assist the *'task of campaigning and communicating youth work's key messages'* has not really been our experience. Whilst the argument made by Jeffs (2004) that suggests a curriculum would contribute to *'a break with the historical mode of practice that has given them (youth workers) a unique place in the tapestry of education'* does not hold true either. The break with that historical tenet of youth work (voluntary association) would appear to have more to do with funding mechanisms and survival instincts than curriculum.

Training issues

A matter relating to self-image and the perceived lower status of the profession was the duration of initial professional training for Community Youth Workers in Northern Ireland. At present it takes a minimum of two years full time (or one year full time, accelerated if you have a non-cognate degree) to achieve the initial qualification into the profession (i.e. Diploma in Higher Education). This is in comparison to other professions e.g. teaching and social work where professional training is three years full time for the initial professional qualification. Given the increasing demands on workers, the expanding body of knowledge and complexity of issues affecting young people, as well as the diverse range of skills necessary to carry out Community Youth Work, perhaps the time is right to make initial training three years for full-time participants.

The Education and Training Standards Committee (National Youth Agency) has stated that, from September 2010, youth work will become a degree-level profession bringing England in line with training in Scotland. The indications are that Wales will follow suit and Northern Ireland (and possibly Republic of Ireland) will complete the set. Steve Drowley, team manager training standards, NYA, is quoted in *Young People Now* (December 2004) that *'...moving to a three-year degree will raise the status of the profession'*. From a training perspective it also allows for more time to prepare potential youth workers for the demands of the job.

The research also raised issues around post-qualifying training. It was worthy of note that over 50% of the sample had undertaken further study and gained additional qualifications albeit in other areas. In January 2002, the University of Ulster launched its new Postgraduate Diploma/ Masters in Youth and Community Work as a result of demands from the field. It would be a positive development for Community Youth Work to become an all degree profession with pathways to study locally at Masters Level.

Ideological shift

Survey respondents identified policy overload amongst their concerns and referred to fatigue and role confusion. There were comments around the need for a more strategic and sharper focus for the work and concerns expressed around the lack of clarity in the definition of the work. This is not new. Smith having argued in 1987 and 1988 that '...the Youth Service, as a distinctive entity is in danger of disappearing,' in 1992 Jeffs and Smith refer to 'youth workers having to transmute themselves into something else.' They advise that, 'we cannot provide instant solutions to moral panics'. Smith (2003) counsels how we should be careful against youth workers losing their vision and take care against youth work moving into the mainstream 'alongside social work and schooling' arguing that it is necessary to protect our profession from adopting the North American model of Youth Development. There is no doubt that participation in our research project has helped to reopen the debate in Northern Ireland about the status of youth work as a profession.

Respondents expressed strong views in regard to changes that are occurring within their respective Education and Library Boards. This was evidenced by growing trends within the Statutory Youth Service to take the full-time qualified workers out of youth centres and onto the streets, into schools, or into other specialist areas of work. Despite a changing focus away from youth centre-based work across UK and Ireland, it should not be assumed that the youth centre has lost its place at the heart of youth work. Its role, function and purpose (and potential for professional training placements) should be debated along with other philosophical and ideological changes that are occurring within Youth Service. This research suggests that while there is a definite change in the focus of youth work over the past fifteen years, this change or ideological shift appears to be driven by policy and finance rather than debated philosophical discussion among practitioners who work on the ground.

Working in a Team

Community youth work has traditionally depended on team working for success as a value and a necessity. As money became available in Northern Ireland, many of the new youth work projects were created as single person projects and worker isolation increasingly became a feature of employment. Such was this phenomenon that by the late 1990s the Youth Council of Northern Ireland (established in 1990 by the Youth Service (NI Order with a primary role to advise the Minster of Education and others on the development of the Youth Service) and YouthNet (voluntary headquarters organisation) requested the University of Ulster to provide a pre-vocational Certificate in Youth Studies targeting those working in isolated situations.

Youth workers working in a team have always been the preferred approach. Recently there appears to be a redressing of the isolation factor and a more concerted attempt to get back to a team working formula. Many research respondents perceived teamwork as the primary way to overcome isolation and help boost morale. They welcomed opportunities to co-work

particularly in detached/area-based work.

More youth-led provision

There has been much talk recently in Northern Ireland about youth participation and the empowerment of young people. Many respondents, particularly within the statutory sector, felt that there has not been enough emphasis and effort in bringing young people into decision-making processes. Youth-led activity was viewed by many as fundamental to the future and development of community youth work and an area that demanded more practical and theoretical attention. Respondents were keen to advance an approach to their work whereby relationships with young people were built upon trust and principles of empowerment. It was suggested that ownership of the sector should lie largely with young people themselves and there was a great need, and challenge, to engage young people in programmes and initiatives that were 'truly youth-led.' This is a refreshing reminder of the essence of the work and principles underpinning social education.

Partnerships

The research findings suggest that the Youth Service in Northern Ireland is fragmented and that co-operation and partnerships between the statutory, voluntary and community sector is not as strong as it could be. It was felt that this has led to a culture where knowledge, experience and information were not freely shared. There was a call amongst respondents for more recognition of each sector's strengths and better co-ordination and collaboration between them. Useful suggestions were made about secondment opportunities between agencies and sectors and more forums to share learning. There was also an appeal for a more effective and united Youth Service to emerge that would lead to greater co-operation and co-ordination of resources and training across the sectors.

Concluding remarks

This study into career paths and views of Community Youth Work graduates has highlighted many professional issues that merit further research and debate. Whilst there are similarities, youth work in Northern Ireland has evolved in a different way to youth work in the rest of the UK. External factors such as the 'troubles' and lack of political stability have generated new funding opportunities that have led to the emergence of three separate and distinct youth sectors within Northern Ireland. In particular the evolution of the voluntary sector, and more recently the community sector, has contributed to a broadening of youth work. This broadening, whilst generating new opportunities for innovative youth work practice, has also created ambivalence as to the overall purpose of the work and ushered in 'a spirit of competitiveness' in regard to the allocation of resources. Expansion over the past fifteen years has also led to career paths becoming much more diversified. There is natural unease about the long-term sustainability of many aspects of Community Youth Work. This is evidenced by the fact that 53% of the voluntary and community sectors were on fixed or short-term contracts and concerns respondents had in regard to the looming funding precipice in 2006. These trends echo the JRF UK findings (Crimmens et al 2004) that *the root of the difficulties with staffing is funding'* (Spence et al, 2003).

It would also appear that the diversification of the Youth Service has contributed to a refocusing of skills whereby many youth workers perceive themselves as increasingly providing a more 'specialist' rather than the traditional 'generic' service to young people. Indeed these

developments are at the heart of reasons why the skills and expertise of youth workers are increasingly sought after by other professions. The findings also identify specific recruitment concerns in regard to age, gender and religious imbalances that have major implications for future employers. There is also a need for better post qualifying support to reduce isolation.

The fact that 75% of graduates wanted to remain within the profession and 64% of the workforce was aged under 40 provides a potentially healthy foundation for the future. Despite the challenges facing the profession locally and nationally, this study depicts a profession that continues to thrive and grow. It is a profession where its workers are often the unsung heroes of many communities throughout UK and Ireland; a profession committed to young people and their issues and, in the words of one respondent, a profession where its workers are *'worth their weight in gold'*.

Notes

1   Documents such as *Transforming Youth Work: Resourcing Excellent Youth Services* (2002) and *Effective Youth Work* (1987) have no direct relevance to Northern Ireland although we have a Curriculum Document called, *A Model for Effective Practice* 1987 revised in 2003 and we do 'not' have *Connexions*.

2   The results of this research commissioned by The Department of Education will be available in February 2005. A full copy of the research is available from the Community Youth Work team at the University of Ulster.

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The Youth Work Curriculum: A view from the countryside

John Bevan

In its strict dictionary sense, the word 'curriculum' is restricted in its meaning to a prescribed course of study, or more widely to a programme of activities: and it appears to be of relatively recent use as an English word. This would suggest that its use to refer to process, rather than to describe content, is improper. But it is clear that recent contributors to *Youth and Policy* are not much concerned about these niceties. And since languages, and the use of language, are ever evolving, let us turn to substance.

Proposition 1: there is no such thing as 'value-free' youth work

To establish this proposition, there is no need to enter the realm of 'beliefs'. As soon as we argue (or agree) that racism (or even just overtly racist behaviour) is unacceptable, or that teenage pregnancy is a bad thing, or whatever, and take that argument, or agreement, into our youth work practice, we have established the proposition. And this is true whatever value system we espouse. The issue for practitioners is more one of openness and honesty about the values 'on offer'.

Proposition 2: there is no such thing as 'no outcome intended' youth work

The outcome may be highly specific, even explicitly skill related [winning a darts match, learning to use map and compass], or it may be much 'looser' [enjoying ourselves, 'chilling out together', getting to know one or more young people better – usually with other possible eventual outcomes in mind], but to deny its existence in the youth worker's mind at the outset of the encounter, however poorly formulated, is either to condone laziness, a lack of preparation, and bad practice, or to be dishonest.

The immediate outcome may be all that there is, or it may be part of a longer term 'plan'. Moreover, the intended outcome may be neither documented nor achieved – and, indeed, the 'session' may go off in an entirely different direction with the full complicity of the youth worker – but to deny that the encounter was entered with some sort of outcome(s) in mind will not do.

Proposition 3: the youth worker never 'knows better' than the young person.

This proposition may be negated simply by reference to a specific skill [darts, navigation],

or – see our first proposition – by reference to the imposition or importing of rules of conduct based on a defined (set of) value(s).

Corollary: the youth worker is, at least sometimes, operating in a leadership rôle, rather than as a equal partner of the young people. This proposition and its corollary also have something to say about arriving at a 'negotiated curriculum'.

Proposition 4: youth workers are not in any sense engaged in an educative process.

That is to say, for example, that they never impart knowledge or skills, never draw out young people's opinions, never seek to extend young people's understanding of themselves and the world they live in: and so on. The proposition is self-evident nonsense.

Corollary: youth workers, at least sometimes, are educators. Note that we have already established that the youth worker bears at least some responsibility for content, purpose (in the values sense) and outcome(s).

Proposition 5: interventionist youth work has no normative reference point.

That is to say, for example, that it is irrelevant to 'targetted' youth work that most female teenagers do not get pregnant, that most young people do not have a 'substance abuse' problem: and so on. Again, the proposition is self-evident nonsense.

Corollary: the importance of 'ordinary' youth work for 'ordinary' young people does not lie solely in what is done directly with them. Further, there is a proper place for 'ordinary' youth work in all planned programmes of provision, however tight the budget.

Proposition 6: provided that the values and the outcomes are 'OK', it does not matter how we do youth work.

That is to say, for example, that all the 'stuff' about 'relating to young people', about notions like *Hear by Right*, about leadership styles, or about the places in which we do our work, is irrelevant. Yet once more, the proposition is self-evident nonsense.

Proposition 7: (if only we could identify it and require its delivery) there is a single 'set' of youth work content 'modules' and delivery mechanisms that will meet all the needs of all our young people.

Need I go on?

The analysis of a complex issue by the consideration of extreme or negative propositions, which are capable of being validated, or proved to be invalid, by the identification of a single exception, is an old trick [*'Well, you agreed to sleep with me for £1,000,000, and now you refuse to do so for £5: so there's clearly no issue of principle involved!'*]. Nevertheless, it is still useful. It would have been easy to examine a few more propositions, but I have got where I wanted to go. And of course establishing the limits to a debate still leaves an awful lot undone! Fortunately, proper youth work – and therefore its 'curriculum' – is as 'pluralistic' as young people are different from one another, and as they change as individuals over time.

However, we have established that youth work has intended outcomes, is based on some set of values, involves the imparting of knowledge and skills by youth workers in leadership rôles, is inherently educative, has a 'normative' base, and that it matters what we do and how we do it. What a surprise!

Accordingly -

Final Proposition: any attempt to claim a single, exclusive, meaning (or limited set of meanings) for the word curriculum when used in relation to youth work is doomed to failure: it is a pointless exercise.

QED

Envoi: it will also not surprise anyone who knows me if I assert that all this is pretty much 'old hat' – though I recognize that each generation must re-establish it for itself – and that notwithstanding the current fashion for denigrating anything more than a few years (or governments) old, I tend to the personal view that the values, methods, and programmes that are good enough for the largest youth organisation in the world just might have something to commend them. Alternatively, one might look back to the time when Permanent Secretaries, *mirabile dictu*, talked sense:-

> *The primary basis of such a service is social or pastoral. This is, of course, an educational purpose in a sense wider than that usually understood, and has been comprehensively expressed (as being) 'To offer individual young people in their leisure time opportunities of various kinds, complementary to those of home, formal education and work, to discover and develop their personal resources of body, mind and spirit and thus the better equip themselves to live the life of mature, creative and responsible members of a free society.'* [The *Albemarle* Committee, quoting John Maud, in 1960]

Essays in the History of Community & Youth Work

Edited by Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs & Jean Spence
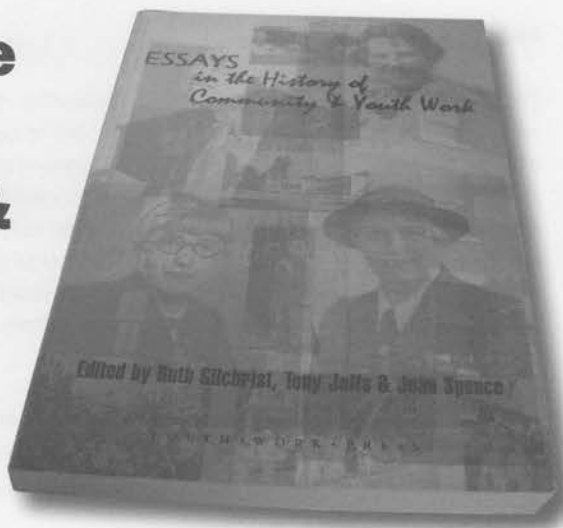
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What does George Orwell have to say about youth work?

Tom Wylie

George Orwell – 'the crystal spirit'

The use of an author's name can conjure up a whole atmosphere in a simple word. 'Dickensian' conveys the squalor and misery of nineteenth century London; 'Orwellian' now provides a sense of how tyranny can produce conformity through constant state surveillance. Indeed, some of the detailed components of the Orwellian picture of dystopia – 'Big Brother'; 'Room 101'; 'double-speak' – have themselves passed into common speech and understanding, though not necessarily as their author may have intended.

Modern youth work has little time for heroes and prophets. If it had, Orwell would be one of its heroes given his engagement with issues of power, cruelty and tyranny.

George Orwell is best known now for two works of satirical fiction, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but his work is considerably more extensive than these. It contains such other novels as *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and *Coming up for Air*; journalistic reporting, notably *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*; and a feast of broadcasting and political feature writing, especially during the Second World War. He was born in India in 1903 (his real name was Eric Blair). The son of a civil servant, he was educated at Eton. He served in Burma in the Indian Imperial Police, which sickened him of colonialism; after a few years in Paris, he returned to England as a schoolteacher, then bookshop assistant. He and his wife went to aid the Spanish government against Franco and Orwell was wounded in the throat by a sniper. During the Second World War he worked for the BBC and became a journalist for *Tribune* and the *Observer*. Taken seriously ill with tuberculosis from 1946, he died in 1950 at the age of 46.

Orwell sought as a writer to bear witness to integrity in language, blended with compassion and humour. He persisted to the end with his belief that the world could and should be organised better as a 'society of free and equal human beings' and was confident in the ability of ordinary people to make it so. But he did not believe that this better world would come easily: 'common sense and goodwill are not enough; there is also the problem of overcoming ill will and invincible ignorance' (*Observer*, August 1943). Youth workers who have sought to advance the interests of young people with some politicians will recognise the truth of these remarks and may find much value in how he set about his own work.

George Orwell's five main insights for youth work practice are oblique but important. They underline several of the key principles of youth work – skilled observation; experiential learning; clarity of thought and expression; sound values.

First, Orwell was a skilled observer with an immense skill in turning what he saw into powerful descriptions and reflective writing. Much of this had a lyrical quality: 'he was a tough-looking youth of twenty-five or six, with reddish-yellow hair and powerful shoulders. His peaked cap was pulled fiercely over one eye. He was standing in profile to me, his arm on his breast, gazing with a puzzled frown at a map which one of the officers had open on the table...' (*Homage to Catalonia*). It was this kind of descriptive power which he brought to bear in such notable reportage on disadvantage as *Down and Out in Paris and London* and, especially in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, his most famous early work of journalism:

> *The train bore me away, through the monstrous scenery of slag-heaps, chimneys, piled scrap-iron, foul canals, paths of cindery mud criss-crossed by the prints of clogs. This was March, but the weather had been horribly cold and everywhere there were mounds of blackened snow. As we moved slowly through the outskirts of the town we passed row after row of little grey slum houses running at right angles to the embankment. At the back of one of the houses a young woman was kneeling on the stones, poking a stick up the leaden waste-pipe, which ran from the sink inside and which I suppose was blocked. I had time to see everything about her – her sacking apron, her clumsy clogs, her arms reddened by the cold. She looked up as the train passed, and I was almost near enough to catch her eye. She had a round pale face, the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty, thanks to miscarriages and drudgery; and it wore, for the second in which I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen. It struck me then that we are mistaken when we say that 'It isn't the same for them as it would be for us,' and that people bred in slums can imagine nothing but the slums. For what I saw in her face was not the ignorant suffering of an animal. She knew well enough what was happening to her – understood as well as I did how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling there in the bitter cold, on the slimy stones of a slum backyard, poking a stick up a foul drain-pipe. (The Road to Wigan Pier)*

Orwell's second insight for youth work lies in his capacity to learn from experience. At the end of 1936 he went to Spain to help defend the Spanish Republican government against Franco's *coup d'état* and to write about what happened. It was the defining experience of his life, putting into context all that had gone before and shaping how he would see the world in future. Orwell arrived in Barcelona knowing little of the complexities of Spanish politics and the tensions between the various anarchist, Trotskyist and communist defenders of the republic. His sympathy for the (Soviet-dominated) Communists did not last once he saw how they operated towards the Trotskyist (POUM) militia in which Orwell had enlisted. Already wounded in fighting at the front, Orwell and his wife were lucky to escape with their lives from their national allies in the Soviet-influenced government's assault on supposed dissenters in the ranks. His relatively brief sojourn in Spain politicised him and gave him the basis for his major works. He had seen at first hand that objective truth found it hard to survive in wartime; that the state was willing to tell lies; that there were, indeed, 'enemies on the left' in the shape of Stalinist communism.

If the experience of Spain was seminal in respect of his politics, it was not the only setting from which he would recycle material from his ordinary life into his later work. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, Orwell had found employment with the BBC. His diary records:

*The only time when one hears people singing in the BBC is in the early morning,
between 6 and 8: that is the time when the charwomen are at work. A huge army of
them arrives all at the same time. They sit in the reception hall waiting for their brooms
to be issued to them and making as much noise as a parrot house, and then they have
wonderful choruses, all singing together as they sweep the passages. The place has a
quite different atmosphere at this time from what it has later in the day.* (Diary)

Such a description would eventually find its way into *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, his last and prob-
ably greatest book. It is at the heart of the third lesson for youth work: Orwell's opposition to
totalitarianism and tyranny and his commitment to liberty (and for democratic socialism).

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell portrays the world divided into three great powers
– Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia – each perpetually mobilised for war with each other. In
Oceania (a metaphor for Britain), 'The Party' rules through four ministries with absolute
power – the Ministry of Peace (which wages war); the Ministry of Love (the base of the
feared Thought Police); the Ministry of Plenty which deals with rationing; and the Ministry
of Truth which provides propaganda and alters accounts of history to fit the current party
line. The authorities keep a check on everyone's word, deed and thought. Orwell's narrative
tells how Winston Smith endeavours, through human love with Julia, to evade this constant
surveillance by Big Brother and his ever-present agents. Orwell creates the atmosphere of
a society where individual life is absolutely pointless and he deliberately set it in Britain 'in
order to emphasise that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else
and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere'.

A similar theme of resistance to totalitarianism is told in the softer but still biting, satire
Animal Farm. This is a tale of a revolution that went wrong and of the excellent excuses
which were then trotted out to explain away every diversion from the original doctrine.
The animals on a farm drive out their human master and take it over. Leadership devolves
to the pigs, who are on a higher intellectual level than the other animals. Unhappily their
character does not match their intelligence and they become drunk on power. A new simple
commandment is created: 'All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than
others'. Various gentle creatures suffer. *Animal Farm* dramatised what Orwell believed was
the human betrayal practised by the Soviet regime since the Russian Revolution, and it is
also a parable about people who are blind to the dangers of totalitarianism in any society.

The fourth lesson from Orwell for youth work lies in his use of language. *Nineteen Eighty-
Four* was in part a satire on political discourse, notably on 'double speak' and the Party's
slogans – 'War is Peace'; 'Freedom is Slavery'; 'Ignorance is Strength'. But Orwell also
set out his philosophy of writing more directly in a set of articles. He noted that his own
writing was lifeless when it lacked a political purpose. But he went further to address the
slovenliness and vagueness in much writing. He identified several common faults such
as the use of dead or hackneyed metaphors; of meaningless words such as 'freedom' or
'democracy'; an over-reliance on Latin or Greek words rather than those with Saxon roots.
He chided those who favoured such convoluted phrases as 'In my opinion it is not an
unjustifiable assumption that...'; rather than the simple verb 'I think' which demonstrates
agency of the thought. He railed against the use of the passive voice as in 'it is greatly to be
desired' rather than the active. He parodied a famous verse in *Ecclesiastes* as follows:

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill; but time and chance happened to them all.

This becomes, in Orwell's parody of degenerative language:

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must, invariably, be taken into account. (Why I Write)

The fifth lesson from Orwell concerns his values. He was a man of sharp intellectual honesty who, as he matured, engaged in a ceaseless struggle against imperialism, fascism and communism and for democratic life. He was a patriot but not an unthinking nationalist. A patriot who sought a radical, even revolutionary, change in English society. It was, for him, in part bound up with landscape. Here he is returning from Spain to England:

The railway-cuttings smothered in wild flowers, the deep meadows where the great shining horses browse and meditate, the slow-moving streams bordered by willows, the green bosoms of the elms, the larkspurs in the cottage gardens; and then the huge peaceful wilderness of outer London, the barges on the miry river, the familiar streets, the posters telling of cricket matches and Royal weddings, the men in bowler hats, the pigeons in Trafalgar Square, the red buses, the blue policemen – all sleeping in the deep, deep, sleep of England, from which I sometimes fear that we shall never wake until we are jerked out of it by the roar of bombs. (Homage to Catalonia)

Orwell was 'English' in the sense that Tom Paine or the Leveller, Thomas Rainsborough, were English – their ideas were intended for universal consumption.

He was prepared to discuss the costs of any action, not indulge in mere heart-warming rhetoric. He sought a more egalitarian society though it has to be admitted that the women in his works are not notably strong characters even if he did marry two tough-minded and intelligent women. He wanted great reforms to transform society – nationalisation, pay limits – and was impatient with predictions of inevitability. Above all, he cherished and championed the triumph of human experience. It is to be found in the private, intimate moments of Winston and Julia in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. But it is expressed above all, in the poem he wrote about shaking hands with the Italian militiaman he met in Spain:

But the thing I saw in your face
No power can disinherit
No bomb that ever burst
Shatters the crystal spirit.
(Homage to Catalonia)

Here, in emphasising the connectedness between humans as well as in the clarity of his writing and his suspicion of the authorities, lies Orwell's ultimate gift to youth workers.

References

Many of Orwell's individual novels are now out of print but his most notable works
 -- *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are widely available.

A twenty-volume *George Orwell: Complete Works* (Dawson, P; Seeker and Warbing) was
 published in 1998.

A short collection of some of his feature articles *Why I Write* was published by Penguin in
 2004.

The currently definitive biography *Orwell: The Life* by D J Taylor (Vintage UK, 2003) has
 overtaken the earlier work by Bernard Crick (Penguin, 1980).

Orwell's Victory by Christopher Hitchens (Penguin, 2002) is a powerful polemic for Orwell
 and against miscellaneous critics and claimants on his memory from the left and the
 right.

This is the first of a series of articles that will look at the writings of significant individuals in relation to youth work and youth policy. In future editions we hope to publish contributions on Albert Camus, St. Paul, John Holt, Mary Douglas and Paulo Freire. If any reader would like to add to that list please do not hesitate to get in touch with Tony Jeffs, Burnbrae, Black Lane, Blaydon Burn, Blaydon, Tyne and Wear NE21 6DX.

ARCHITECTS OF CHANGE

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Review Article

John Player

The editors inform us that *Managing Community Practice: Principles, policies and programmes* is the result of 10 years of meetings and discussions involving themselves and others on the theme of 'management for community practice'. The book comprises ten contributions split into four reasonably digestible sections from recognised commentators and practitioners all anxious to equip managers to face the new challenges presented by the continuing development of a community focus in public policy. The editors worked with the former Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC) (which later became Community Learning Scotland, some of whose functions have now become absorbed within Communities Scotland) to define the purpose and nature of community practice. The intention being to develop guidelines for the training of community practitioners.

By way of definitions

The notion of focussing resources and abandoning territoriality is a recurrent theme within the text under the umbrella term 'community practice'. The construct of the 'management of community practice' was a key theme in the influential *Community and Public Policy* (Butcher et al, 1993) to which three of the editors contributed. In Butcher's text 'community practice' was employed to incorporate work with a community focus, undertaken not only by community/development workers, but also by other professionals, members of self-managed community groups and managers. Here the authors draw upon a study carried out by Thornton (1996) in an attempt to define 'community practice'. Arguing that Thornton's study identified a significant interest in the areas of community practice among managers across a range of professions. The study reported that the interviewees, made up of managers from a range of agencies, were uncertain of the term 'community development', seeing it either as a separate discipline, or a particular set of frontline skills. Community practice was commonly identified by them as:

> the management of change, inter-agency working, community profiling, social auditing, partnership work, consulting service users, working with voluntary sector organisations, understanding and working with different ethnic, cultural and religious groups, research methodologies and community consultation. (Thornton, 1996: 15)

Concept of 'community practice'

In chapter one Banks engages with the term 'community practice' and how this differs from 'community work' and 'community development'. Maintaining that the role of the generalist paid professional community worker has declined (e.g. neighbourhood workers with a brief to work with local people on whatever issues regarded as important), while the number of specialist community work/community development practitioners has increased. A new post has emerged calling for community work skills and approaches, but with a specific brief, often linked to a particular central government policy initiative (e.g. 'community safety officer', 'regeneration worker'). Banks is using the term 'community practice' as a concept that embraces the methods and values of community work or community development, whilst being wider than both. 'Community work', she suggests, has been used to describe the work done by paid or unpaid workers who work with individuals and community groups experiencing disadvantage to identify needs and take action to work towards change in local neighbourhoods and communities of interest. Banks draws upon definitions of community development from the Standing Conference for Community Development (SCCD) to which many of us subscribe such as:

> Community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual support. It is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in issues that affect their lives.

Her definition of 'community practice' is that of a generic term for the distinct methods and techniques concerned with promoting, fostering and implementing community policies (p.13). These include approaches to community participation, community government and areas of service delivery such as community care, community health and community policing.

Banks then engages with the 'well-trodden' theme of the contested concept of community, arguing that community has both a descriptive and an evaluative meaning and can be used to convey 'images of warmth' – a constructivist notion deriving from the work of Raymond Williams. Without acknowledging his influence Banks rigorously describes three senses of community:
* as a descriptive concept where people share something in common, either as territorial communities and communities of interest or identity;
* the idea, grounded in the philosophy of communitarianism from the United States, of community as value where 'community' generally has positive connotations, conjuring up images of warm, caring neighbourliness;
* and the notion of active community, which advances the idea of collective action.

Banks argues the latter is the idea public policy makers have in mind when seeking to promote initiatives drawing on community strengths and capacities. The idea of active community is, for Banks, also an essential element of community practice. She asserts community practice can be described as work involving a broad range of professionals who increasingly using community work methods in their organisational initiatives to ensure community engagement in institutional change and development programmes.

The intention of this text is partly for the training of what the editors define as community practitioners. Banks (p. 20) suggests 'the key purposes of community practice link very closely to current government policies, with the aim of promoting active citizenship in the context of a desire to revive democratic participation in decision making'. It could therefore be suggested that she is advocating the use of community practice as a way of administrating government policy and managing the consent of the disaffected. A mechanism derived from Etzioni, the US communitarian thinker, which underpins much current government social policy.

Situating 'community practice' historically

While the ideological position of Banks reflects that of the present government, Mayo and Robertson's contribution draws on different critical traditions. They focus on unpacking the competing theoretical assumptions that underpin the debates on community practice with the intention of helping so-called community practitioners develop their own strategies more effectively. Mayo and Robertson start by engaging with a highly selective history of the past three decades focusing on the aspects of the rediscovery of community and the development of community-based social polices that have a contemporary resonance. This includes: looking at communities where problems of poverty and social deprivation were concentrated; co-ordination among service providers to enable more effective ('joined-up' in the current idiom) services to be provided to meet these concentrations of need; the emphasis on changing relationships between professionals, policy makers and service users with greater user participation and enhanced community self-help; and a consideration of the associated commitment to empowering approaches relating to user and community participation and the pursuit of social justice agendas. Mayo and Robertson go down their own 'well-trodden path' of a discourse about the fact that by the mid to late 1960s poverty was obstinately persistent, amply demonstrated by Abel-Smith and Townsend's 1965 pamphlet *The Poor and the Poorest*. They make reference to the rise of new social movements, women's liberation movement, welfare professionals' downright arrogance towards their clients, Notting Hill riots, Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech, and the seminal text *Community against Government* (Loney, 1983). The authors talk about the targeting of community development services at particular neighbourhoods and discuss the influence of the US's 'War on Poverty' highlighting that Marris and Rein were invited to Britain in 1969 to advise the government on the lessons of the US War on Poverty. The US approach stressed the need for area-based programmes and the resultant Community Development Projects (CDPs) emphasised local strategic partnerships, community participation and self-help. However as Mayo and Robertson point out the CDPs proved to be not quite what the government intended. The CDPs produced challenging reports analysing the structural causes of poverty and social deprivation that advocated social reform and the promotion of social justice. The Home Office, as Loney (1983) notes, quickly dismantled the CDPs and reaffirmed its commitment to a 'neighbourhood' method.

Mayo and Robertson also investigate the market-led approaches of the 1980s and early 1990s, a model, I would assert, reconfigured and more competently applied by the present government. The authors do well to remind us of that whereas 'Old Labour' supported state planning and public provision as the basis for the universal welfare system neo-liberals

rejected. For them, the private sector was to be the engine of growth and the disciplines of market mechanisms and the new managerialism were to be rigorously enforced. However, there has been an increasing realisation that neo-liberal development strategies – structural adjustment programmes – needed to be modified because of the negative impact on the poorest and the most vulnerable. Consequently Mayo and Robertson argue the focus has shifted with local authorities brought back as partners to deliver government regeneration programmes. For example City Challenge Programmes (launched in 1991) provided government resources to local partnerships within which there was an emphasis on the role of the private sector to co-ordinate regeneration strategies at a local level. For me this chapter is the most effective. Mayo and Robertson are asking the pertinent questions regarding where the current policy context leaves managers of community practice? How might they evaluate the opportunities and constraints of the current policy framework? And how might their conclusions affect their own strategies as reflective practitioners?

The authors reflect on the contradictions of the 'New Labour' welfare project usefully drawing upon Benington and Donnison's article *New Labour and Social Exclusion: The Search for a Third Way – or Just Gilding the Ghetto Again*. This warns that 'a small area focus can run the risk of diverting attention from wider political economic forces which cause and maintain the concentrations of poverty and unemployment in these areas' (1999: 65). Mayo and Robertson hold New Labour has shown insufficient courage in challenging the values associated with the Thatcherite legacy due to its fear of alienating a Middle England electorate perceived sympathetic to those values. They are wary of New Labour's neo liberal views on the value of involving the private sector in financing and running public services. Referring to the National Renewal Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan, which emphasises the partnership approach, including local communities as well as the private sector, working together to develop more joined-up thinking to promote neighbourhood renewal. In their concluding remarks Mayo and Robertson highlight the need for managers of community practice to share the process of analysing the structural barriers and policy constraints.

Linking partnerships and networks

Alison Gilchrist's contribution looks at the implications for community practice of the expectation that a range of public services and policies will increasingly be carried out by multi-agency coalitions. She begins with a cautionary note about 'partnership as policy' arguing that since the mid-1990s New Labour thinking has rested on an authoritarian version of communitarianism in drawing on the ideals of civic renewal, active citizenship and governance. Bearing this cautionary note in mind Gilchrist welcomes the desire for community involvement in partnership. However she points out that while this desire for community involvement in partnership is not new, there has been a welcome realisation that for this to become a reality certain things need to happen. As communities may require help to become organised, to develop inclusive and democratic structures. However this capacity building often uses the methodology of community development but without a commitment to an autonomous 'bottom-up' organising that enhances, but is independent of, state sponsored partnerships. Like Sarah Banks in her chapter Gilchrist refers to and reaffirms the Standing Conference for Community Development's definition that:

Community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual support. It is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in issues that affect their lives.

Gilchrist helpfully asserts that community development aims to support community-led activities which address issues arising from their direct experience and which are articulated through processes of critical reflection and dialogue. However she maintains the rhetoric of community empowerment and active citizenship is not being reflected in the day-to-day reality of partnership working. Nevertheless, Gilchrist argues, partnerships were intended to replace competition with co-operation. Their aim being to bring together key decision makers in the relevant agencies to reach a consensual overview of a particular problem whilst leaving separate agencies to manage the actual delivery of service in a co-ordinated way. Gilchrist makes critical points about partnership working and networking suggesting this approach creates a foundation on which other objectives can be realised, but there are dangers of 'abusing' network connections in ways which are manipulative or non-reciprocal. Before going on to stress that relationships that feel exploitative or one-sided should be avoided and managers need to understand that community practitioners must invest in a variety of connections not all of which will contribute to planned outcomes. Her contribution amounts, in part, to the insight that the lifeblood of communities flows through the capillaries of personal relationships and inter-organisational networks. Well-connected communities being vibrant, tolerant and relatively autonomous of government agendas. Able to preserve traditions of protest, self-help and solidarity, as well as building alliances that improve partnership working. Most importantly she maintains managers of community practice must adopt a delicate balancing act between partnership targets and encouraging independent community activity. Optimistically Gilchrist feels that in the long term these aims will coincide but only if there is a shared sense that some of the many difficulties encountered can be overcome through sensitive and empowering community practice.

Fostering participative cultures committed to organisational learning

Before taking a problem posing approach to organisational learning Butcher (chapter four) sets the context in which community practitioners find themselves. For Butcher the purposes of community practice find expression in a wide range of policies pursued by government such as *New Deal for Communities* (1999) and the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU, 2001). In a separate chapter Butcher and Robertson raise questions managers of community development, or their preferred term, 'community practice', should be asking. Butcher reflects on what management system and organisational structures will best support community practitioners in achieving community learning and social change? How should organisational and management systems be constituted in order to enable the community practitioner to work effectively? Butcher's reply is that community practitioners are likely to find person-centred, open, democratically run systems for determining strategic direction of their own organisational unit the most valuable and functional. However as most community educators working in local state hierarchies are aware the opposite is usually the case.

Butcher and Robertson seek to promote and encourage critical reflexive practice supported by sustained and skilled managerial supervision. The desired outcome being to enable community strategies to emerge through dialogical processes of action learning. They attempt to resolve the questions first of what kind of individual staff development best support the work of community practitioners and enable continual improvement? Second what kind of organisational development needs to flourish? Third how continuous quality improvement at individual practitioner and organisational levels can be assured? Their resolution is based on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning. This argues that such learning occurs in and through engagement with day-to-day problems and issues. The authors introduce the term 'practitioner-learner' to best convey their approach. Asserting that the task of being a truly effective experiential or practitioner learner is not easy as it requires the 'practitioner-learner' to exercise four distinct kinds of learning abilities:

- concrete experience abilities – an ability to involve ourselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences;
- reflective observation abilities – an ability to observe and reflect on our experiences from a variety of different perspectives;
- abstract conceptualisation abilities – an ability to use or create concepts that integrate our observations into coherent frameworks of understanding and theories;
- active experimentation abilities – an ability to deploy our theories to aid decision-making and solve problems.

There are problems with this notion of experiential learning. Stuart and Thompson (1995: 163) point out that if people's experience is defined within a social context then certain groups are only going to have access to particular types of experience and their range of options are limited by their position. Butcher and Robertson conclude their chapter with the proposition that the best structure for the practitioner learner to flourish in is one that seeks to devolve decision making and control of operations to relatively small, decentralised units. Where co-ordination is likely take place through mutual adjustment, communication and shared information rather than through top-down instruction or bureaucratic 'rule following'. Where the 'how' is delegated downwards.

Conflicts of culture and accountability: managing ethical dilemmas and problems in community practice

Banks' chapter (six) helpfully highlights ethical dilemmas involved in 'community practice'. She draws upon semi-structured interviews with 10 community practice managers to engage with several difficult issues, not least those in achieving 'community participation'. However she enters into a discourse that could be construed as paternalistic when suggesting that a distinction is often made between consultation and participation, with participation seen as the highest point on a ladder. Banks maintains that only a few representatives can sit on a board or committee and be involved in decision-making. The process by which individuals become community representatives, how accountable they are to their constituencies, and how competent they are to take part are all issues she finds problematic. She also focuses upon the ethical dilemmas and problems emerging when residents or service users have no desire to become active; are prepared to take power, but not responsibility; are given responsibility but little real power; and lack the skills but do not

wish to undertake training. Her response appears to be platitudinous. Concluding, as she does, with the almost axiomatic suggestion that having a clear set of values, the ability and commitment to reflect on their implications in practice, to weigh up conflicting priorities and the courage and the commitment to implement them are all important in resolving ethical dilemmas.

The manager's role in community auditing

Yvette Smalle and Paul Henderson's chapter investigates 'community audits' which provide essential information upon which action plans can be based. They assert that obtaining an understanding of a community's needs and resources and discovering its strengths, weaknesses, history and aspirations is a central component of practice. Their contention is essentially that not only should managers provide support for community auditing; they should be actively involved with it. Smalle and Henderson helpfully highlight the space made available by recent government pronouncements such as:

> The focus of urban policy in the UK has widened over the years from a concentration on the physical aspects to a holistic approach which considers the whole range of needs of local communities. Central to this is a 'bottom up' approach with community involvement and the use of broadly based partnerships.

Maintaining that the insistence of government on community involvement is clear, whilst the term 'community development' is used rarely. Why this is the case and why there is a move way from community development inherent in this book is not fully explained. Smalle and Henderson do, nevertheless, refer to the fact that community audits and profiles receive extensive treatment in community development practice-theory texts. Citing the new edition of *Skills in Neighbourhood Work* (Henderson and Thomas, 2002) that includes a community worker's perspective on auditing in addition to data collection. What is clear to the authors is that government and EU policies on community involvement are forcing the issue of community auditing onto managers' agendas. At a time when the absence of management input within the range and variety of available methods and tools available for carrying out audits is becoming increasingly evident.

Smalle and Henderson's chapter is useful. Their conclusions provide a much-needed appeal for operational managers to be involved with community auditing. Until recently that argument wouldn't have got very far with managers and management theorists who tended to hold that such a proposal wasn't within their remit. Smalle and Henderson believe the situation has changed with the emphasis on community involvement across a raft of government polices placing managers under pressure to ensure the community involvement imperative is delivered. Actual involvement in community auditing, they feel, ensures operational managers are aware of the nature and extent of problems facing many communities. Smalle and Henderson conclude with the argument that operational and senior managers' involvement in community auditing rests on the need for both practitioners and local people to receive substantive support for grassroots work in which they are engaged. My concern with this chapter relate to the authors' concluding statement that a proactive approach to managing community audits makes 'good business sense.

It is SMART business'. It would seem to me that these authors have failed to engage with Raymond Williams and his heart-felt suspicion of the 'weasel words of the market'. A suspicion these 'community practitioners' and government ideologues might learn from.

Participative planning and evaluative skills

Chapter eight by Barr is a 'well-kent' discourse for us in Scotland. We were meant to have internalised his infamous framework for planning and evaluation, developed for community development/education called LEAP (Learning, Evaluation and Planning). This chapter reaffirms why it is difficult to get passionate about performance management. Barr argues that participative planning and evaluation are key elements in the process of managing community practice. His stress upon a rigorous approach to performance management that reflects the participative, partnership and empowerment principles of community practice, within an evaluative framework was, he asserts, long overdue. The author suggests that weaknesses in these areas had been identified before, notably in the 1970s when government had provided significant investment in the CDP. Barr argues community work in the UK had been heavily criticised by leading American commentators for its lack of structure. Barr is the type of intellectual who while the CDP's were struggling against pluralist notions of individual and community pathology, with a 'bottle' rarely reproduced in current 'community practice', was agonising over their lack of rigorous assessment of 'performance management'. He holds the LEAP framework arose partly out of the Scottish Office's dictat that practitioners were under notice that evidence-based performance measurement would be a condition of sustained investment. The framework owes a major debt to previous work on planning and evaluation in community development. This highlighted the importance of evaluating both the process and outcomes of development work, emphasising that if community development is about empowering communities it must also be participative regarding the manner in which targets are identified and achieved. Barr introduces a dual view of accountability that is not only about hierarchical authority but also about user and community rights and empowerment. Displaying his affection for current government ideas when he insists that shared planning and evaluation is a necessary ingredient of a model of governance that embraces these ideas of partnership between governors and governed. This fondness is highlighted when he concludes 'the cultural shift implied by these approaches is acknowledged in the government's "modernising government" agenda' (p. 152). A modernising government agenda that stresses the need for community involvement in planning and evaluation, on the one hand, and the increased role for the private sector in public initiatives such as the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and the Public Private Partnerships (PPP's) on the other, is however, seriously worrying.

Sustaining community involvement in programme and project development

Georgina Webster in her chapter attempts to illustrate that the sustainability of community involvement in programmes and projects has a poor practice record in the recent past. She cites extensively from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's 1995 study *Made to Last:*

Creating Sustainable Neighbourhood and Estate Regeneration. This was highly critical of a variety of programmes and initiatives designed to tackle disadvantage on estates and in deprived urban neighbourhoods. Webster points out a key finding was that one of the most disturbing features of regeneration area-based initiatives has been the frequency with which the same areas have to be selected for special treatment. How it highlighted concerns about 'wheel re-invention' and identified four key ingredients of sustainability:

- local empowerment and capacity building;
- critical aspects of programme design;
- arrangements for the management of initiatives;
- effective exit strategies.

Using her own research on programme and project sustainability, Webster refers to the work of the Riverside Community Health Project in the North East of England. She argues this case study found a limited measure of sustainability was purchased at the cost of an enormous amount of work and time invested in funding applications and building up new partnerships. Time and energy that prevented the project focusing considerable resources and energy on direct work with local people and local health issues. This meant the state ensured the project's activities and boundaries were drawn in and less likely to focus on contentious issues and concerns.

Webster's emphasis throughout is that managers have a key role to play. She effectively argues that it is necessary for them to prioritise learning and development in staff teams in relation to community development principles/practices. According to the author such learning and development will include critically reflecting on the culture of organisations and how agencies operate and impact on partnership groups and community involvement activity. Webster secures my vote when she argues that the work requires a commitment to promoting social change and rethinking traditional ways of operating in community and local neighbourhood contexts.

Mainstreaming community practice

Henderson (chapter ten) attempts to summarise the book's issues and themes. He suggests these revolve around the questions of how community practice can become a more integral part of organisations and programmes, and how it can be mainstreamed. Henderson does a good job in grouping the themes into two categories:

- managing the policy context;
- managing the interface with communities.

Henderson notes that contributors have drawn attention to the community involvement aspects of regeneration and social inclusion policies and how these inform and create a different context in which managers have to operate. Thereby reaffirming that the dimension of community involvement has been added to the management world with new policies requiring public organisations to challenge the traditional culture of professional bureaucracy with a capacity for change orientated to a new culture serving and empowering the public. Moreover, Henderson engages with the intellectual challenge facing managers. He draws attention to the notion of 'social capital'. Managers have to come to

grips with the effects of this growing 'social capital deficit' which threatens educational performance and safe neighbourhoods. This 'deficit model', it should be stressed, has been critiqued elsewhere (see Auerbach, 1989).

Henderson reiterates a clear theme encountered throughout this book that managers need to be much more familiar with the policy context than before. This he argues is because of the sheer number of community-based policies and programmes the 1997–2001government introduced and which have since expanded. Helpfully he refers to the critical space emerging and the contradictions that provide them. As well as the accumulating evidence of the power imbalances in many partnerships that have led commentators to argue for the use of power mapping, community involvement in monitoring and evaluation, joint learning events and community networks. The other key part of the policy context, for Henderson, is that managers are facing concerns regarding 'mainstreaming'. Henderson maintains that the Audit Commission has examined whether the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy's emphasis on using mainstream local services to tackle neighbourhood renewal is deliverable. Henderson stresses that there are organisational aspects of the 'new frame of reference' for community practice facing managers. Pointing out that in their links with communities local authority officers have to ensure they have good knowledge of the community sector and local networks. That managers need to be familiar with methods and tools used by practitioners in neighbourhoods and communities of interest and identity because they must provide support to practitioners and because, on occasions, they themselves will need to use these methods and tools. From a progressive viewpoint Henderson is helpful when he argues that there is a need to move away from quasi-bureaucratic features in organisations and to align community practice more closely with the organisational base from whence it is managed. The author then proposes that 'democratic welfare' therefore requires a 'deliberately engaged, active citizenry'.

Henderson maintains this book can, in addition to being used as a core text on degree and other long courses, be drawn on for other short courses. Given I have been struggling with this text for some time, I must be considered as one of Henderson's first graduates – one who however remains to be convinced of the value of the idea of 'community practice' over and above 'community development'. Finally he is upbeat when he refers to the policy documents from the Scottish Executive on tackling deprivation believing these signal a fundamental shift from seeing regeneration as separate from wider issues, such as mainstream health and education services, to the much more strategic approach offered by community planning. However he suggests in England, if one can paint a reasonably optimistic picture of government policy commitment, the prognosis for organisational change by agencies must of necessity be more cautious. It was ever thus. Making a reality of high-sounding policy statements is, all too often, where the best intentions fail. Nevertheless, Henderson asserts managers are likely to have to become increasingly involved with community development strategies.

Conclusions

I feel this text offers some valuable insights into the current neighbourhood renewal strategic work of the present government in both England and Scotland. The authors

affirm that community is firmly on the agenda of national, regional and local agencies. Senior ministers and civil servants continue to emphasise its importance. The contributors are upbeat about 'joined-up thinking and action' which they argue make sense in terms of effective service delivery and provide the basis for good links with communities because communities themselves work on a joined-up basis. The contributors appear aware that the call by policy makers for community involvement, which has on many occasions been bland and vacuous, can be cast within their framework of 'community practice' and supported by community development. I welcome this book as a serious and adroit attempt to exploit the spaces created by the current policy context. I remain sceptical, however, that 'community practice' is an attempt to 'sanitise' the already contested idea of 'community development' that is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual support. While competent and politically adept the book is somewhat lacking in passion. A passion that might help more readers learn from this informed text about how to skilfully operate in the interests of progressive social change within the archaic and reactionary British state and exploit the spaces provided by the contradictions afforded by its 'relatively autonomous' structure.

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Reviews

Mary John
Children's Rights and Power: Charging up for a new century
Jessica Kingsley 2003
ISBN 1 85302659 X
£16.99 (pbk)
pp 304

Priscilla Alderson

Mary John is widely respected for her advocacy of children's rights. She founded the programme of work arising from the 1992 conference that she convened on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This book is the ninth in the *Children in Charge* series she edits. John begins with the powerful memory of herself as a child in hospital over 50 years ago, deprived of basic rights, and she writes from the perspective of 'as if', not from cynicism but from hopeful imagining. To the familiar UNCRC's '3 Ps' of provision, protection and participation rights, Mary introduces the vital fourth 'big P' – power, and how children around the world experience power, being powerful, and transforming power relationships. The book asks why children are in a powerless minority group. Why are they so rarely included in debates on social accountability, freedom and autonomy? And why is their personhood often misunderstood and denigrated, so that they are not seen as real people?

By the 1970s and 1980s, a few psychologists, such as Judy Dunn, were recognising very young children as persons. They followed the earlier work, for example, of the Polish paediatrician Korczak, who inspired the UNCRC, and the French obstetrician Leboyer, who recognised new born babies as sensitive aware people. Yet the multiple representations of the child still tend to be negative, dominated by such media images as the Bulger murder and other witch-hunt visions of childhood, in contrast to respecting every child regardless of age or circumstances.

Beyond protection and provision, power concerns realising children's own self-defined aspirations in ways, for example, that Ennew has proposed for street children, and Rhys Griffths for school students: children as citizens now. Different concepts of power are reviewed – power as domination, or power as peaceful transforming energy – with the potential for children as one of the most excluded and oppressed groups to contribute to social change. If the major axes of rights are personhood and power, respect for children's rights entails honouring children's personhood and lived experiences. To do so, involves critically rethinking mainstream child psychology that has fallen into depoliticised 'objective' indifference. This rethinking is similar to the way feminism reformed adult psychology, and enabled the voices of the silent women to be heard through radical new research theories, methods and ethics. In research with children and young people, these new approaches cross, but also explicitly analyse, power relationships between children and adults.

The chapters on children and the economy examine the commercial corporate construction of childhood, and also review how children tend to be invisible in statistics. If children

do appear, the statistics may be misleading and fragmented. Children are situated on the edges of adults' concerns. We need statisticians, journalists and economists who will render children visible, and start from children's perspectives to change public attitudes and policies, for example, towards Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa. I found that this section of the book filled in yawning gaps left by admirable but adult-centred writers such as Will Hutton and George Monbiot.

The 'enduring and surviving' section reviews how the seemingly remote political issues are integral to immediate personal ones. Cases such as Victoria Climbié's short life illuminate structures in contemporary British society, the state services, and the family. The section considers indomitable children who endure and survive, are resilient and resourceful, cope and collude, despite the constraining myths that adults weave around them. Many families across the world survive through the support of their working children. This book challenges unrealistic Western opposition to all child labour, in the light of working children's own views, showing how, instead of researching young people, it is often more salient to research adults' misrepresentations of them and 'intolerable' offences against them (p. 154). 'Warriors and workers' begins with the relentless war waged against childhood, and especially against child workers and child soldiers, by adults' violent values and policies.

In the section on eloquent active 'children in charge', their political agency and participation, Mary John sustains her radical critical scrutiny, such as of children's attempts to take part as equals with adults at UN conferences and global summits. The depressing state of many schools' disrespect for children and young people, from the West to South Africa to Japan is reviewed. There's a fascinating account of the modern versions of Geisha girls with their liberating mobile phones.

The 'young citizens in action' section ranges from the Devon Youth Council to the Children's Parliament, which since 1993 has run night schools in Rajasthan, one of the poorest regions in the world. The children there work from around dawn to dusk, and then attend night school. Unusually, the night schools emphasise skills over abstract learning, rural and working class language over urban middle class approaches, small local schools rather than larger distant ones, and skills over exams. Everyone learns and teaches (a model for every school). The young teachers are former students of their school. Sustainable education helps everyone to understand and enrich their self-reliant local community (practical nurturing power) instead of to hanker after the dream of personal success in a distant city. By 2001, there were 150 night school with nearly 3000 children, two thirds of them were girls. Whereas the new UK Children's Parliament is mainly for role play, the Rajasthan Children's Parliament has real power. The children aged 6-14 years elect their MPs aged 11 –1 4 years. The Parliament monitors the schools and can fire slack teachers. The 11 year old Speaker, Devkaran Guijar, in 1996 organised installing a water pump for his village, showing how the children have responsibility and power to achieve change. A travelling puppet show warns people against moneylenders and promotes women's and children's rights and the value of good teachers. So the children teach the adults about citizens' power, even in this very traditional community, where a series of the Parliament's Prime Ministers had to resign when they became wives aged about 15 years. This global book moves on to Albany Free School, questioning why, since there are pockets of respect for children and their rights in all parts of the world, these pockets are so small and rare.

There are many vivid analyses: 'Adolescence, an artificially-created, cold waiting-room to life, appears now to have to endure more waiting' (p. 258). And young people tend to be blamed for their impatience, whereas we need instead to research how and why adults enforce the wait through escalating intergenerational and international inequalities. Children and young people are 40% of the world's population, allocated nowhere near 40% of the world's resources. If reports from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, G8, EU, and international corporations all had to include an impact on children statement, would we all become informed and horrified enough to insist that policies change?

This book offers hope that the world can become one of risk, excitement, imagination and creativity (p. 267) by listening to children. The book ends with the memory of Mary John as a child in hospital and Proust's belief that: 'We do not receive wisdom. We must discover it for ourselves from experiences...'. I found the book's beginning and end especially interesting now because of Margaret Stacey, who died recently and was a founder of medical sociology, which has important links with children's rights and power. First, Margaret (and I) started from our sons' time in hospital being treated for malformed feet, and we followed in our sons' footsteps to learn to research with children. In a sense, so do all sociologists of health and healing who follow Margaret's lead. And in the ultra risk-managing, child-protecting contemporary UK society, children in hospital with severe disease or disability are among the few groups of children in Britain who still experience the kinds of danger and suffering that children in many parts of the world face everyday. Adults have much to learn from their courage and insight, and Mary John's book, grown from her own suffering in childhood, profoundly illustrates this point.

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Lode Walgrave (ed)
Repositioning Restorative Justice
Willan Publishing 2003
ISBN 1-84392 016 6
£28.50
pp 351

Kim Andrews-Devine

This book is the companion volume to *Restorative Justice and The Law* (2002) and is a collection of contributions from almost 30 practitioners and academics following an international conference in Leuven. It is often difficult to find a coherently focussed argument with such an eclectic mix of ideas and reflections from contributors generally looking to promote this radical alternative to punitive sanctions. The book is divided into four logical sections looking in turn at the 'principles' of restorative justice, 'aspects' of restorative practices, 'extending the scope of restorative approaches' and 'positioning restorative justice in different countries' (p.vi). No clear definition of restorative justice is offered and this is symptomatic of the widespread view that clarity of definition is something those involved need to work on expediently in order to further the case. Therefore, it remains very much an alternative viewpoint and a subject situated only on the

periphery of academic debate surrounding punishment. This book promotes the theory as both desirable and realistic but without the detail needed to ensure that implementation could actually be effected in a post-modern Britain.

As the book progresses, it becomes clear the title is somewhat ambitious. In order to enable repositioning, restorative justice must at some time have been firmly and unambiguously placed somewhere within the criminal justice system. According to the majority of contributors, this has never really been the case and as Martin Wright states (Chapter 1), the quest is to find a place for it. Indeed, the editor concedes that if definition and positioning is not achieved within a reasonable time scale, the whole subject may lose its 'trendiness' within contemporary debate and as a consequence, associated funding streams. The very concept of punishment is questioned, which is a sensible and necessary place to start and states a compelling case for a move away from a merely punitive approach.

Paul McCold (Chapter 4) rightly highlights the many advantages to implementing restorative justice for the various actors and positive outcomes are assessed. He also points to the difficulty of measuring progress and indeed, results in the USA are varied and based largely on opinion. Several statements spread throughout the book show public opinion to be generally in favour of restorative justice in principle. This is encouraging but in this country, with a frustrated public demanding more punitive sanctions for criminals, it may be perceived as a soft option and a difficult issue politically.

The sensitive topic of mediation forms a central plank of the debate and the successes and pitfalls are well documented. Nathan Harris (Chapter 5) states that the procedural aims of group conferencing are 'restoration', 'empowerment', 'reintegration' and 'emotional resolution' (p123-127) and acknowledges the tensions that can be present in these interactions. The main aims must also be to do no more harm to the victim and to give sensible outcome to all parties through respect, fairness and justice. It is not an exact science and evidence presented from family and group conferencing shows that most victims and offenders will meet but rates of recidivism are estimated no lower than court adjudications.

A particularly interesting and relevant area is youth justice, where the implementation of restorative justice in this country is becoming a reality, although still in its infancy. Isabelle Delens-Ravier (Chapter 7) examines the views of community service by young people and concludes that many view themselves as victims of the system and liable not to participate. Accepting guilt and accepting responsibility are considered as very different ideas to young people. We do need to understand the attitude of juveniles to community sentencing and to restoration and reparation to be able to better construct aims pertinent and acceptable to young people and Delens-Ravier explains this with some clarity.

From a practitioner perspective some informative reflection by Mia Claes et al (Chapter 13) regarding victim-offender mediation for young offenders within the Belgian criminal justice system raises inherent difficulties linked to the obscure position of restorative justice. Highlighting issues such as 'differences in procedure, vision and approach' (p.265) that hinder victim and offender participation within the scope of the practitioner provides limited input for development work. The requirement to frame restorative justice in a

comprehensible manner within the criminal justice system and the practicalities of effective partnership working are amongst the range of challenges for the practitioner to craft a position for this initiative.

Whilst it is only possible to review a small selection of the chapters and contributors to this book, it is certainly recommended for those seeking to analyse and compare international perspectives by ascertaining the views of contributors from countries that have some form of restorative justice experience. Indeed the range of comparative reviews of restorative justice and their contextual positioning within their respective criminal justice systems provides stimulating reading. Generally well presented, the book would have benefited from a conclusion, where the varied and diverse strands of thought could have been drawn together to give the argument greater coherence.

Importantly however, it does not address practical implementation issues and therefore may be of limited use for practitioners. As a section manager within a Youth Offending Team, I need to look beyond academic theory and towards reality and the potential difficulties of implementation. Guidance on what has been found to be effective and how this can best be adapted to the needs of this sphere of practice would have made this book more relevant to practitioners. Restorative justice is radical and desirable but the subject needs to find both a universally understood definition and a workable place in the criminal justice process, a position that practitioners can relate to. Whilst realising that the main aim of the book is to give an insight into international perspectives on restorative justice, the paucity of contributors from England and Wales ensures that this book does not convincingly locate restorative justice within our own criminal justice framework. Nor unfortunately does it point to a sensible, progressive way forward for practitioners in this country.

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Jeremy Roche, Stanley Tucker, Rachel Thomson, Ronny Flynn (eds)
Youth in Society: Contemporary theory, policy and practice
SAGE Publications in association with The Open University, 2004
ISBN 1-4129-0024-7
£18.99 (pbk)
pp 263

Jeremy Brent

This book is intended as a comprehensive introduction to policy developments affecting young people today. It contains major arguments about the need to understand the historical and social specificity of the experience and formation of the category 'youth'. It includes a good potted history of 'youth' up to the 1970s, and an excellent chapter on ideas of social constructivism, but it is a second edition. Most of the chapters have not been updated, and much of the book is stuck in 1997.

This does provide historical interest, as it makes the reader realise how much has changed over the last seven years, partly, but not entirely, to do with the rule of 'New Labour'. The

chapters dissecting the policies of the Conservative government have a quaint ring to them, but there is no need to waste time on old arguments when there are plenty of new ones. There have been many recent changes in social life as experienced by young people, which unfortunately the book just does not cover. To be specific:

- Neither of the chapters on race cover the Stephen Lawrence case and subsequent McPherson Report, which have changed the terms of the debate about racism in Britain. Incidentally, after rightly pointing out the relationship between racism and fears of the masculinity of the Other, why do the writers then only write about young men?

- The discussions of race do not take 9/11 and the subsequent rise in Islamophobia into account. This has led to a massive shift in the discourse of domestic racism that needs analysis and understanding.

- The work on the human rights of young people was written before the recent Crime and Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour Acts, both of which have major implications for young people. Fortunately the chapter on youth justice is more up-to-date.

- None of the chapters on youth policy discuss either *Transforming Youth Work* or *Every Child Matters*, major steps in the practice of youth work and the managing of children and young people. There are big professional issues at stake – how much youth work is about accredited outcomes, and how much surveillance is part of social care.

- I get tired of discussions of youth sub-cultures that rely on studies of Teds, Punks and Rastafarians. Those studies were brilliant at the time, but not all changes in youth manners carry such meaning, and capitalism has become more savvy in its commodification of sub-cultural expression. Not everything young people do is in itself oppositional – for example, young women wearing physically revealing Barbie wear may be reclaiming femininity, or being ironical about the commodification of sex, or may just be buying into the whole idea of women as sexual toys. Young people can, after all, be extremely conservative!

- The debate on sexuality too has shifted. The arguments about section 28 are over. This does not mean the defeat of homophobia and discrimination, but the debate now hinges much more around gay marriages (the debate in Europe on this issue, especially in France, Italy and Spain, has changed beyond recognition in the last two years) and the age of consent. The chapters on sexuality rely, properly, on the works of Michel Foucault and Jeffrey Weeks, but in trying to interpret the ideas of these two very clear writers they make them indigestible. I would recommend everyone to read them in the original.

- The discussion of housing and youth homelessness ends in 1996 – an area in which more recent government action fluctuates between provision and repression.

- There is nothing in the book about the many and confusing changes in the examination regimes which are such a large part of the life of teenagers, nor any discussion on the expansion of higher education and changes in the way it is financed. These affect those who do not continue their education after 16 as much as those who do, as they change the way that young people are given value.

Fortunately the shortcomings of the book are mitigated by a number of excellent chapters. These include first-rate primers to issues of family life, disability, welfare services for young people, and changes in youth and employment. There are two good chapters on practice – ethical dilemmas in work with young people, and communication between young people and adults – valuable for both new and experienced workers.

This book is intended for that rather strange mass of people who work with young people. Who are they, and what is their identity? There is an interesting chapter devoted to describing the fluidity of this identity in a shifting and contested world. Identity formation and professional practice are described as an ever-changing 'game', dependent on the socio-political climate in which people work. For workers to play this game well we need to know the history forming the present, but we also need to know the current situation. It is disappointing that this book does not provide that information.

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Judith Sealander
The Failed Century of the Child: Governing America's Young in the Twentieth Century
Cambridge University Press 2003
ISBN 0 521 53568 9 (pbk); ISBN 0 521 82878 3 (hbk)
£21.99 (US $28.) (pbk)
£60.00 (US $75.00) (hbk)
pp 374

Marcia B. Cohen

Sealander's *The Failed Century of the Child* is simultaneously accessible and scholarly. The text is highly engaging, free from the dryness of many academic tomes. The title refers to the unmet goals of the twentieth century to guarantee health, opportunity, and security to its children. A historian, Sealander uses inter-disciplinary sources to effectively trace reoccurring themes, contradictions, and interconnections in twentieth century American child welfare, education, and public health policy, in order to understand the failure of these lofty goals.

The book covers a broad expanse, a century's worth of policy developments, across a range of different fields. The author traces the roles of social scientists, politicians, and professionals in influencing, and often, benefiting, from historical change. The book synthesizes the impact of state regulations across four substantive arenas: children's welfare, children's labor, children's education and children's health.

The first section explores historical, sociological and social policy developments in juvenile justice, state responses to child abuse, and public aid to poor children. The material on the juvenile justice system captures the century's changing views of children and a shift of goals from 'child saving to public accountability' (p. 19). Early in the century the prevailing view was that juveniles were educable, in need of treatment rather than punishment. By the end of the century many youths under age 18 had their cases heard in adult courts, served time in adult prisons, and, in some cases, were executed. The complex societal reasons that account for such changes over time are discussed, two of the most prominent being race and gender.

Government response to child abuse is understood as reflecting changing demographics

and values during the century. The myth of social class transcending the identification of child abuse is questioned given the scrutiny which poor families are subjected to, by departments of welfare, in contrast to the virtual lack of such monitoring of affluent families. Related issues of children, poverty and policy are explored.

Policies regarding the eligibility, provision, and scrutiny of public assistance for poor families followed a similar trajectory as juvenile justice and child abuse. ADC (later AFDC) was initially a small programme, administered by the states, which had the power to implement regulations to meet the needs of local workforces. The eventual explosion in numbers of poor families requiring state aid was not understood as a symptom of a society whose industrial economy was built on the unequal distribution of wealth. Rather, critics were quick to blame the moral character (or lack) of recipients. Given how relative advantages and disadvantageous are apportioned in American society, it is not surprising that people of colour are over represented among families receiving public assistance, fueling stereotypes. Public consensus, stirred up by the media and politicians, feeding off deeply engrained racial and class prejudices and whipped up by fears of higher taxes, agreed to the demise of AFDC. Ironically, during the 1990s when the criticism of AFDC had grown to fever pitch, the percentage of families on welfare had actually decreased, although the percentage of non-white family beneficiaries grew. Policy culminated in the bipartisan supported 'Personal Responsibility Act' of 1996 which ended the AFDC program and replaced it with the complex and punitive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programme. This places strict time limits on benefits, exerts controls over the behavior of poor women (encouraging them to marry or remain with violent spouses) and has reduced aid to poor children at the cost of increased homelessness.

Issues of child labor are explored in section two. The Progressive movement sought to regulate the paid labor of children; and by the 1930s there were child labor regulations in every state, ultimately federalized in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Such regulations emphasized limiting child employment in hazardous jobs, reduced the number of hours that children were permitted to work and increasing the age at which children were considered old enough for paid employment. Sealander suggests that an unintended consequence of these regulations was to extend the age of legal childhood and, therefore, the government's responsibility for training children and preparing them for adult employment

The third section addresses several aspects of children's education: compulsory education, pre-school education, and education for disabled children. All three topics reflect ongoing political and academic debates about the purpose of education for children. Early in the century, the Progressives saw compulsory high school education as a means of reducing child labour and instilling values of civic consciousnesses. Ironically, this use of the classroom as 'mini-democracy' excluded African-American students prior to the enforcement of racial discrimination bans in the 1960s. Other themes embedded in the century long history of compulsory high school education include a series of shifting beliefs, political positions, and academic influences over IQ testing, vocational education, and life-adjustment education (guidance and other counseling).

Pre-school education was a legacy of nineteenth century reformers who sought to 'save' young children from their ignorant, immigrant parents. Concerns about the inadequacies

of parents reached their peak during World War I, as psychological behaviorism came to the fore. By the 1960s, the 'discovery' of poverty by social scientists and politicians, resulted in efforts to enrich the early education of poor children. Head Start was one of many programmes launched during the 1960s and one of the very few to persist into the twenty-first century. The author is quick to point out that amidst the many controversies, claims, and counter-claims made about the success or failure of Head Start, very little research as to the actual effectiveness has been done.

Regarding the public education of special needs children, the author raises the provocative question of whether, in a time of budget scarcity and limited spending on education, monies to accommodate the education of special needs children were being diverted from programmes for poor and minority children? It is disturbing to think about an inadequate pie being split between children covered by the Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 and the Education of Handicapped Children's Act in 1975.

The final section explores several aspects of children's health, specifically government attempts to improve children's fitness and to regulate childhood immunization. It is in keeping with the regulatory and monitory theme of this book that a chapter on the government's attempts to improve children diets, exercise, and fitness would, appropriately have been included. Although frequently conflated with our military prowess Sealander points out that children's diets are far more likely to reflect historical manifestations of poverty. Early in the century, poor kids suffered from severe malnutrition whereas by late century they were far much more likely to be obese given the increased availability and affordability of unhealthy and fattening 'junk' food.

Earlier themes of the book reverberate in the discussion of mandatory childhood immunization. Not surprisingly scientists, academics, the public health community, politicians and the media have all been part of the shifting debate. The author comments that the fastest growing government federal entitlement programme of the 1990s 'Vaccines for Children,' would have been more accurately termed. 'Vaccines for the Insurance Industry'. Many of the children receiving these federally subsidized vaccines were not really poor while one in five families thrown off the AFDC rolls in 1996, included children who lost their Medicaid coverage and eligibility for government subsidized immunization.

The author's brief concluding chapter is somewhat disappointing in its absence of a more comprehensive synthesis of the various themes that are well raised and documented in the book. The conclusion is not without interest but does lack much of the weaving together of century long themes and inter-disciplinary perspectives, including the powers of social scientists, the media, politicians, and large corporations to shape policy and the tendency to overlook issues of race and gender. Perhaps the author has left it to her readers to draw their own conclusions.

On a far more positive note this book is a wealth of information on a variety of 'child saving' movements begun in the Progressive era and their tendency, by century's end to fall short of their original promise. Carefully tracing the developments of public policy in a variety of interconnected areas, Sealander provides us with an extremely useful compendium. This book is a natural for classroom use, especially but not exclusively, in the United States. The

book is appropriate for undergraduate and graduate courses in history, child welfare, social policy, social work, and political science.. It is also likely to be of interest to practitioners, policy makers and academics in those same fields.

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Danny Brierley
Joined Up: An introduction to youth work and ministry
Pater Noster, Carlisle 2003
ISBN: 1-85078-483-3
£7.99 (pbk)

Bob Mayo

This book is third-way thinking for faith-based youth work and ministry. It makes a clear presentation of why it is inappropriate to think in terms of either doing youth work or youth ministry but better instead to think in terms of doing both youth work and youth ministry. It is joined-up thinking that takes what is known as 'youth and community work', 'youth work' and 'youth ministry' and then mixes them all into one. The book offers 'joined-up' thinking that takes the 1991 definitions of youth work as promoting 'equality of opportunity', 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'education' and then mixes it with the theological ideas of 'incarnation', 'fellowship', 'worship' and 'mission'.

There are specific and profound insights in this book that have benefited me as a reader. I liked the idea of Jesus using healing as a way of countering social exclusion (p.128); and the fact that it is wrong to talk of different races because there is only one race (p.124). I appreciated the idea of empowerment as enabling a growth into inter-dependence rather than independence (p.100) and the idea that if, as educators we withhold our values, we deny young people the necessary information they need to make value judgements about us (p.87).

It is a profoundly honouring book that is very respectful of the contribution that different people have made to the field. Maxine Green and Chandu Christian (for example) have done important work in establishing the legitimacy of faith-based work (p.20) and the overlap between the disciplines of informal education and theology (p.91). It is because this book is a consciously bridging and inclusive book that it enables the discussion to be taken further. The book models the dialogical nature of youth work and ministry by including responses at the end of each chapter and so the debate is entered as the book is read. Nick Margesson disagrees with the attempt to shape a theology round the idea of 'voluntary participation' (p.79). Nigel Wright would prefer to talk of 'duty' ahead of 'empowerment' (p.113).

There were three areas that drew my attention as being worthy of further discussion. These were the ideas of incarnation, conversion and equal opportunities. The incarnation

is described as 'the son becoming fully human in Jesus so as to identify with and atone for humanity' (p.135). The danger of sentences, such as this, is that it suggests that the purpose of the incarnation was God wanting to identify with humanity rather than God wanting to reveal his truth, which consequently did then identify with humanity. This can leave the idea of incarnation as a short hand term for contextual and there is then no satisfactory distinction drawn between incarnational and relational youth work.

The book gives me the opportunity to consider what I understand by the idea of 'conversion'. Youth work that does not lead to change or conversion to young people's attitude to self, others and society is described as ineffective practice (p.12). The idea of conversion is a change from one thing to another; in this respect youth work and ministry might be about 'conversion' when, for example, there are attitudes that need to be challenged. Equally though, youth work and ministry might be to do with 'transformation' when there are attitudes to be encouraged. Then, later in the book, all informal education is described as being in the business of conversion (p.86). The danger of a sentence such as this is that it gives a prominence to the personal interaction between educators and educated. This, by definition, will involve the interaction between one person with more experience and another person with less experience and therefore conversion will be embedded within any consequent rethinking of attitudes. The danger of this emphasis, though, is that it underplays the interaction between the educated and their peers. Malcolm Rittman (p.97) acknowledges this in referring to the role of the environment in education. Dewey (1916:19) wrote that people never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment.

For a lot of the time the youth worker/minister will not have a clear understanding of what she/he is achieving with young people. The *Albemarle* (HMSO, 1960) idea of associational youth work suggests that often youth workers and young people will be hanging around together without any immediate and quantifiable educational outcome. I have always thought that it is one of the spiritual laws of the universe that God will never let us know the effect we have on people on the basis that it would either make us arrogant or depressed.

Equal Opportunities is described as ensuring that all individuals and groups are given equal opportunity to succeed in life (p.118). The book does not deal with how this understanding of Equal Opportunities could be then located within the current discussion around the promotion of diversity. An effective society is one which recognises and maximises the differences that exist within individuals whether they be age, sexual orientation, gender, race or disability. Even this idea of diversity has been overtaken recently by Trevor Philips' comment that the idea of multi-culturalism promotes the idea of separateness. My unease at the book referring to original goodness (p.121) rather than original sin is that it might underplay the reality of structural sin and inequality within society.

None of these comments detract from the fact that the rapid expansion of faith-based training courses over the last ten years has made the need for books, such as *Joined Up* imperative. It is a must read for the students on the Oasis, Moorlands, Centre for Youth Ministry courses as well as anyone seeking to integrate a value base or belief structure with working with young people.

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Sue Heath and Elizabeth Cleaver

Young, Free and Single? Twenty-Somethings and Household Change

Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

ISBN: 1403901244

£45.00

pp 225

Yvette Taylor

In posing the question *Young, Free and Single?* Heath and Cleaver introduce a series of questions, debates and controversies. Their central motivation in asking appears to be the lack of research into young peoples' housing 'choices' and the effects and connections this has with the labour market, employability, intimacy and 'reflexivity'. Despite the frequent labelling of younger generations as carefree, individualistic, 'slackers' who lack commitment and development both interpersonally and with respect to 'adult' choices – both of which are marked as states of 'arrested development' (Cote, 2000), the authors suggest that many young people are making positive and genuine choices. Choosing to live the way they want to live, choosing to create autonomous, equal, 'pure' relationships, choosing to reallocate, move up – and move out, if necessary. The reader gets a sense of the 'flexible', geographically and economically mobile worker, choosing, deciding and preferring certain ways of being. Although such an account gives a clear sense of agency to the people they interviewed, and contests the portrayal of young people as victims of constraint, crisis and pessimistic uncertainty more generally, I was at times uncertain about the broader applicability of such depictions. After all a choice is not just a choice, is it?

In answer to this, the authors do point out the specificity of their sample, stating that they conducted the research amongst a relatively privileged group of young people, with access to socially acceptable 'exist strategies' for leaving the home, and 'niche' student housing markets. While I would agree that it is essential to adopt a more holistic approach to youth 'transitions', including and problematising the experiences of the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged, I feel that the flagging up of the privileged nature of their sample, as a methodological concern was not always matched in terms of pointing to the specificity of their arguments and conclusions. Furthermore, there is almost an erasure of the language of class from their analysis – yet this is included in their overall conclusions, as is the necessity to look at other 'disadvantaged' groups, specifically ethnic and sexual minorities. Admittedly, it is difficult to know when to research the 'advantaged', fearing a perpetuation of 'privilege', and the 'disadvantaged' and a continuation of stigma. However when the

authors conclude that their, albeit privileged, sample are 'representative of one of the groups who appear to be very much in the vanguard of social change with respect to the transformation of intimacy and household formation' (p. 192), I fear that such a distinction can occur.

It is with hesitation and respect for the overall project that I make such a critique and it is only because I found the work so interesting, engaging and thought provoking that I am able to do so. While it is beyond the scope of this review to fully chart the book's insightful analysis and use of broad ranging methods (embracing quantitative data from UK, Europe, Australia and the USA, to qualitative interviews with young household sharers, including extracts and illustrations from popular culture) I will attempt to illustrate some of their interesting, if controversial, points. In doing so I hope to demonstrate that this book is both valuable and useful. As a 'twenty-something' I was simultaneously comforted and taken aback that I was still considered to be a within the scope of a 'youth' study. Indeed, it is the purpose of their work to extend this concept, given their problematisation of smooth, linear 'transitions' from dependence to independence, from youth to adult status. Critiquing both the youth cultural studies tradition as neglecting the 'ordinariness' of everyday life and the domestic sphere, and the youth transitions tradition, with its focus on youth constraints, prioritising work transitions over and above housing the authors then go on to remedy this in their substantive chapters.

In chapter three, 'youth trajectories' are replaced by individual, 'reflexive' 'choice' biographies capturing, they argue, a sense of negotiated opportunities contrasting with the standard, normative biographies of past generations. With theoretical allegiance to Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992), the authors suggest that the development of 'families of choice' (friends as family, family as friends) within their study resonates with 'transformation of intimacy' conceptualisations. The limitations of choice are acknowledged, using Giddens' 'fateful moments', and broader literatures are drawn upon (such as Jamieson, 1999), highlighting the fact that this is contested terrain. Moving on to chapter five. Here the authors give attention to student housing and households suggesting that this route provides opportunities in terms of housing choices and friendship networks. The differential experience between working-class and middle-class students could have perhaps been elaborated upon but the inequalities in student experiences are highlighted. These include differential investments in the self, as 'responsible choosers', who are able to make 'reflexive' decisions about housing, friends, and employment – and those who are stuck at home. But even here, there is a suggestion that this may not be entirely constraining; except how do gap years and 'CV building' compare with staying at home, staying put rather than 'moving on'? Attention to social policy changes, such as the withdrawal of housing benefits for students and the expansion of higher education situate these choices within broader social structures.

The distinction between student housing and 'proper', 'decent', 'sophisticated' and 'grown up' housing is drawn out through interview data, perhaps suggesting a sharper distinction between housing hierarchies and transitions than the authors imply. Their respondents seemed to know that however many times they 'returned' (to the parental home), their journeys wouldn't involve moving down or occupying more vulnerable positions. Returning, reassessing, re-consolidating advantages. Sociability within shared spaces acted as the

emotional glue binding housemates together and here the authors use Maffesoli's concept of 'neo-tribalism' to explore shared communal ethics, proximity and ritual. The devices used by sharers to attract 'like minded' (vegetarian, gay, and presumably profitable) renters implicitly suggests ways of knowing, and the cultural as well as economic capital required to become an 'attractive' house mate. Conflicts are not as common as the stereotype of shared household suggests, is the argument put forward by the authors, yet this would seem to be a rather divisive issue, socially and interpersonally. Again, I would like to have read more about the classed components of such accounts and strategies.

In exploring perceptions of living alone and eventual long-term desires to 'settle-down' and conform to normative expectations of property buying and family building, there is an assertion that such feelings do not invalidate satisfaction with current household arrangements and the relationships that these foster. Households have meanings, memories and values that are denigrated by normative expectations of moving on and moving away, of becoming 'proper', 'respectable' owner-occupiers. The emotional resonance of not 'achieving' and not/belonging that this has is surely widespread. For that reason, I would recommend this book as a way of considering young people's housing, employment, and relationship 'choices' and I would agree wholeheartedly with the authors' assertion for the need for more research into this area. I believe this book will be appreciated by students across disciplines, given the attention to student and post-student experiences.

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Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands
Urban Nightscapes – youth cultures, pleasure spaces and corporate power
Routledge 2003
ISBN 0-415-28346-9
£19.99 (pbk)
pp 285

David Wallace

This book identifies with the important role that popular culture plays in our city centres. It sets out to provide a contemporary analysis of urban nightscapes in which the consumer, as represented by young adults, faces an increasingly standardised leisure experience through forms of McDonaldisation in which big brands take over large parts of downtown areas. This is represented in both the replication of standardised social and recreational activities in cities and by the systematic exclusion of alternative voices and of those who are non-consumers. The authors argue that the current urban entertainment economy is distinguishable by a concentration of corporate ownership, increasing use of branding and themeing, and market segmentation through gentrification and sanitisation of leisure activities. Corporate control is exemplified by the emergence of a leisure economy rooted in an infrastructure of themed restaurants and bars, nightclubs, casinos, multiplex cinemas and various types of virtual arcades. All of this is characteristic of a corporate control of urban nightlife that 'marginalise(s) historic, alternative and creative local development'.

Statistical evidence is used tellingly to support analysis, particularly with regard to young people being targeted as consumers and the trend toward fewer and larger corporate players controlling the market. The value of commercial city centre leisure is exemplified by a UK nightclub industry that attracts around 185 million people annually and reaches sales of over £2 billion. The authors portray this trend as a rapidly changing aspect of urban life. Hence a representation of nightscapes is presented 'through an integrated circuit of culture which comprise the three processes of production, regulation and consumption'. Complementary analysis is provided of who and what is involved in producing nightlife spaces; who and what is involved in regulating them; and who and what is involved in consuming them.

Offering 10 erudite and lucid chapters of analysis the 246 pages of narrative in the book seek to untangle urban nightlife and to show how it is made and remade in various guises. Although predominately related to UK experience, the authors also provide a comparative glimpse into how these processes are working out in other parts of the world. Methodologically the book is grounded in several years of research including an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded study of several UK city centres, which took place between 1999 and 2002. Surveys, focus groups, interviews and document searches were all undertaken to provide the necessary triangulation of data on which the findings in this publication are based.

As part of a critical geographies series, there are several areas of critique in *Urban Nightscapes*. The mores of global fast-buck culture are observed as blocking out and ultimately silencing legitimate local interests and other non-commercial and diverse concerns. The involvement of young adults in these commercial leisure developments is wholly as consumer. Chatterton and Hollands cite evidence which essentially suggests that for those who can afford it, and who fit with the mainstream, then the corporate approach allows access to the status quo. For those young people who are residual or marginalised from these commercial phenomena then the exclusion is regulated by the market and highly discriminatory. Questions of equality and access are critically appraised and perhaps unsurprisingly the authors conclude that 'the contemporary urban entertainment economy is marked by social and spatial inequality and segmentation of consumer markets'.

Paradoxes in these new urban nightscapes are explored throughout the volume. For example the authors identify a trend in which young women are now increasingly occupying space in these nightscapes as social actors independent of men. However this is juxtaposed with the rising objectification and subjugation of women as represented in a growing and legitimated (sic) lap-dancing sector. The continued absence of women from senior management positions in the leisure sector is also highlighted. Long hours and low pay in the nightlife sector may be the norm but this too is contrasted with the financial opportunities that are available for young people in bar work and in creative jobs such as interior design and music.

The local state is increasingly seen to embrace a business led and entrepreneurial trend in city centres (e.g Glasgow, Barcelona and Melbourne) which is often accompanied by a clamp down on 'deviants', non-consumers such as homeless people, the urban poor, and young people such as punks and skaters. Outpriced by the night-time economy the authors raise important issues about the further disenfranchisement of groups who are already excluded by discrimination and poverty.

In providing a cogent analysis of the regulation of nightlife, there are insightful pieces on the role of the police and of bouncers in restricting 'alternative' forms of nightlife and in becoming 'mechanisms for distinction and exclusion'. This reinforces the authors' contention that nightlife experience is polarised between those who can exercise significant entertainment choice (highly mobile, cash rich, time poor groups) and those who have extremely restricted choice (unemployed, low waged, high debt groups). They further contend that nightlife experience is still contoured by higher education, gender and sexual identity and ethnic differences.

Urban Nightscapes should be of interest to a wide readership including policymakers, academics and youth workers. I enjoyed reading this book. In part this is down to a professional interest in the world of young people and of youth work but I also appreciated the insight it provided into the social and commercial world around me and which I experience as a consumer. This is an important text because it conveys a warning about the fate of our public urban space and about the subjugation of issues of access, civility and public cultures. Chatterton and Hollands have identified an insidious commercial and anti-democratic trend for which there are real alternatives. They offer up a vision of a differing nightscape in which communities and local people have a contribution to make; in which there is participation by young people other than as consumer; and in which there is attention to diversity and more democratic relationships between producers, regulators and consumers.

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David Buckingham and Sarah Bragg
Young People, Sex and the Media: the Facts of life?
Palgrave 2004

Paul Crawshaw

The impact of diverse media forms on the lives of young people is an established area of debate and study in academic, policy and popular arenas with concerns often focussing upon representations of violence, illicit drug use and sex. This text focuses upon the latter, and offers a new and insightful analysis based upon original, and often innovative, empirical research. The study starts from the oft cited premise that young people increasingly know 'too much' about sex and that this results in a destabilising of the traditional boundaries that exist between childhood, youth and adulthood. This, so conservative commentators would tell us, leads to a stripping away of the innocence associated with childhood, and presents a very real danger of its disappearance altogether. As the authors are careful to point out, such simplistic ideas are, of course, highly contestable, and questions surrounding sex, permissiveness and the impacts of the media remain much debated. This study offers an in depth qualitative analysis of young people's own accounts of sex and the media, and as such provides a valuable discussion from the perspective of those most able to offer an insight into the impacts of media representations of sex on young people; young people themselves.

A real strength of the text is a detailed discussion of the innovative research methods used to collect data with young people in a way that allowed them to express their own views and understandings. The authors discuss at length their use of diaries, in depth interviews and young people's responses to TV programmes, as well as data collected with parents and some quantitative survey work. Extracts from diaries are presented and serve to bring respondents accounts to life, whilst also offering the reader an interesting methodological guide for how such approaches could potentially be incorporated into their own research and practice. From reading the detailed chapter devoted to methodology, it is clear that the data reported in the main body of the text is based on a rigorous and in depth study that makes a strong case for the salience of qualitative approaches in attempting to explore a complex issue that is so inextricably tied up with diverse aspects of young people's lives.

Subsequent chapters focus on specific questions such as how young people learn about sex, the construction of gender and sexual identities, young people's response to representations of sex and the body in diverse media forms, how sex is talked about in the media, representation of sex in TV dramas and issues raised by 'watching' sex in home and family contexts. All draw extensively on original data and this makes the text accessible whilst offering the reader a real insight into the accounts given by young people involved in the study. This comes together as a highly comprehensive discussion that draws on diverse perspectives from both parents and young people. As such, the text offers a real attempt to deal with the complexity of debates surrounding the impact of sex in the media on young people and offers a refreshing antidote to the 'moral panics' instigated by the media themselves and overly simplistic and linear models of media effects that have often been used in disciplines such as psychology to 'explain' how what we see has a direct influence on how we behave (for an interesting discussion and critique see Gauntlett, 2002). The authors recognise that watching or reading any text is part of an active process of the

construction of meaning that takes place between the text and the viewer/ reader. The message is that to understand this process we must elicit young people's own accounts that are sensitive to the context of their own lives. The use of in depth qualitative approaches allows this, and the result is a study that leaves the reader with a real feel for respondents experiences and accounts and a raised awareness of the subtlety and sophistication of young people's responses to the media and concerns and understandings regarding sex, sexuality and gender.

A real strength of the text for this reader is its integration of complex theoretical perspectives with original empirical data. The authors draw on the work of key theorists such as Foucault (1984) and Rose (1999) to consider the role of the media in the construction of contemporary identities and the governance of individuals within consumer societies. This offers the more critical reader a theoretical framework to critique the role played by the media in the construction of the individual subject or self that is both challenging and relevant to media research more generally.

Overall this is a challenging and exciting text that offers insights for both researchers and practitioners into an important area that continues to be topical for parents, young people, academics, the media and, of course, those working with young people. Real strengths are the rigorous and well documented methodology that presents a model for future research and practice, and the attention to theoretical contributions that have much to offer our understanding of how the media impacts upon the construction of identity within consumer cultures.

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Roger Matthews and Jock Young (eds)
The New Politics of Crime and Punishment
Willan Publishing 2003
ISBN 1 903240 91 3
£17.99 (pbk)
pp 260

John Tierney

The central theme of this edited collection is recent developments in criminal justice policy, and in particular policies introduced by the New Labour administration since their election

victory in 1997. The opening chapter by the editors on New Labour, crime control and social exclusion, prepares the ground for the rest of the book. Their basic argument is that for New Labour crime is understood in terms of disintegrating communities and social exclusion resulting from global economic forces, a weakening of family and community ties, and the social and economic policies of previous Conservative administrations. However, as Young and Matthews correctly point out, although this indicates an acknowledgement of social structural factors, New Labour's central project – tackling social exclusion – prioritises 'agency' over 'structure'. Efforts are directed at integrating 'excluded' individuals and families into a wider, apparently problem-free, society on the basis of work, even though the work itself may be low-paid. It is not a project based upon a commitment to redistribution and the creation of a significantly more equal society. The authors argue for a more radical programme that would strengthen the 'progressive features of present policy': a programme that emphasises the relationship between social exclusion and a class-divided society. An important element of this is the need for political inclusion.

In the chapters that follow, these ideas (and others) are discussed further within specific contexts: crime (including drugs and 'hooliganism'), youth justice, the family, policing, probation, prisons, and urban regeneration. There is, perhaps inevitably in this type of collection, a degree of repetition. Furthermore, not all of the chapters build their arguments around developments post-1997, or concentrate on the policies introduced by New Labour, though this does not necessarily detract from their importance. John Pitts, for instance, begins his succinct and insightful analysis of youth justice and its social and political contexts in the 19th century; Catriona Woolner and Betsy Thom go back even further – to 2737 BC (albeit briefly) – in their examination of the prohibitions on, and effects and uses of, cannabis. Patrick Slaughter's thesis is that the last thirty years or so have seen a profound transformation in the nature of the crowd. He pursues this further by arguing that in the recent period, football hooliganism and anti-globalisation demonstrations are forms of social crime comparable to rioting in the 18th century. On two counts, there was an acute sense of déjà vu when reading Slaughter's chapter: the writing style is highly reminiscent of work produced by new deviancy theorists in the late 60s and early 70s, and football hooligans are seen as engaging in a form of political deviance. While the first of these is no bad thing, the second is much more problematic. And, a small detail: 'Northumberland' Police should be Northumbria Police.

Jock Young mounts a trenchant attack on the government for ignoring evidence from criminological research, failing to cash in on the 'crime drop dividend', and for focusing on dysfunctional families and teenage pregnancies. The distorted perception of the 'crime problem' among the general public is linked to the influence of the mass media, with New Labour's discourses and policies on crime doing little to counter this distortion (being 'tough on crime' is seen as a reflection of New Labour's obsessive concern with sustaining the approval of the electorate). In this discussion – as with New Labour – 'crime' is equated with conventional crime.

Jayne Mooney looks in more detail at the family, arguing that the government has avoided addressing wider structural factors in favour of an emphasis on the role of 'failing' families in the aetiology of criminality. John Pitts points to a convergence between family policy and criminal justice policy, and he too criticises New Labour for failing to engage with

structural factors. The youth justice system, he argues, is built upon a central concern with 'criminal deeds', rather than 'social or psychological needs'. For Pitts, New Labour's policies have led to increasing stigmatisation, a widening of the criminal justice net, and the use of community penalties that are likely to suck more young people into imprisonment.

Other parts of the criminal justice system are also examined. John Lea's chapter on police racism begins with the Macpherson Report and the notion of institutional racism. Here he develops his earlier work on forms of racism, and in the process provides an important and sophisticated theoretical analysis of the nature of institutional racism and the ways in which it manifests itself in the context of operational policing. Denise Martin discusses the reform of policing over the period of Conservative and New Labour administrations. This is a useful analysis of New Labour's attempt to replace 'managerialism' with 'modernisation'. However: 'despite a renewed emphasis on quality within performance measures, the police are still assessed in the narrowest of terms.' Anthony Goodman provides a well-informed overview of the huge changes that have occurred within probation over the last twenty odd years, these changes seen as encompassing a shift to correctionalism and managerialism. Roger Matthews analyses the growth in prison populations in the UK and US. Casting a critical eye over four influential explanations of this growth: the more punitive society argument; bifurcation (a twin-track policy based on differentiating between minor and major offenders); actuarial justice; and the imperatives of a prison-industrial complex. These, he argues provide only partial explanations, and present penal policy is characterised as uncertain and lacking direction.

Lynn Hancock provides a well-researched discussion of the positive and negative dimensions to the various initiatives aimed at urban regeneration, and a hoped for reduction in crime. Two major problems are highlighted: the lack of strategic direction on the part of multi-agency partnerships, and the unintended consequences, which can lead to an increase in crime and disorder. The growth of an alcohol-driven night-time economy is one clear example of the latter.

Overall, the book provides an interesting and useful overview of the direction taken by criminal justice policy, and the assumptions underpinning it, in recent years. It is worth recommending to students taking courses in areas of crime and criminal justice, though, as always, and to take a leaf out of this book, it should be read with a critical eye.

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Graham St John (ed)
Rave Culture and Religion
Routledge
ISBN 0 415 31449 6
£60 (hbk)
pp314

Pete Ward

It has been said that archaeologists when faced with an artefact for which they can think of no use generally resort to the description, 'It's cultic.' Even in contemporary academic discourse religion still has its uses. Indeed in cultural studies religion has become something of a favoured interpretative tool. Thus we get shopping as sacrifice, advertising as a religious system of value and now rave culture as religion.

From the sociology of youth we are familiar with the notion that the symbolic behaviour of young people can be read as rituals of resistance. Yet as the subsequent discussion has run its course a healthy scepticism of the ability of academics to understand and interpret young people and the cultures that they create has been very evident. Faced with the latest theory on why young people dress or behave youth workers in particular are often remarkably unimpressed. We can add to this a residual feeling that if academics are writing papers and meeting for conferences and publishing books on an area then this must be the last hurrah for any youth subculture. So with the current interest in Rave there is an impression that we are seeing a rerun of previous theoretical discussions of Skinhead, Punk, Grunge etc.. Yet at the same time from the perspective of the study of youth religion *Rave Culture and Religion* pushes on some important issues

The question at the heart of this book relates to the nature and extent of religious experience among young people. In particular the collection represents a multi-disciplinary approach to the social practices, texts and embodied experience of dance culture and explores the extent to which Rave Culture may be interpreted or understood as religious. *Rave Culture and Religion* is a collection of papers that have arisen out of an academic conference in Australia. Following an introductory chapter by the editor Graham St John, the book divides into four sections. The first is gathered under the title 'Techno Culture Spirituality,' the second 'Dance, Rapture and Communion,' the third 'Music the Techniques of Sound and Ecstasy' and the fourth 'Global Tribes: The Technomadic Counterculture.'

St John provides the introduction and first chapter to the collection. These set the scene for what is to follow. Arguing that in a variety of different ways dance culture has manifested, played with, and appropriated religious imagery. He also hints that the various genres of dance music have been influential in Christian circles with Rave Masses in Sheffield and California cited. Unfortunately these areas are not explored in the rest of the book. St John does however highlight the extent to which religion and the religious feature in dance cultures. Through embodied experiences of release, community, celebration, presence and transcendence Rave engages and challenges religious understandings. The question is what does this mean? How far can Rave be read as specifically 'religious'?

In the book Gauthiers argues that Rave has emerged as a result of the religious experience of contemporary western societies. Rave, he says, operates as an 'instituant' religious experience. This concept is drawn from the French social thinker of the nineteenth century Roger Bastide. Bastide suggested that while religion may be in decline it continues to exist in a residual way. The human reflex and instincts which first 'instituted' the Christian faith and religious practice remain as the instituant. Gauthiers uses this idea to suggest that Rave is a manifestation of this kind of religious experience. He goes on to make the helpful distinction between ritual and religious festival. Since ritual is generally linked to narrative and myth in religious systems (at least according to some anthropologists) Rave, which lacks a coherent

system of religious symbol, should not be discussed in these terms. However, says Gauthiers, the anthropology of religious practices also includes the category of 'festival.' With a less obvious link to systems of doctrine Rave might well be seen as the manifestation of instituant religion in this festival mode. Olavesan performs a similar, 'well it is but it isn't' operation in a discussion of Rave as religious movement. The communal experiences and sense of connection evident in Rave indicate similarities to religion, but the absence of the structures of religious organisation seem to suggest that Rave should not be read specifically as a New Religious Movement. Along the same lines Landau discusses the religious interpretation of the experience of 'ecstasy.' While not specifically religious he indicates that there is what he calls the 'gnosis of ecstatic flesh.' This is an embodied knowing and linked to notions of connectedness.

Rave Culture and Religion pioneers important ground in the understanding of Rave and the texts, practices, and institutions of dance culture. Recent empirical work in the UK suggests that the spiritual as a category in the week by week experience of clubbing may not be as significant as a more prosaic reading based on the significance of friendship and celebration. The collection acknowledges these kinds of insights and perhaps as a result signals that Rave may be subject to its own 'post'. So we must speak of 'post-rave.' This leads the authors as a result to privilege what could be seen as extreme off limit cases such as 'Burning Man' and Trance in Goa. For those engaged in working with young people, day in day out, the theoretical framing of these events and cultures may be of limited value. Indeed the sense that we have seen this before in the treatment of previous youth subcultures may suggest that we take it all with a little salt. From a religious studies perspective *Rave Culture and Religion* may however indicate the extent to which the spiritual and the religious are not only innate, but creative in some youth cultures.

Pete Ward is Lecturer in Youth Ministry and Theological Education at King's College, London.

Obituary

Ron Kirby 1946–2005

The editorial group of *Youth and Policy*, were deeply saddened to hear of the death of Ron Kirby. He was a friend to many in the youth and community sector and was also a respected colleague, teacher and critical participant in the arena of professional education, training and policy making. Ron was well informed and thoughtful. He worked unstintingly to further the interests of the profession. This expressed itself in his commitment to education as a good in itself, in the time given to students, and in the contribution which he made to the processes of professional endorsement.

Ron subscribed to *Youth and Policy* from its first issue, contributed to its pages and participated in the conferences organised in its name. He attended the *Youth and Policy* History conference at Ushaw College, Durham in February 2005, less than three weeks before his death and as always, his contributions towards the discussions demonstrated a deep understanding of the field. Later, he spoke about how the conference had reminded him of the importance of the local history work with which he was involved in Cornwall. The day after the conference, before flying south, Ron took the opportunity to walk around the streets of Newcastle once more, to revisit places which had been familiar to him as a student teacher in Northern Counties College in the late 1960s and also to experience first hand the new developments on the Riverside. What he particularly enjoyed that morning were the old lanes of the city and the Laing art gallery.

Ron Kirby had a strong commitment to the wellbeing of young people and to the human and political values of youth work. He was a sensitive and modest man whose contribution to the development of the profession was consistent and important. Those who knew him will miss him sorely and community and youth work is poorer for his loss.

An appreciation – Dave Ireland

Colleagues from all across our sector will have been shocked and saddened by the news of Ron Kirby's sudden death on 10 March. In writing this personal recollection, I have been struck by how many people, in remembering Ron Kirby, wanted to talk about his compassion and sheer dedication to the work. I have also been taken by how many of us remember his wild enthusiasms, quirkiness and the sheer capacity for enjoying his family and life outside work.

It was known by some that, early in his life, Ron was raised in care, which might have had a lot to do with his lifelong commitment to young people and their communities. He

obviously did alright at school and went on to get a BSc at the London School of Economics in 1972, followed by various spells as a teacher and community worker, before moving to a post as Head of Community Activities at the Sidney Stringer Community College in Coventry. In 1979 he joined the Department of Community Studies at Ilkley College of Higher Education as a lecturer. This establishment became a northern powerhouse of youth and community work development during the early Thatcher years and a number of its young teachers, including Ron, Hugh Butcher, Neil Kendra, Marian Charlton and Ian Ledgerwood all went on to become significant educators in the field.

I first met Ron when, as a recently arrived youth worker in Cornwall, I enrolled on a Diploma in Community Education at the then Plymouth Polytechnic. Ron himself had just arrived from Ilkley and I was struck by his concern and empathy for the people served by community and youth work, something which he never lost in a long and distinguished career. As students, we also recognised a man who knew what he was on about and I found Ron very easy to engage with, particularly in drawing out his already-deep experience of the work.

Ron's short stay at the Poly was marked for me by the occasion when, in full flow, he was suddenly interrupted by an elderly professor who burst through the door gesticulating wildly. Without any introduction whatsoever, the old chap started cracking on about 'gemeinschaft' and 'gesselleschaft' in impenetrable Glaswegian. We students did not have the faintest idea what he was on about, but we gaped in awe, not daring to interrupt the discourse. Eventually Ron, chuckling and obviously aware of the interloper's eccentric ways, reminded him gently that it was not Tuesday, not room 102 and not 2nd year Social Policy. The Prof retired with an 'Aw Jesus Christ' and a cheery wave of the arms, slamming the door on his way out.

All too soon, Ron announced that he was departing for the College of St Mark and St John (Marjon), just up the road from the Poly, which we students all thought was undue haste, but also we knew that it had not been the right place for him.

Starting at Marjon in the late '80s, Ron oversaw the development of the postgraduate and undergraduate youth and community courses and more recently the Masters programme. My last professional contact with him was only a week before he died when, along with other representatives from the field, I was invited to meet The NYA panel re-validating the programmes. That it all went swimmingly is a testament to Ron and the staff who have worked so hard over the years. Ron's tenure also saw the 'coming of age' of youth and community work at Marjon, symbolised by the move away from horrible, 'temporary' huts, marooned on the far side of a muddy car park, to suitably appropriate teaching rooms and offices in a newly-built block. Today, Marjon is by far the biggest player in the South West and a major presence on the national youth and community work education scene.

In recent years, Ron's posts as first Assistant, then Dean of the School of Society, Environment and Culture have meant wider and heavier responsibilities, with less focus on the department he nurtured, but he never lost his enthusiasm for teaching, nor his desire to give potential workers the best education they could get. The current developments in youth and community work studies offered at Marjon mean that Ron's staff are ahead of

the game in preparing for 2010 and a degree-entry profession.

Ron was a key member of the Training Agencies Group (TAG) and represented TAG at NYA's Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS). A colleague recalls Ron's habit, in meetings, of removing his glasses and using them to make a point, warning all that he meant business and that 'impassioned words were imminent.' Like many of us, she also remembers that he was quick to catch the Chair's eye, even in the most competitive of meetings and to try and get a word in edgeways with Ron around could be tricky.

He and I often met on Plymouth or Exeter station for the long and sometimes disjointed journey up to ETS meetings and inevitably, we turned down dinner at the hotel, opting instead for the delights of a Leicester curry house and a few beers. We both shared a keenness for bicycles and the following morning would find us peering through the window of a Leicester bike shop, pretending to be serious shoppers. In spite of my best efforts, I never did persuade Ron to buy a rather expensive folding bike I thought he needed.

Ron loved gardening at home in Calstock and walking in the countryside. Another colleague tells of a walking holiday with over 80 miles covered in a few days and the two of them having to 'waddle off' the effects of massive pub dinners and B&B fry-ups. Typically Ron did not do this sort of thing by halves and this friend recalls lending him gloves which got shoved into a back pocket and shredded to pieces as Ron scree'd down a mountain slope on his backside.

All of us will recall, whether as students, colleagues, or plain friends, some of Ron's ever-so-slightly eccentric, funny little ways. For example, what Marjon student could ever forget his regular appearance as Big Ron Butcher – brother of East End wide boy Frank – delivering his lecture on crime and social policy in the worst cod-cockerney accent you've ever heard? Sartorial splendour didn't always figure high with Ron and even when he was elevated to Dean you would never say he was often that smartly turned out. He was still wearing that parka that had seen better days long ago. And didn't we always wonder at those ankle-rider trousers, which never quite managed to hide the lurid orange or purple socks?

Ron and technology didn't always see eye to eye either and he was more or less a complete stranger to the mobile phone and PowerPoint presentations. Paradoxically and typical of him however, he was positive about the application of new technology in youth work. Thus, he raised a few eyebrows when his piece 'Conversations in Cyberspace: Informal Education and New Technology' was published in the *Journal for Research in Post-Compulsory Education* in 2002. Again, Ron was always thinking ahead about developments in his work but somehow he remained completely incapable of matching the number of students to the number of hand-outs needed for the lecture. But it was Ron's enthusiasm as a dancer – and his endearing lack of talent – that will probably stick in the memory most. He loved to cut a rug in his own, idiosyncratic way, but to pretend that rhythm and Ron were natural partners would be stretching it. However, he could clear a space round himself on the dance floor quicker than anyone I know, particularly if it was the Rolling Stones.

Ron certainly knew how to party and we will all remember his sheer love of life. He was also deeply serious and sometimes immovable on the issues he cared about, particularly around

equality and discrimination. Ron carried his learning and authority lightly, but he worked immensely hard for his staff and students. There was no 'side' to him. He was a naturally modest man, lacking the arrogance of some high achievers and what you saw, you largely got. I liked Ron because he was a great teacher.

He died doing what he liked best, enjoying himself with friends and colleagues at a fund-raiser for victims of the Christmas tsunami. But he was only 59 and I'll miss seeing that familiar gait of his shambling down the corridor.

Thanks are due to Mary Tyler, Andy Glen, Hugh Butcher, Ruth Hubbard, Marian Charlton, El Warren, Hayley Cocks and Craig Walker for their help in writing this.

Dave Ireland

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