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The National Youth Agency

supports those involved in young people's personal and social development and works to enable all young people to fulfil their potential as individuals and citizens within a socially just society.

We achieve this by:

- informing, advising and helping those who work with young people in a variety of settings;
- influencing and shaping youth policy and improving youth services nationally and locally; and
- promoting young people's participation, influence and place in society.

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Contents

Youth & Policy
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'Othering' the Brothers: Black Youth, Racial Solidarity and Gun Crime	5
<i>Suzella Palmer and John Pitts</i>	
Where is <i>Youth Matters</i> taking us?	23
<i>Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith</i>	
Young Offending: The lives, views and experiences of three 'typical' young offenders	41
<i>Steve Rogowski</i>	
Homophobic Bullying and Schools – Responding to the Challenge	59
<i>Ian Warwick, Rosalind Goodrich, Peter Aggleton and Elaine Chase</i>	
Fragmenting the All Wales Coherent Route: Removing the link between local and professional qualifications	75
<i>Hamish Murphy</i>	
Reviews	85

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'Othering' the Brothers: Black Youth, Racial Solidarity and Gun Crime

Suzella Palmer and John Pitts

The recent and highly publicised rise in gun crime involving Black young people has served to re-direct attention to the socio-cultural predicament of Black British young men. Drawing upon a cross-generational study of Black people's experience of, and attitudes towards, crime and crime control in a North West London neighbourhood, this article explores the relationship between the changing nature of Black youth crime, the worsening socio-economic and cultural predicament of some Black young people and changing social relations within the 'Black community'.

Keywords: *Black youth, community, gun crime, individualisation.*

The era of solidarity

Research and scholarship conducted between the early 1970s and late 1980s in the UK found Black young people of African-Caribbean descent to be a group with a strong sense of solidarity, born of a shared experience of social and economic disadvantage and discrimination in school, on the street and in the labour market. It also revealed that this experience tended to foster oppositional values. In his classic study of a Black inner-city community in Bristol, Ken Pryce (1979) noted that many of the young men who were the subjects of his ethnography were subjected to 'endless pressure' in education, housing and employment, resulting in their adoption of lifestyles and values which represented a form of resistance against what they perceived to be unjust treatment and oppressive conditions. Like Pryce, Robins (1992) in his study of a predominately Black inner-city community in London, found that African-Caribbean youth perceived state institutions as oppressive and that these '...angry young men and women...saw their mission to expose the injustices visited on their communities' (Robins, 1992:5).

A key area of concern for many Black people, young and old, in inner-city communities has been the experience of unjust policing and their involvement with the criminal justice system. The 1980s was a period of heightened racial tension and unrest. This tension was, in part, the legacy of earlier UK 'race riots' in the 1950s in which the police had not only failed to intervene to protect Black citizens from racial attack, but had also often dealt harshly with the Black victims (Hiro, 1971). Arguably, it was this legacy of antagonism between the police and the Black community which culminated in the inner city 'riots' of the early 1980s; first in Brixton and subsequently in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and other UK towns and cities with high concentrations of Black citizens.

Whatever else they might have been, most Black commentators were agreed that the 'riots' of the 1980s represented a form of resistance to the multiplicity of shared injustices experienced by the Black community. Thus they served as the catalyst, and *raison d'être*, for a new Black Politics ranged around the issues of policing and crime control, which brought together Black citizens from across the social spectrum and the generations (Lea and Young, 1984; Hall et al, 1978; Gilroy, 1987).

The renaissance of the Black community

In the early 1980s, this re-discovery of a capacity for collective action within the Black community found expression in the campaigns against the 'SUS' laws; for an independent investigation of the New Cross Fire and in 'Rock Against Racism'. Indeed, the early 1980s marked the 'high point' of 'Black solidarity' in the UK. It was a period which also saw the creation of Black community projects; supplementary schools, information and advice services, housing associations, the Black press and a growing number of Black-owned businesses (Shukra, 1998). These projects facilitated inward economic investment into the Black community and helped to open up legitimate economic opportunity for the many members of the Black community who lived on or near the poverty line (Power and Tunstall, 1995). It is for this reason that Ballard (1992) has argued that members of the excluded Black community should be viewed not as passive victims but as active subjects with a capacity to devise 'strategies of resistance' (Pryce, 1979). For Ballard (1992) the success of this 'resistance' was exemplified by the 'ethnic colonies' which were a salient feature of Britain's urban inner cities during the 1980s, and founded on 'vigorous networks of mutual support and solidarity' (Ballard, 1992:486). This renaissance of the Black community in the 1980s was simultaneously political, cultural, and economic.

However, because many of these initiatives were wholly or partly dependent upon government funding, the Thatcher government's 'rolling back the state' meant that, by the mid-to late 1980s, they had simply ceased to exist, thus compounding the predicament of the poorer members of the Black community (Owusu, 2000) and undermining the institutional base of Black solidarity.

The Backlash

The unprecedented degree of solidarity developed between first, second and third generation African Caribbean citizens in the 1980s was, in part at least, a product of the problematisation and 'criminalisation' of 'Black youth' by the government and the police (Hall et al, 1978; Pitts, 1988). As Pitts has observed, it was in her 1979 election campaign that Margaret Thatcher pointed to '... the threat posed by young Black men to White families', claiming that '... our culture (was) being swamped' and pledging to '... turn the clock back ...' in order to '...make the streets of Britain safe once more, for law abiding citizens' (Pitts, 2001:5).

Once elected, Margaret Thatcher's administration took to describing the 'riots' of 1981 as unjustified acts of criminal violence that could not be condoned, thereby rejecting

any suggestion that predatory and racist policing or poor housing, inferior educational opportunities and racism in employment may have been precipitating factors in either the events of 1981 or the apparent over-representation of Black young people in the criminal justice system (Brake and Hale 1992). This account of events stood in contrast with that proffered by the Scarman Inquiry (Scarman, 1981) which pointed to the combined effects of negative socio-economic pressures, racial prejudice and the 'irrational' beliefs and attitudes of both the police and the public (Sivanandan, 2004).

The political backlash against the Black community in general, and Black youth in particular, found its corollary in the utterance of other 'opinion formers'; vocal figures within the media, the criminal justice system and the universities, who often utilised, largely irrelevant, North American data, to paint a picture of Black people in general and young Black men in particular, as an inherently criminal 'underclass' (Moynihan, 1965; Wilson, 1987; Murray, 1984). Whereas commentators of the left and centre had argued that Black youth crime and disorder was rooted in an inequitable social and economic structure and institutionalised racism (Lea and Young, 1984), these commentators of the right emphasised cultural factors, and in particular the role of fatherless Black families in the transmission of attitudes and beliefs conducive to involvement in street crime and social disorder. This analysis, in turn, provided a political and intellectual rationale for even more robust and intrusive policing tactics, in which special police units would 'swamp' areas of Black residence and stop and search Black citizens apparently at random (Lea and Young, 1988; Pitts, 1988). This drift towards 'military-style policing,' which offered individual officers unprecedented anonymity, encouraged some of them to engage in acts of brutality against Black suspects (Hall et al, 1978; Pitts, 1988; Cashmore and McLaughlin, 1991).

The politics of resistance

Although the desire to challenge police racism and racially oppressive institutions served to unite the 'Black community' in the 1970s and 80s, there were conflicting ideas about how this was to be achieved. These differences coalesced around the twin poles of 'integration' and 'separatism'. Heavily influenced by American civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King, those who supported integration viewed the movement as a vehicle for pushing back the barriers that denied the Black community access to the same resources and opportunities as their white counterparts.

Others, influenced by the ideas of Black nationalists such as Marcus Garvey saw the logic of the isolation and rejection they had experienced as leading them to reclaim their heritage, build their own community, define their own goals, lead and support their own organisations and collectively reject the racist institutions and the values of the wider society (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1969).

This tension is clearly demonstrated by Robins who, in the wake of the 1981 riots, chronicled a group of young Black people who came together to form a community group providing job training facilities, business units, a day nursery and a number of community projects based on the principle of self-help. Whilst some of the members who founded the group embraced the integrationist ideology of 'Black, Christian, self-help,' espoused by Black

leaders such as Martin Luther King and Jessie Jackson, 'with its tacit acceptance of white authority' (Robins, 1992:71), for others, separatism, of the type advocated by Black leaders like Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X held a greater appeal. Separatism struck a particular chord with the alienated, lower class, Black young people on the run-down housing estates of the inner city and its periphery who came to believe that the racial hostilities they had experienced were endemic within, rather than incidental to British society. In the words of one young Black man in Robins' (1992) study:

It is inevitable that we, as Black people, were never and can never be a part of this country where we do not belong; like a heart transplant, it rejects us (Robins, 1992: 5).

The reconfiguration of the UK economy under the Conservatives in the 1980s and 1990s produced deep divisions within the working class, disembedding cultural identities rooted in occupational cultures and eroding traditional sources of solidarity and common identification (Walker, 1987). This loss of solidarity and cultural fragmentation was experienced particularly acutely in the Black community (Shukra, 1998). Indeed, many commentators have argued that the Conservative government's policies had a particularly deleterious effect upon Britain's Black community (Arnott, 1987; Young, 1999; Pitts, 2001).

But the effects of these changes were paradoxical. Although the 1980s and 1990s was a period of considerable educational and social mobility within the Black community, culminating in the emergence in the UK of a Black middle class and a vociferous Black intelligentsia, this was paralleled by a steady worsening of the predicament of large numbers of Black people at the opposite end of the social scale (Robins 1992; Power and Tunstall, 1995; Pitts, 2001). Arnott (1987) suggests that the Black experience in Britain since 1979 illustrates the effects of the Conservative government's policies at their harshest. He argues that Black young people in particular bore the brunt of these policies, trapped as so many of them were by structural youth unemployment, forced to exist on very low incomes in neglected and decaying inner city neighbourhoods or out-of-town housing estates.

The collapse of the ghetto

In his powerful essay 'Deadly Symbiosis', Loic Wacquant (2002), chronicles a similar development in Black neighbourhoods in the US. These 'ghettos' were 'organised' (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960) and to a large extent, self sufficient, held together by the twin pillars of the church and the Black business community which provided employment and hence a solid basis for a 'Black' formal economy. Like the Black community in Britain, Black people in the US were compelled to develop their own social worlds in response to white racism during the post-war period. In the USA, the Reagan administration's neo-liberal economic policies resulted in cutbacks in public expenditure and the withdrawal of crucial state services from these neighbourhoods. Unable to thrive, local businesses relocated, giving rise to unemployment and the decline of the formal economy and this corresponded with the rise of an informal economy.

There ensued what Wacquant describes as the 'collapse of the ghetto'; a process in which the simultaneous upward and downward mobility of members of the Black community

opens up social and economic opportunity for some as it attenuates it for others. The simultaneous loss of influential social networks fostered by the church and the business community serves to fracture pre-existing political and racial solidarity and the political power that some 'ghetto' communities were able to exert in North American cities. This 'collapse of the ghetto' is followed, Wacquant argues, by a process of 'hyper-ghettoisation' in which material deprivation, the absence of regulating 'social relations' and the violence associated with the drugs trade leads to an intensification of 'Black on Black' violence.

The research

The study discussed in this article set out, amongst other things, to establish whether Wacquant's gloomy analysis had any resonance with developments in the UK. The study is based upon interviews and non-participant observation with two generations of Black residents living on the same high crime public housing estate in North West London. This is the neighbourhood where Robins (1992) conducted his ethnography, which he refers to as 'Satellite City', and where one of the present authors grew up. The study also attempts to characterize and analyse the debate about Black young people and gun crime within the Black community by applying thematic content analysis to discussions on Black pirate radio stations and the public utterances of Black British 'opinion formers'. It is evident from even a cursory analysis of the public utterances of Black 'opinion formers' that the concern about the criminalization of Black youth which characterised the Black politics of the 1970s and 1980s, has been supplanted by a concern about their criminality (Bennett, 2003; Jasper, 2002; Rowan, 2002) and this has become a point of tension and mutual resentment between the 'Black bourgeoisie' and those left to survive in the UK's version of the urban ghetto.

Respondents who were teenagers during the 1970s and 1980s, appear to have had a strong sense of racial solidarity, borne of a shared experience of social and economic disadvantage in housing, employment and education and unjust policing.

I got a criminal record when I was 15 for something I did not do... I got loitering with intent to commit an arrestable offence in places unknown with persons unknown' yeah? That was the charge, that's called SUS...in fact; I could go as far as to say I've got 14 convictions for SUS. And that was all by the time I was 18 (Steve).

As we have noted, the unrest precipitated by the military-style policing of 'Black neighbourhoods' (Lea and Young, 1984) culminated not only in the disturbances or riots in towns and cities across Britain in the early 1980s, including the neighbourhood in which this study is based, but also in the renaissance of the Black community. In the neighbourhood where this study is being conducted, this took the form of the development of a radical Black youth movement as well as of local Black businesses and services, which included a Caribbean restaurant, retail outlets, a day nursery, supplementary schools and employment training facilities. However, as we have seen, many of these projects were short-lived because of the depredations of the Thatcher government. We have also noted that the social and economic polarization fostered by the Thatcher administration produced winners and losers and this was also evident on the estate.

Those who managed to move out often acknowledged that they were both fortunate and in the minority.

We were all right, we had a means to get out but most people don't and most people, they're caught up in the system (Christine).

Malik, a mobile phone retailer and entrepreneur, was perhaps the most successful, initially setting up his business in a local business unit annexed by the radical Black youth movement, which housed young 'entrepreneurs', some of them just out of prison (Robins, 1992). Malik was able to expand his business and within a few years he opened several more shops across London and, eventually, he and his family were able to buy their way out. However, Malik was an exception.

Those who were unable to leave experienced a marked deterioration in both the fabric of their neighbourhood and the resources available to them, as well as a loss of their sense of local connectedness. During this period, most of the shops on the once busy shopping parade were abandoned by retailers, while one of the empty buildings was converted into a police station. High-rise blocks are being torn down and replaced by small maisonettes as part of a government community regeneration programme but management of the estate has been transferred to a Housing Action Trust which, according to Thomas, a resident and local youth worker, is perceived locally as 'privatisation'; an attempt by the local authority to shrug-off its responsibilities.

One of the consequences of the re-generation project has been the dispersal of some established residents into neighbouring areas, disrupting old social networks and eroding the sense of 'community' that had survived from the 1980s. The disorientation of local residents has been compounded by a new influx of North African and Eastern European migrants and relationships between them and established residents are strained, not least because, according to Thomas, the newcomers are perceived to be competing for the dwindling resources and opportunities available to residents. Marvin points to the way the decline of the local economy has affected his family:

It's got so bad now that my mum's gone from the highs of running her own agency, till now, on working back in the area, and she showed me the other day how (she's earning) below the minimum wage.

He says that now the estate is:

...Nothing but a dump, a slum with nothing for no-one round here.

Like many of their older counterparts, the younger respondents did not want to engage in 'shit work' (Pryce, 1979), the low skilled and low paid work taken up by some of their elders, who often had to juggle two or three low paying jobs in order to make ends meet. The lack of educational qualifications and criminal convictions meant that 'shit work' provided the only legitimate opportunity available to them. In such a situation, the attraction of illegitimate opportunity as a means of transcending their circumstances became ever stronger.

The growth of the crack and cocaine market in the area in the late 1980s meant that the limited choices available for the young people now included drug dealing, which proved to be far more lucrative than either 'shit work' or petty property crime (Robins, 1992). Some of the people who became involved in dealing crack and cocaine also became users. And, according to many respondents, the number of users in the area is still increasing. A respondent explains that, in the 1980s:

You couldn't talk about crackheads, it would be the odd little crackhead, one or two. You wouldn't have so many crackheads and cats coming up to you ...

However, as another explains, one of the reasons for this apparent increase in drug use is a sense of hopelessness.

A big word is hope...you look around your environment and (you're) like 'What hope do I have?' ... you got children turning to drugs because their life's that bad ... with parents who are suffering from the system (which) transforms them from what they was to something that nobody should have to go through in one lifetime... The world just treats you like you're not relevant (Mark)

Like many of the others who lived on the estate, Mark also felt trapped and unable to see any pathways out, suggesting that:

In this community it feels like you're trapped, you can't get out and if you make the wrong steps you will fall, it's just inevitable.

The perception that opportunities for upward social mobility had narrowed was shared by respondents from both generations, most of whom could see no way out for themselves and their families. The success of many of those who had benefited from the opportunities was often resented and respondents of both generations experienced little sense of solidarity with the successful members of the 'Black community'. Indeed, some believed that the price they had paid for upward mobility was to 'sell out' and cut their ties with the old neighbourhood. As Janet observed, they want to:

Get paid and accepted ... Everybody's out for themselves and as soon as somebody would get something then they would show off, but they're not willing to share it or let anybody know any other means of getting what they have. Basically ... they get what they want and they move out.

This apparent resentment may be explicable in terms of what Young (1999) describes as the climate of 'precarious anxiety', in which families, communities and employment are no longer stable, and competition, individualism and inequality become more pronounced giving rise to polarisation along class lines. Frustrations may then occur between an 'underclass' who are denied equality in the market place and those who have achieved 'respectability'. These feelings of resentment appeared to be mutual, wherein the upwardly mobile seemed to resent their poorer counterparts who appeared to them to be thriving despite their lack of economic mobility, a state of being that is frequently attributed to crime and benefit fraud. Therefore those in the Black community who benefited from legitimate

opportunities were often intolerant, and harboured punitive feelings towards those left behind in the neighbourhood.

Delinquency and opportunity

As legitimate opportunities for social advancement disappeared, crime loomed ever larger both as a means of achieving material goals but also of achieving status and respect in the neighbourhood. Marvin illustrates this point when he suggests that:

Everybody around me that I see and that I know, practically everyone, they all just turn to crime ... a lot of people saw (drugs) as the only way of making some real money ... That's the only thing around here, there is nothing else ... There's no opportunities around here, poverty's high.

However although crime has always been a feature of neighbourhood life, it manifests itself differently in the two generations. Robins' (1992) perception that neighbourhood crime in the 1980s was petty was shared by most of the older respondents. Anthony talks about the criminal activities he and his peers were engaged in:

All we used to do was rob; street robbery, burglary and shoplifting and sell weed.

Much of the crime amongst the older generation appears to have been instrumental. Steve, like others from the older generation, concurs that this rarely involved 'robbing from your own'. He suggests:

In my time, you wouldn't steal from your mate ... from your own Black person ... now, they're just nicking anything they can get their hands on!

Although older respondents had sometimes been involved in confrontations or fights with other Black youth, particularly those from outside of their neighbourhood, they saw these encounters as far less significant than the violent confrontations with white racist skinheads and BNP supporters. They appeared to agree that in the 1980s, State institutions, the police, courts and schools, and 'white society' more generally were viewed as the 'enemy' and so robbing from 'your own' contravened the moral code of the community since it was regarded as doing the oppressors' job for them. As Barry suggests:

Fights with skinheads made Black people like warriors ... For a lot of my friends, White people were their enemies ... The records of those days was telling you about 'Babylon' and that we are in Babylon and we have to struggle to come out ... We were anti-system.

The older respondents also talked about the use of weapons. Aware of the increase in gun crime in his community, Steve suggested that:

When I was growing up there was more knives and bottles than there was guns.

Although violent confrontations did occur within the community, such disputes were often

settled with fist fights and where weapons were used, they tended to be knives, bottles or baseball bats. Although guns were available prior the 1980s, they were only used and owned by a small number of higher-tier criminals, and used in the pursuit of armed robberies, targeting businesses such as banks and jewellery stores. The victims of such crimes were almost invariably outside of the local Black community.

The individualisation of crime

Respondents from both generations expressed great concern about what they perceive as the current widespread use of guns amongst Black youth in the neighbourhood and, in particular, the high levels of 'Black on Black' shootings, many apparently arising from minor disputes:

They're operating with guns now man, so it's a whole different ball game ... with guns, everybody's equal.... But some are doing it to frighten people with and others carry guns to protect themselves... everyone's got a gun in (this neighbourhood), and they're not afraid to bring it out, daytime, night-time (Christopher).

Janet said:

No one wants to fight (with fists) no more; no one wants to get their hands dirty.

It is not simply that crime has become worse and the weaponry more dangerous. Crime amongst the younger generation appears to be more random, spontaneous and localized, in that the victims of these predations are, more often than not, members of their own local community. Violent crime appears to be less instrumental than in the past, concerned with wounding and robbing people to gain respect and status rather than possessions or money. It is a form of crime which appears to be highly individualized, and it is facilitated by the fact that on the street and around the neighbourhood friendships and affiliations tend to be short-term and pragmatic. This contrasts starkly with the more solidaristic peer group relationships developed by the older generation. A second-generation respondent suggested that one of the reasons for this could be that now, Black young people never left the estate to work or to study and so:

If the majority of the people you're around are young Black people and have the stuff that you want, they are going to be the people that you're gonna target (Christopher).

Second generation respondents spoke of their concerns that one's assailant could be anybody:

I've been set up a few times but I'm not watching no faces because that's life. You don't know the brers... face covered, it might be your own friends (Jason).

Ryan, a first generation respondent who has lived in the neighbourhood for over thirty years, bemoaned the fact that:

Half of the shootings that have happened over the last 10 years, do you know that the parents of the kids that have been shooting each other was boyfriend and girlfriend or close friends?

As well as knowing many of the young people in their community who have possessed or used firearms, most of the respondents also knew many people who had been the victims of so called 'Black on Black' shootings. However there is, thus far, a paucity of research concerning the numbers and the proportion of Black young people who are actually involved, either directly or peripherally in this form of crime, and how many are victimised directly and indirectly by it (Tilley and Bullock, 2002; Hales, 2005).

Robins (1992), who conducted his study during the 1980s, identified the early stages of this internecine crime in the neighbourhood. While he observed that, in general, youth crime in Britain's inner cities was petty, he also recognised that intra-racial violent crime was becoming more prevalent in some areas. Within ten years the neighbourhood where he undertook his study, had become one of those places. Today, the area has achieved national notoriety because of gun-related incidents involving Black youth. A recent survey by the local Crime and Disorder Unit in suggests that the perpetrators of firearms crime are usually aged between fifteen and twenty-five and are disproportionately Black. It was, of course, as a result of this disproportionality that *Operation Trident*¹, an initiative set up by the Metropolitan Police to tackle gun crime amongst London's Black communities, was established.

The nature of 'Black-on-Black' youth crime

As many commentators have argued (see for example Young, 1999), in post-industrial societies consumption has become a major source of identity and the socially disadvantaged are exposed to intense pressure to fulfil escalating, media-driven, material expectations (Smith, 1997). Thus while they are culturally included, in the sense that they share mainstream material aspirations, they are economically excluded, being denied the means to fulfil these aspirations through legitimate channels. It is this sense of relative deprivation, Young argues, that drives street crime. To be economically excluded but to believe that you are on the way upward or inward, as was the case for many black people in Britain in the 1980s is one thing, to be excluded and experience yourself as pursuing an outward or downward trajectory unless you seize the initiative yourself is quite another.

For a few, drug markets can provide a source of income where large amounts of money can be made in a relatively short space of time. Yet, by rejecting low paid work in favour of instant, albeit short-term and highly dangerous, illicit wealth, paradoxically, these young people embrace their marginalised social status, becoming 'ghetto fabulous'; a state of being symbolised by 'bling'; 'flashy' cars, designer clothes, highly visible jewellery and expensive champagne. This lifestyle provides them with 'a sense of purposeful presence where previously there may have been only shame, despair, and the urge to fade away' (Smith, 1997:24). Theoretically, it might also provide them with the means to buy their way up and out of the 'ghetto', but because this is where they find their most appreciative audience, this seldom happens.

The illicit acquisition of these prized symbols is a bid for 'respect' in a situation where the day to day experience of school, policing, and living in an area of disrepute amongst people often regarded as 'losers' denies them that respect. Moreover, in this world, respect and masculinity are indissoluble and the more tenuous their hold on the 'glittering prizes' of conventional life, the more problematic does their sense of personal and gender identity become (Messerschmidt, 1993). And this is one reason why, as Cloward and Ohlin (1960) observed nearly half a century ago in their discussion of the 'disorganised slum', that as their social and economic predicament worsens, the targets of their predations are likely to be other Black young men. In such conditions, friendships tend to be characterised by remarkably low levels of mutual trust. Thus, these young people live with the constant threat of being attacked or robbed by 'their own' (Lemos, 2004, Palmer, 2002). As Young (1999) observes:

Young men facing such a denial of recognition turn ... to the creation of cultures of machismo, (specifically) to the mobilisation of one of their only resources, physical strength, to the formation of gangs and to the defence of their own 'turf'. Being denied the respect of others they create a subculture that revolves around masculine powers and 'respect' (Young, 1999:12).

What is often ignored however, is that the majority of young men in this predicament do not actively seek out gang membership or involvement in gun crime. Furthermore, the image of Black youth who are caught up in these activities, and are presented by high-profile commentators within the black community as cold and ruthless killers, is different from that of the second generation respondents. Many are mortified by what they have done and what they often feel they have had to do to survive. Christopher gave an account of how one young person he knew was affected:

They're crouched up in the corner crying cos they brought the gun out to protect themselves and they've been challenged so they've pulled the trigger. They haven't wanted to pull the trigger... (Christopher)

In reality, being unable to 'escape' from the neighbourhoods where these crimes are being enacted, they cannot afford to appear resistant or indifferent to the powerful cliques and individuals who are involved. Moreover, gun ownership in a neighbourhood tends to become self-propelling, as those who feel threatened by other young people with firearms, arm themselves in self-defence. However, as a result of the historical legacy of mistrust, seeking help from the police is not an option.

These young people regard the police and the criminal justice system as arbitrary and, not infrequently, brutal in its dealings with them so, as Sherman (1993) observes, because:

Disrespect is a two way process ... a vicious circle of mutual disrespect, anger and alienation, is often created, especially between police and young, poor minority citizens and communities (Sherman, 1997: 464).

Thus, as *Operation Trident* has found, those who are most likely to be the victims of gun crime are the least responsive to their campaigns and least likely to supply them with

information. In this situation, the police have turned instead to a more forthcoming segment of the Black community, but one that the young Black people living in these high crime neighbourhoods do not regard as representative of their perspective or their interests. Indeed, there is often a huge gulf between the beliefs and attitudes of these youngsters and those who are called upon to represent their views. Thus, the mayor of London's adviser on race and policing, Lee Jasper's frequent calls for the Black community to work with the police to stop gun crime, seems to betray a profound misunderstanding about the decades-long legacy of mistrust between the police and local residents which characterise the neighbourhoods in which gun crime is a problem, and its impact on police-community relations today.

Most of our respondents, from both generations, regard the police as an intrusive, inherently corrupt and hostile presence, rather than as their potential defenders or allies. Indeed, the younger generation in the neighbourhood were constantly preoccupied with the harassment and brutality they experienced at the hands of the police:

A lot of people, they hear these stories about the police and when I was growing up I used to think why do I hear so much about the police and why do they hate the police so much? I was open minded, I wasn't thinking yeah, pigs and this stuff I used to hear until they started harassing me. And I've seen the same officer being so polite to the everyday white person, the same one in the area and it's the same officer who's handcuffed us behind our back, stepped on our back and started kicking my friend in his face ... If you could be a fly on the wall and see when they get together (Marvin).

Gregory recalls an incident where he was beaten up, detained on the street for over an hour and then released without charge by the police for no reason.

I look at myself now as they see me, as a criminal. They make me feel like a criminal.

The younger respondents also tended to believe that seeking help from the police, particularly through *Operation Trident* was pointless. Some even believed that it was in the interests of the police that the intra-racial killing continued.

They're like 'that's the Black community over there, they can do whatever they want cos they are not troubling us while they're troubling each other' ... you go to them and they say 'so what, why don't you just kill each other'. I heard it come out of their mouth and unless you see it happening and it's told to you directly (people) don't actually believe it (Marvin).

The mistrust of the police was also shared by the young Black female respondents who claim to have routinely experienced hostility from the police. After witnessing a fatal shooting at a party, Serena explains that her friend:

... was upset because of what happened. She knew the guy ... when (the police) arrived they were abusive and aggressive towards her ... they started pushing her out the way, and roughing her up. Before she knew it, she had police on top of her kicking and punching her and they were all men! They had no respect, she just witnessed someone

getting killed and they just beat her up ...cos it's Black people they don't care.

These young people do not see co-operation with the police as an option, even in extreme circumstances. As a result, as Jason says:

If they want you to help them, of course you're not going to help them. You're gonna walk off because you don't want anything to do with them, you don't want to be attacked by them and nothing can be done about it.

For both generations, their experience of policing, and in particular the military style interventions employed in the riots of the early 1980s, and now in *Operation Trident*, consolidates what White (2004) calls a 'soldier mentality' where, on the 'battleground' of the streets today, not only do they feel under threat from one another, but also from the police.

The 'othering' of the brothers

Clearly, the rise in the incidence of 'Black-on-Black' violent youth crime is a cause for concern throughout the Black community, not just in its upper echelons. However, it is the understanding of the nature of this problem that divides those at the top and those at the bottom. The response to this form of violent crime by the media, politicians and the vocal Black elite fails to address the complexities of the phenomenon. In particular, the victimisation of the Black young people drawn into or caught up in intra-racial violence has been sidelined (Murji, 2003; Walters, 2003) and subsumed within the all-embracing label of 'Black-on-Black crime' (Zylinska 2003) which, by implication, and in popular consciousness, holds both victim and perpetrator culpable.

This is a discourse which juxtaposes a law-abiding hard-working Black majority with a violent, anti-social minority that has turned its back upon the Black community and absorbed instead an alien (American ghetto) subculture. However, for Marcus and many of the other young people interviewed the very idea of a 'Black community' to which they might belong or return is highly problematic.

Ever since I've been growing up, I've seen my Black community divided; I've never seen us together as one community I share skin complexion with them, but as far as the Black community is in my eyes, we're just a sea of lost, confused and insecure people and everything we do is dictated to us sublimely through the media and through the lack of education. Our understanding ... of who we are is so low that we're just lost. We have little pieces of what we're about, but we don't really know what we're about ... we just follow whatever we see, which is why we are so disorganized and un-united (Marcus).

This did not, however, lessen the desire for such a community. Janet articulates the wish expressed by many young respondents, who saw a united Black community as a prerequisite for a cessation of the carnage:

I wanna make a change to our lives and what we've all experienced, and ... get us to be working together so we can all accomplish something ... so I would like us to all be communal and people to come together to do something about it ... that's where my mind is set, for us to be together.

Although the emergence of the Black middle class is celebrated by some commentators for providing positive role models for Black young people, others accuse the 'Black bourgeoisie' of turning its back on the emergent Black 'underclass' (Wilson 1987), focussing instead upon individual mobility; breaking through 'glass ceilings' rather than 'getting out from under' (Du Bois 1903, Sivanandan, 1974, Robins, 1992). This development tends to be widely resented by downwardly mobile Black citizens, as one of Robins' respondents observed,

When people in the community reach certain levels to operate certain things, they change ... they don't really wanna know ghetto people anymore (Robins, 1992: 2).

The publicly expressed concerns of prominent members of the Black community about Black youth crime as a problem for the Black community and 'society more generally' exemplifies this schism. Thus, Mike Best, the former editor of *The Voice*, a 'Black British' newspaper recently called for an increase in police stop and search powers to deal with 'Black crime' (Rowan, 2002), while Lee Jasper calls upon the Black community to work with the police towards the removal of (Black) 'gangsters' from the street. These gangsters in his view, are the young (Black) people who 'live fast and don't give a damn about society' and 'violent drug dealers prepared to kill at the drop of a hat' (Jasper, 2002). This stance positions Jasper and other 'respectable' Blacks in opposition to these undifferentiated demonised 'others'. Likewise, the Black academic and journalist Tony Sewell recently called on the Black community to 'connect with the middle and high achievers ... rather than the disaffected black youth roaming the streets' (Ojumo, 2005).

In this discourse, the nefarious activities of Black British youth 'hanging out' on run-down housing estates is routinely conflated with the small minority of Black young people who perpetrate Black-on-Black, drug-related, gun crime, those who procure arms to defend themselves against such violence and its many inadvertent victims.

Lee Jasper, for example, speaks of a need for a 'sense of moral responsibility within the Black community' and that:

We can't say because we know the conditionalities (sic) that give rise to gun crime that there is some justification for someone to take a weapon and mow down innocent people ... There is no moral equivocation against pure acts of evil (Jasper, 2003).

However, this denunciation of particular perpetrators of gun crime side-steps the issue that the majority of respondents who had either owned or handled guns, had done so, in the first instance at least, as a means of self-defence in a dangerous and worsening social milieu that they felt powerless to leave. As a result, respondents hearing the utterances of the likes of Lee Jasper are left feeling that their justified fears of armed violence are being ignored and that their interests are being profoundly misrepresented by the 'leaders' of the 'Black community'. Recognising this, Richardson (2003) suggests that at a time of unprecedented

anger, frustration and bitterness amongst disadvantaged Black young people, and despite far more Black faces in 'high places', there is a vacuum of leadership in the Black community. He suggests that their failure to acknowledge the worsening social and economic predicament of large sections of the Black community invalidates their leadership and therefore:

Their Leadership is 'misleadership' because the reality on the ground has got worse ...
(Richardson, 2003).

Clearly, there is a gulf between the lived experiences and the concerns of an excluded section of the Black community and the perceptions of its most vociferous 'representatives'. As Palmer (forthcoming) argues, only by analyzing, with those members of the 'Black community' most closely involved with it, the broader socio-economic, political and cultural conditions for the emergence of the current spate of intra-racial armed youth violence, and detailing its nature and impact at local level, can we begin to understand the chances and 'choices' available to these young people (Hallsworth, 2005).

The failure to identify these concerns may help to explain why social policy and criminal justice interventions have failed, so far, to deal with the problem of intra-racial armed youth violence in Britain's poorest Black communities and why government remains 'puzzled' (McLagan, 2005).

This study has identified that the respondents, particularly the younger generation, feel that a cohesive 'Black community' is a necessary prerequisite for dealing with 'Black on Black' violent crime. As it is, the divisions created by upward and downward social and economic mobility and growing individualisation are compounded by the 'othering' of so many of its young people by the 'respectable'.

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Note

1. See Metropolitan Police website for *Operation Trident*: www.met.police.uk/trident/

Essays in the History of Community & Youth Work

Edited by Ruth Gilchrist,
Tony Jeffs & Jean Spence

Any profession that fails to learn from its past is doomed to repeat its mistakes. Community and youth work has made a huge contribution to the wellbeing of communities but, with a few honourable exceptions, it has failed to produce its own histories. By neglecting to record its successes and its failures, it has left itself vulnerable to those who would foist on it warmed-over policies that have been tried and found wanting in the past.

This book is part of the process of putting that right. Developed from papers given at the History of Youth and Community Work conference at Ushaw College in Durham, it includes 15 chapters written by leading practitioners and researchers. Each one reflects upon a particular organisation or aspect of work from the past two centuries – from the earliest moves to make provision for young Londoners to the operation of HM Inspectorate in the 1980s. Together they not only pay homage to the pioneers in this field, they help to create a better understanding of contemporary practice and provide the means to resist pressure to go down the wrong road.

More than sentimental nostalgia, these histories offer a vantage point from which contemporary practice can be interrogated. They are an important resource for the student and researcher, but also, crucially, for the practitioner and indeed anybody who cares not just about the past but also the future of community and youth work.

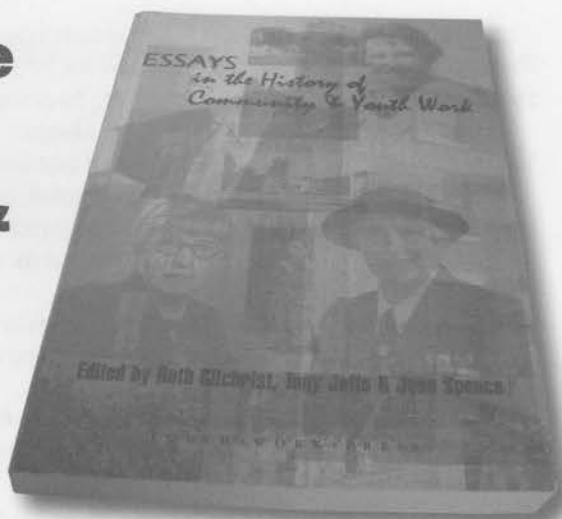
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Where is *Youth Matters* taking us?

Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith

'Optimism is a moral duty'

Karl Popper

In the Autumn of 2005, Youth and Policy (89) published a number of articles on Youth Matters (HM Government, 2005)- the English Green Paper concerning youth services; more may surface in forthcoming editions. We are anxious to avoid reiterating what others have said or to spend much time taking issue with interpretations offered by earlier contributors. However, we would like to comment on certain facets of the Paper that have been somewhat overlooked, notably the extent to which it heralds the end of education in state-sponsored youth work, attacks young people's freedom and privacy and fails to engage with civil society. Before doing that though, we want to examine briefly the restricted and questionable framework adopted by the Paper's authors, some of the basic methodological errors associated with this, and their failure to address certain fundamental aspects of young people's experience.

Keywords: *Green Paper, Opportunity Cards, skills, containment.*

Keeping it fuzzy

When set beside earlier government papers on youth services, *Youth Matters* lacks originality, vision, inspiration and, above all, honesty. It is a courtier's gift, prepared to gratify those who bequeath the authors their meagre status. Alas, it is yet another among a plethora of policy documents compiled by anonymous writers who pretty much knew before penning the first sentence what was required of them regarding policy, content and stance. Consequently the difficult questions, especially any that might embarrass a minister or by implication undermine a valued policy initiative, are scrupulously avoided. This ensured that the Paper did not begin, as it might logically have done, by seeking to establish first, what might be the most pressing issues and problems young people currently encounter, and second, whether or not existing statutory and voluntary youth work agencies are addressing those needs – and if not why?

Having failed to undertake both those tasks, predictably, the document did not mull over how current provision might be enhanced to meet those unmet needs. Neither did it explore what steps might be taken to address the problems and issues that lay beyond the capacity of youth services and youth work agencies and groups to tackle, and suggest possible action

other arms of government might take. For example, what might the government do to eradicate the de facto evening curfew imposed on young people and women in many town centres by the violent and aggressive behaviour of significant numbers of men (and some women)? Such behaviour makes provision in some localities only accessible to those who can be 'taxied' to and from the venue, and ensures opening times are frequently dictated by the issue of how 'safe' the locality is at given times rather than the partiality of the users.

To ask questions about the issues young people actually encounter would have led to the authors acknowledging that many, perhaps the bulk, of 'youth problems' are (a) shared by many others – old and young; and (b) emanate either from government action or calculated inaction. With regard to (b), the failure to intervene can often be traced to a fear amongst contemporary politicians of doing anything to expose and curtail the socially irresponsible behaviour and greed of those corporations and interests who fund their election campaigns, party conferences, private offices and junkets. This fear guarantees that *Youth Matters* either side-steps crucial issues or discusses them as if they are immutable facts of life. For instance the poor state of our public transport system makes it difficult for many young people, in both urban and rural areas, to have a meaningful and independent social life beyond their own immediate neighbourhood. If we had a safe, cheap, clean, extensive and reliable public transport system, akin to that found in many parts of Europe, it is likely that many 'youth problems' would begin to solve themselves. If young people could travel cheaply to and from places of entertainment, friends' houses, youth centres, projects, leisure, social and educational centres when they wished to do so, and without fear or anxiety, it would transform the types of provision and services that could be planned and offered. It would also increase their capacity to engage in self-motivated and autonomous activity.

In similar vein can any reason, apart from political cowardice, explain why a contemporary Green Paper on youth services should fail to discuss the legal status (and availability) of cannabis and other currently prohibited drugs? Given their comprehensive use it is difficult to treat seriously a document that avoids considering for example, what to do about a distribution network that ensures tens of thousands of young people regularly purchase drugs from some of our worst criminal elements. In many localities more young people have regular contact with their friendly neighbourhood dealer, as customers and aides, than a youth worker or Connexions PA (May et al, 2006). Should this not be a matter of serious concern? Might it not at least prompt some examination of the possible benefits of legalisation or even how the damage wrought by the current illegal 'system' might be handled and addressed by youth workers and services? Equally one would expect consideration of growing levels of debt amongst young people; escalating disaffection and weariness with school; the lack of accommodation for those unable or unwilling to remain in the parental home; and the social irresponsibility of a 'drinks industry' that targets young people to get them hooked. Others would add different policy issues to this list. The point is that the document is seriously flawed, not on the grounds that it neglects a given 'issue' or social problem, but because it fails to start from an honest analysis of what needs to be done and by whom. It ought to have weighed the evidence concerning priorities and needs – without fear or favour. Unfortunately that is not something a team of retainers will be disposed to undertake. For all its manifest failings, the Albemarle Report (HMSO, 1960), the last major precursor to legislation relating to youth work, did seek at least to

commence from first principles, unlike its successor. This was made possible by the greater autonomy it was gifted to collect and sift evidence and by the report being collectively authored by a committee comprising respected figures drawn from the youth work field and two outstanding academics, Richard Hoggart and Pearl Jephcott. Because they signed it, the authors of the Albemarle Report were therefore held publicly responsible for the content. Perhaps it was futile to hope for a similarly honest assessment to materialise during a government's third term: it would inevitably highlight failings, many of which could be laid at the feet of the current administration. Whatever the reason, what we have in lieu of a candid research-based assessment, is a document awash with vague generalities and platitudes and a virtually data-free manuscript.

So what is wrong?

Imprecision regarding policy failures in the document is matched by a refusal to actually explain in what ways existing 'youth services' and 'youth work' require reform. The failure to acknowledge, let alone take cognisance of the *Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England* (Merton et al, 2004), a document that was the direct product of research funded and micro-managed by the DFES, gives the game away. If that evaluation had painted a negative portrait of an incompetent service it would have been liberally cited; exploited to justify root and branch reform. However, it failed to 'deliver' according to plan. Serving no useful purpose for those who financed and oversaw its production, the evaluation has been quietly discarded and the Green Paper's authors pressed on regardless. This meant that the authors of *Youth Matters* had little hard evidence of malfunction apart from a rather slight study by Feinstein et al (2004). In preference to the far more substantial evaluation, this was not only quoted in the Green Paper but utilised prior to publication by Margaret Hodge to 'prove' much youth work was 'counter-productive' (*The Guardian* January 20, 2005). *Youth Matters* and *Transforming Youth Work*, before it, were part of an effort to reorient state-sponsored (and if possible non-state sponsored) work with young people. Ideologically driven, the core aim of both was not first and foremost to improve services and meet needs, so much as to change the ethos of provision; to fundamentally alter the ways in which young people relate to the state and the market; to realign provision by changing from a membership to a consumerist model of youth work; to 'marketise' delivery so that youth work, like schools, reinforces and confirms for young people a particular understanding of the world and their place in it. Such an understanding rejects earlier traditions inherited from a liberal education and welfarist ethos and supplants them with a view that holds the market as sacred and immutable.

It is not surprising in the light of all this that the writers of *Youth Matters* were nervous of offering any analysis of why, in their opinion, youth work and youth services were failing. First, the emphases within what we have known as youth work upon voluntary participation, group life and convivial learning, and upon the local provision of space for young people away from the pressures of home, school and the state, did not sit well with government obsessions. It was difficult politically to question such concerns head-on. It would seem that young people's happiness was not important to them. Even though this is something that has been a feature of other aspects of their policies with regard to young people and children (see, for example, Layard, 2005).

Second, the writers knew it would be impossible to offer any meaningful analysis of current service provision without acknowledging the degree to which the damage was inflicted by a decade of policy-drift; drift infused with a desire on the part of the government to increase the direct surveillance and control of the young. With chaotic funding structures and strengthened inspection frameworks linked to desired outcomes, the autonomy of local authorities had been eroded along with the capacity of those agencies and groups receiving state monies to sail in any direction apart from that decreed by central government. Perceived failures in local work could quickly be linked to problems with the central frameworks.

Third, any proper analysis would have necessitated an honest acknowledgement that staff morale, along with the financial viability of many youth projects, had markedly deteriorated during the last decade. Much of the reason for this lies with the direction of government policy. The crude emphasis, for example, on managerialism, outcomes and containment, and the failure to put young people's happiness and connectness at the centre, have sapped the discretion and creativity of both workers and agencies. Just how dire the situation is regarding staff morale after decades of growing central government interference cannot be accurately ascertained. However two recent surveys are not in this respect encouraging. The first, of youth work staff in one local authority, indicated that over 80 per cent of those surveyed considered their service was either 'standing still or deteriorating'. Two-thirds described staff morale as 'low' (Newcastle City Council, 2005). A second, of principal youth officers, indicates that four out of five are pessimistic regarding future funding (Goddard, 2006).

Fourth, if *Youth Matters* had spelt out what was wrong, and by implication what was healthy, it would have had to justify imposing a new funding and administrative structure that will, in all probability, lead to many of the most effective programmes being put at heightened risk. Our current funding arrangements do not discriminate against the incompetent or ineffective. Instead it is predominately a matter of luck as to who prospers and who fails (Crimmens et al, 2004). Nothing in the Green Paper addresses this absurd and demoralising state of affairs.

Last, and perhaps most humiliating of all, an honest analysis would have to explain the whole *Connexions* debacle. An account would have to be offered regarding why it was decided for all practical purposes, to dismember after only a few years an agency launched at enormous cost by ministers, most of whom are still in the government. *Connexions* was hawked around as a panacea by civil servants who are largely still responsible for overseeing youth work policy (see Smith, 2005a). It hardly inspires confidence to behold those who concocted the *Connexions* Service, and are now trying to quietly bury it without the slightest hint of discomfiture, popping-up all over the place vending the *Youth Matters* agenda.

Farewell education

Youth work has changed over time and that is not a bad thing. Initially it sought to offer young people access to welfare services, leisure provision and education. Depending on

the provider, it also aimed to induct them into particular religious and social belief systems and (or) divert them from anti-social or self-destructive behaviour. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards specialist agencies, overwhelmingly funded and controlled by the state, increasingly undertook to provide welfare services. Thus, by the late 1940s youth work retained barely a residual role with regards to these aspects of its work. A commercial sector has always operated in competition with agencies working with young people offering alternative 'for profit' leisure. Although some workers have learnt to compete effectively the long-term trend has been for the commercial sector to gradually eclipse its rival.

Growing affluence has made the youth market evermore lucrative. Consequently youth work agencies are now often leisure providers of last resort, serving those too poor or isolated to access commercial provision or those whose parents on religious or moral grounds wish to isolate their off-spring from commercial influences. The irresistible rise of commercial providers, including the expansion of home entertainment and leisure centres, has left the youth work sector a bit player within an arena where once it was a central figure (see Jeffs, 1979).

Regarding education, the rise of mass schooling since the 1870s and the more recent expansion of post-compulsory provision has meant youth work agencies largely abandoned 'formal' provision relating to classes and instruction. Instead they focussed on 'informal' or social education of the kind that was always for them an integral element. This entailed a concern with the group, with social activity and conversation, and with reflection and encouragement. However, such ways of working were dependent upon making provision attractive to young people. With the expansion of commercial and home-based leisure opportunities and demographic shifts the numbers using provision such as larger youth clubs has dropped significantly. Other factors were also relevant here, such as the numbers staying on at school (which meant that young people were still in contact with each other on a daily basis) and the rise of coursework which eats into their 'spare' time. Against this, relatively large numbers of young people are still being attracted into provision associated with various religious groups, and youth workers have found different locales for informal education through 'detached' work and exploiting the limited space within schools and colleges.

Alongside these shifts, we are witnessing the gradual but manifest expulsion of informal education from much state-sponsored, and some community-based provision. Provision has become more formalised, outcomes increasingly the subject of accreditation, and workers more narrowly focused on defined areas of work. In this respect *Youth Matters* is merely another milestone alongside the pathway leading to the promotion of a 'youth work' devoid of a substantive educational role. *Youth Matters* is significant though, because it denotes a moment when this process might have been halted or perhaps even reversed. The extent to which education is being ejected from the youth work tent is partially obscured by the manner in which much practice has superficially adopted the language of schooling. What is called 'youth work' has in recent years acquired curricula, outcomes, tests and learning packages (sometimes called tool-kits – a name that perfectly captures how workers are reduced to the role of a technician rather than an educator), all accoutrements of the formal sector. This should not be interpreted as a signifier that the educational role of those employed as youth workers has been retained or bolstered – rather it tells us the

reverse is taking place. Management has triumphed over education (see Jeffs and Smith, forthcoming).

The shift to management initially involved the adoption of a deficit orientation and an emphasis upon training or formation. Young people were seen as lacking key social and life skills, and thus required schooling in appropriate behaviours. As Bernard Davies warned youth services over 25 years ago in, *In Whose Interest?* (1979), this shift exacted a high price in terms of person-centred and critical practice. However, a further step was taken. This entailed viewing young people as cases or perhaps more accurately, as a condition, to be managed. As part of this young people are offered 'packages' of help/activity and become the focus of an increasingly programmatic set of interventions. There are strong echoes here of what has happened in social work in the movement from casework to case-management and likewise in Probation away from casework and befriending to offender management. What has emerged is two tracks of provision. One might be described as youth development/support and is aimed at those labelled as being particularly problematic (largely the 'NEET' of Connexions). It generally entails creating a package of some one-to-one interventions; participation in 'approved' instruction orientated groups and/or training that targets specific behaviour or skill deficits; and involvement in 'purposeful' activity. The second strand is what a number of policy-makers are calling 'youth work' but is really something else. Beverley Hughes, the minister for children, young people and families described the purpose of such 'youth work' as follows:

Primarily, it's about activities rather than informal education. Constructive activities, things that are going to enhance young people's enjoyment and leisure. There will probably be opportunities in some of the activities for self-development, for getting new skills through sport or whatever that might be, but I want activities to be the primary focus (Barrett, 2005b: 15).

Indeed *Youth Matters: Next Steps*, the official response to the consultation exercise on *Youth Matters*, clarifies this issue. It refers to 'youth work skills' as being 'central to engaging with young people' and to 'providing expertise in a range of areas including delivering IAG [Information, Advice, Guidance] and targeted support' (DfES 2006: 30). Crucially it is not youth work in its totality that is valued or central to this policy process, but youth work *skills*, such as an ability to persuade young people to do things they might otherwise be reluctant to do or to engage the attention of those who are commonly resistant to the blandishments of adults. In other words it is the second-order attributes of youth work, developed by practitioners as an entrée to a deeper educational encounter, that are to be appropriated. Like unemployed actors taken-on to meet and greet at theme parks, youth workers according to this scenario are not perceived as peers or the equivalent to other professionals. Rather they are to be conscripted because they are 'jolly' 'caring' sorts who possess the wherewithal and 'tricks of the trade' that will enable others to get their often unpalatable messages across to young people.

This drive to activity derives in significant part both from the need to make provision attractive to those having to pay the bills (in the government's mind parents and tax payers) and the experience of councils offering extended programmes of activity. A much cited example is Newham. There, it is claimed, enhancing the range of sports facilities open

to young people and making them free has contributed to a reduction in truancy levels between 2002 and 2005 of from 1.79 per cent to 0.9 per cent; and to a 27 percent drop in arrests of young people between April and December 2004 (Kirkham, 2006: 9).

The changes made to state-sponsored youth work replicate those that during roughly the same time span re-shaped adult education. With both the essential focus shifted to a new polarity. Historically the underlying tradition of both youth work and adult education for much of the twentieth century was close to the liberal education model. This sought to initiate 'students' and 'members' into understanding, to foster human flourishing and prepare participants to be autonomous but committed members of a free democratic society. The model driven by these ambitions placed great emphasis on student autonomy, collective learning, dialogue, conversation and the encouragement of 'learning for learning's sake'. The underlying purpose was education for liberation, as opposed to the training for domestication that has always been the dominant feature of the mass schooling offered the poor. It was a focus that enabled adult educators and youth workers to see themselves (sometimes without a great deal of justification), as diametrically different to school-teachers who taught to the syllabus and narrowed the gaze. They considered themselves apart from school-teachers, who for the majority of young people, as Oakshott argues, made available not an education but an:

... apprenticeship to adult life which, far from offering a release from the immediacies, the partialities and the abridgements of the local and contemporary world of the learner, reproduced this world in its familiar terms and provided the learner with more information about what was already within his reach and with skills in which he was reckoned to be 'interested' because he was already aware of them in use or in his own talents. The engagement was not to initiate him into difficult and unfamiliar inheritance of human understanding and sentiments, but to give him a somewhat firmer grasp of what he recognised to be 'relevant' to himself as he was and to the 'facts of life' (1972: 41).

Now adult education and the 'youth development' strand (and to some extent the 'youth work' strand) of youth services have shifted their focus to fostering employability and enabling the objects of their attention to better manage the transition from school to the domestic, industrial and commercial niches that await them. A key function is to fill the 'skill gap' that for some remain after schooling has finished and to 'retrain' those deficient in the new skills required by employers. Further tasks include, first, acting as a school support service encouraging some to return, others to survive exclusion and rejection, and the majority to 'stick with it'. Second, it entails undertaking the monitoring of those young people who are not at home doing their homework but who occupy public spaces that do not 'belong' to them – streets, parks and shopping centres. Third, it involves via low level 'counselling' and one-to-one 'mentoring' helping the socialisation of those young people who are experiencing difficulties with their 'transition to adulthood'. All three, unlike the informal education process, can be given targets, micro-managed and adjusted to fit in with an outcome driven structure. All three also do not require practitioners with the knowledge, educational levels and cultural depth demanded of an educator. An NVQ Two, Connexions Diploma or Foundation Degree will suffice for such work because the task is predominately to manage young people and aid their adjustment. The focus is on giving

information, advice and guidance (the bulk of which is pre-packaged); offering personalised support; encouraging engagement with sports and 'volunteering' 'delivered' by other semi-professionals; and the policing of specific locales.

When Ministers announced 'that youth services in the '60s traditional sense were not on the agenda, had proved not to work, and those who believed in them should leave the profession' (Barrett, 2005a: 13), they were not actually saying all the youth clubs will be closed. They were giving notice that no longer will funding be made available for the sort of educational interactions and programmes once fostered in many clubs. In other words, there will not be a domicile in the new 'youth management and monitoring service' for workers who seek to be emancipatory educators. For '60s traditional sense' is a veiled way of telling workers of a certain ilk that the new post-Green Paper services for youth will not stomach them or their *modus operandi*. In particular those youth work professionals and others seeking to break the shackles of school-bred passivity; cultivate collective action rather than individualised learning; release creative energy rather than foster docility; to raise consciousness rather than teach young people to make peace with mediocrity; are being told that such activities will no longer be tolerated.

The attack on freedom and privacy

As the pages of *Young People Now* indicate, many practitioners and observers have questioned the practicability of the 'Opportunity Cards'. These cards have become the focus for some justifiable opposition around the contribution they would make to extending the surveillance and monitoring of young people. However, a great deal of the noise around the cards misses two crucial points. First, whether or not the cards come into general usage, the use of management information systems (such as that pioneered by the National Youth Agency and adopted by many local authorities), along with the national system of databases envisaged by the Children Act 2004, mean the surveillance and monitoring of young people will be extended and some of their rights to privacy eroded. Furthermore this situation has been exacerbated by the ability, and commitment (in the name of 'joined-up services') to allow different databases to be interrogated and consolidated. At the moment data concerning young people are recorded on a variety of national information retrieval systems. These include those maintained for Connexions, Ryogens (Risk of Offending Generic Solution), the Youth Offending Information System, the Youth Inclusion and Support Panels database, the National Pupil Database, the Information Sharing and Assessment database, and the Integrated Children's System database. Local record and management information systems will also mean that data about young people's leisure time activities and private lives will become increasingly available to the state and its agencies. However, there is recognition in some quarters, as a recent IPPR report put it, of a 'seeming imbalance between the Government's enthusiasm for public service modernisation and its respect for constitutional due process' (Davies, 2005: 68). Richard Thomas, the information commissioner, has warned that as proposed the database containing details of all children and young people (legislated for within in the Children Act 2004) breaches the European Convention on Human Rights European Court ruling (*Young People Now*, March 9, 2005). Indeed, a review is already under way for the commissioner with regard to function-creep and disproportionality in the children's and young people's national

databases (*Young People Now*, 25 January 2006: 6). The comments the information commissioner made with regard to identity cards also apply to the main children's database and to the databases that details young people's involvement in activities and contacts with youth development and work agencies. He notes:

I have expressed my unease that the current proposal to establish a national identification system is founded on an extensive central register of personal information controlled by government and is disproportionate to the stated objectives behind the introduction of ID cards. It raises substantial data protection concerns about the extent of the information recorded about an individual when the ID card is used in their day to day lives and sparks fears about the potential for wider use/access to this information in the future (Thomas in LSE, 2005: 3)

As a result of criticisms of this kind, the minister (Beverley Hughes) has said that the youth card will not integrate with the information-sharing plans set out in the Children Act 2004. However, what is left unsaid here is exactly which databases will integrate with each other. It is difficult to imagine, for example, heads and children's trust case managers not wanting data around different young people's participation in activities. Indeed, given that the school will be the site for many of the activities linked to the so-called 'youth offer' a significant amount of the data will already be held on local servers. For the system to make sense individual databases will have to link into a national infrastructure, and to other databases within children's trusts.

There is a fundamental issue around young people's opportunities for privacy in all this. As William Davies has written in the context of the expansion and inter-connectability of government databases and of the 'digital agenda' in general, 'people can only be expected to embrace technologies actively if they retain the right not to'. He continues:

In a highly-interconnected society, privacy is the right to disconnect, to be anonymous and to be alone should one wish. No consumer would be expected to sign up to a broadband connection or mobile phone package if there was no way of cancelling it. And yet, industry and government currently try to convince citizens of the benefits of technological modernisation across society, without developing any sincere narrative as to how we may be able to opt out of it periodically or permanently, collectively or individually. For people to engage confidently with an interconnected world, they need both the entitlement and the know-how to limit that engagement when they see fit. A genuinely reassuring policy programme could consist of nothing less (Davies, 2005: 32).

The routine monitoring of involvement with children and young people via databases intrude in unacceptable ways into what should be the private lives of young people (see, for example, Garrett, 2005).

Before leaving this area it is also just worth noting how the use of information and communication technologies such as those involved in the various databases and assessment systems is reconfiguring the work of those engaging with young people. With far more attention being paid to servicing systems and to operating within the framework offered by centralised administration and policy, local workers have a decreased degree of

discretion and have to participate in a far greater number of routinised activities. As Garrett has commented with regard to the 'electronic turn' in social work, practice is 'increasingly being ordered, devised and structured by academics, policy makers and e-technicians far removed from ... day-to-day encounters.' He continues:

Social work activity is also becoming more Taylorised: broken down into bytes with social workers, aided by less costly 'social care assistants', providing 'customers' with discrete packages, or 'micro-packages', of (purchasable) support and intervention (Garret, 2005: 545)

This trend is already discernible within the field of youth work where face-to-face work is increasingly left to unqualified or minimally qualified hourly paid workers.

A further area of concern with regard to the 'Opportunity Card' is the extent to which it allows for a greatly enhanced regime of charging, and locates young people in the role of consumer. It reinforces the notion of the market and provides additional data to retailers about their customers. However, it does this with a particular twist – as a debit card it allows expenditure only on certain items. For these reasons alone, we suspect that even if pilot schemes throw up major problems, the idea will not be allowed to die. The Card offers a possibility that one of the key areas in which young people currently have a measure of genuine autonomy can be closed down. Cash bestows freedom. Once cash is given it becomes difficult, even impossible for parents and others to control the use to which it is put. It can be spent on a school-dinner or sweets; at the gym or the pub; on sensible clothes or drugs. Further, it can be expended on fake fashion items rather than the inordinately more expensive genuine article; on bootleg DVDs not the over-priced originals sold at Virgin or HMV. Thus cash bestows on young people the capacity to circumvent not only parental controls but to slip below the radar of the big retailers. That is why it will become an idea that will not be easily pushed aside. The card's potential for providing a means of monitoring the spending, movements and behaviour of young people make it attractive to parents and the state alike. In addition it gifts big retailers and suppliers of 'youth' orientated services the prospect of being able to better manage the youth market. For by the judicious use of discounts they will be given an opening that will allow them to squeeze out the small independent and more marginal suppliers and thereby tie young people to their brand, to corral the notoriously fickle young consumer at an impressionable age in the hope of securing a life-time's 'brand' loyalty.

The government also needs something like the Opportunity Card to handle public, and particularly parental, reactions to the costs involved in the various programmes of activity that it is hoped will be on offer. The level of government funding announced for the initiative, primarily to be sited in 'extended schools', is not adequate to the task and a major regime of charging will need to be introduced. The perceived pain of the additional cost will be handled by the portrayal of these extended activities in terms of benefits accruing to the young people and as an additional form of day care (thus allowing parents and carers to work longer hours or less 'family friendly' shifts). Topping up a card each month, some proponents believe, will seem less financially draining than shelling out cash each week for an array of different activities. However, the extended regime of charging also brings with it a compelling administrative argument for a Card. It will make life much easier for

schools and other agencies putting on activities. Rather than having to handle large sums of cash, and deal with cheques, direct debits and the like they can simply invest in a reader and reconfigure their local management information systems. At a stroke they both provide the data that the state requires on what individual young people are up to and a means of handling the complex fiscal transactions involved in funding extended schools and a marketised youth service.

The Opportunity Card is not a 'bad idea' because it will initially prove expensive to launch, but because it will help reduce the privacy and autonomy of young people, and allow others to control significant elements of their spending and relationship to the market. Thereby further confirming the social marginality of young people, marking them out as a segment of society too irresponsible even to be trusted with 'authentic' money.

The failure to engage with civil society

Like the *Transforming Youth Work* papers before it (DfEE, 2001; DfES, 2002), *Youth Matters* fails to engage with civil society in any meaningful way. Youth work was born out of the efforts of voluntary organisations, religious groups and local activity. It remains, overwhelmingly, an activity of civil society. Significantly, even when it comes to the employment of full-time workers more can be found employed and funded by churches than local authority youth services (Brierley, 2000). Yet the Paper does not reflect this. Little mention is made of the contribution that non-state sponsored work makes, nor of how it fits in with the policies and practices proposed in the Paper. In part this may well be simply a matter of the ignorance of the writers regarding the historic scale of that contribution. It is certainly a result of the managerial/business orientation that currently overlays policy making at this level. Within some of the teams working on the Green Paper there were those who had begun to recognise the power of the growing critique of economic-, rather than happiness-oriented policy, by people like Richard Layard and groups such as the New Economic Foundation (Shah and Marks, 2004). Some were also conversant with the arguments of Robert Putnam and others with regard to the need to cultivate social capital if communities are to flourish. However, while New Labour politicians and their advisers and apparatchiks may talk of 'community' and 'spreading power to citizens,' they have actually presided over a growing centralisation of power, an erosion of local democracy and they have increasingly imposed state-defined objectives on the activities of those they fund in the 'third sector'. Their language and framework is that of the technocrat, not of the democrat. An example here is David Miliband, the minister of communities and local government who recently argued that we need to 'find a way of supporting organisations whose value to society cannot be easily measured by targets or defined in contracts', and who has concluded that people lack the means to exercise power (Miliband, 2006). At the same time he has been party to educational reforms such as the introduction of the academies that significantly undermine the voice of local people, as well as to proposals to cut the numbers of councillors in favour of government appointees, to reduce the number of police authorities, and to reorganise the NHS in ways that make it even more remote from local people.

There is a fundamental problem for New Labour here. Direct intervention by the state

around community coherence and social capital is difficult. As John Field (2003) has said, it can only be built by engaging civil society and helping to create the conditions for associational life. This involves both giving local groups and organisations money with few strings (effectively a return to the old idea of grant aid and a move away from the contract culture) and embracing unpopular notions like subsidiarity and associational democracy that entail putting power and money in local people's hands. The more government intervenes directly, the less likely it is to foster social capital and civil society (see Edwards, 2004; 2005). This is why talk of community and partnership remain at the level of rhetoric – and why, in key respects, *Youth Matters* fails to engage with the reality of youth work. The writers and those they serve work within a business model that looks to quick fixes, standardisation and central regulation. Their orientation is that of McDonalds. Local residents, parents and, in this case, young people are placed in the role of consumers rather than active participants in a democracy (see Ritzer, 1998).

Conclusion

Youth Matters occasionally, like the head teacher at the school disco, makes an embarrassed self-conscious but ultimately gauche effort to appear 'with-it'. Mentioning MP3, email, chatrooms and texting cannot disguise the truth that this is a profoundly old fashioned document. It is one that would have barely raised an eyebrow a century ago. Indeed it is firmly located within the evangelical world-view promoted by some Victorian reformers; men and women schooled to search for signs of sinfulness, corruption and evil at every turn. Such Individuals fervently believed the devil makes work for idle hands; that technological change will afford greater opportunities for choice; that putting on a Great Exhibition (or an Olympics) will of itself inspire and induce young people 'to participate in a whole range of positive sporting, volunteering and cultural activities' (HM Government, 2005: 5); that healthy bodies make for healthy minds; that alcohol, drugs and sexual activity are dangerous; that parents of a certain class must be schooled to raise their children correctly; and that schools must train young people to be industrious, loyal and devoted employees.

Significantly *Youth Matters* includes no sentiment anyone on the religious right, Christian or Muslim, might perceive as faintly challenging. The only real sin is one of omission -the Paper has no sustained exploration of young people and spirituality. Entering into that territory was too risky for the Paper's writers – it would be all too easy to offend by the vacuous platitudes that would inevitably emerge. So anxious are the authors to avoid ruffling the sensibilities of these groupings they eschew any mention of the question of sexuality, refusing to even discuss in passing the specific needs of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual young people or select a project working in this area as an example of 'good practice'. Equally their courage deserts them with regard to questions of gender equality and oppression. The possibility that youth work might challenge entrenched views regarding the position of women in communities or wider society is never viewed as an option, let alone that workers might support young women resisting parental wishes regarding 'forced marriage', access to an abortion or birth control information. Instead to further placate the religious right and assure them that youth work will eschew any discussion of the 'dangerous, the 'controversial' or the 'socially progressive' they are told and re-told that parents will acquire

the agency to intercede in the relationship between the young person and their youth worker.

When these concerns are placed alongside the desire of the writers to deliver 'on message' it is little wonder the Paper plumps for generalities and imprecision. *Youth Matters* is fundamentally a document endeavouring to explain how youth work, and youth services are to be modified and re-aligned so that they henceforth operate in ways supportive of changes already enacted within other spheres of welfare policy and practice. These policy agendas include those around 'choice', social inclusion, 'respect' and labour-market flexibility. As the title implies this is a sequel, tailgating with a more high profile predecessor – *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). It adopts not merely the somewhat simplistic five models, as if everything laudable can be reduced to or encompassed within such crude catch-alls, but more significantly the model of practice it advocates – one that views safety and protection as the priority. A priority that leaves education to 'others' and believes safety and protection are best 'delivered' via the strengthening of bureaucratic structures and a narrowing of the options open to the practitioner. Consequently it never considers what might be the best way to fund or manage youth work. Such a question is deemed inadmissible or irrelevant. First, the current government does not want to fund or manage work that may be at odds with many of its priorities. It either has to be 'transformed' into something else or to be marginalised. Second, asking questions allows for the possibility that Children's Trusts and 'extended schools' may not be sensible locales wherein explorative work with young people should reside. That is why the Paper evades any discussion of what might be the most realistic age span for services to focus on. It also explains why the writers ignored nearly a century's worth of data telling us that schools, as they have been and are presently constituted, make an uncomfortable, often disastrous, location for youth work (Jeffs, 1979; Jeffs and Smith, 1988; Smith, 2006). Extended schools may eventually offer an enhanced range of activities and day care. However on the basis of the funding, staff allocation and administrative structures outlined in the Education White Paper and elsewhere this provision will be relatively costly, fail to appeal to many young people, and raise significant questions with regards to surveillance and control (Smith, 2004). Consequently in terms of wasted resources and exploded hopes, extended schooling may well put the short-lived Connexions shambles in the shade.

So where is *Youth Matters* taking us? First, it confirms and extends the shift toward the surveillance and management of young people in state-sponsored services and agencies. Indeed, through the attention given to recording contact, participation and outcomes on databases, it puts those it employs and the funds it will release in the front line of the attack on the rights and privacy of young people.

Second, within this framework, *Youth Matters* confirms and legitimates the rift that has occurred in a number of local authority youth services between youth support activities largely targeted at those deemed to be at risk (and encompassing support work in pupil referral units and the like, the activities of learning mentors, specialist work around drugs etc.), and more open, activity-focused work. Effectively, much of the former will fall within the 'children's trust approach'. The latter will largely become the province of schools and those voluntary and private sector organisations that wish to tender to provide services. The Youth Service as we have known it will no longer exist. The Aberdare and

Maud compromises arrived at over half-a-century ago to encourage and sustain fruitful collaboration between statutory and voluntary sectors have been effectively discarded. Furthermore, given the way that education and informality has been, and will continue to be marginalised and eradicated from state sponsored provision it is difficult to call much of what lingers 'youth work'. This has been already been partially recognised by employers, for example, by their re-titling of jobs from youth worker to such as youth support, youth development and sports development worker.

Third, the Paper, and the government's subsequent responses leave great swathes of non-statutory youth work relatively untouched – largely because it has little or no financial leverage over the groups and organisations involved. The danger for them is that they can easily slip into adopting state concerns and policies, and the associated managerialism. These have come to dominate professional discourses and much that is written about the work. Yet, at the same time, religious organisations, community groups and other agencies that are unambiguously part of civil society have a tremendous opportunity. If they retain a local orientation, do not share their data with others, and stay outside of state surveillance mechanisms they could provide a very attractive form of sanctuary to young people; one that respects their right to privacy and their role as citizens (rather than subjects).

There is a particular challenge in this respect to those committed to youth work but working within state-sponsored agencies. If the comments of the respective ministers alone do not indicate the direction the government wishes youth work to go, the only legislation to so far follow the Green Paper spells it out. The 2006 Education and Inspection Bill does set out a requirement that LEAs must 'so far as reasonably practical' ensure young people (aged 13 but not 20) have access to:

- a) *sufficient educational leisure -time activities for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and*
- b) *sufficient recreational leisure-time activities for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities (page 4).*

However the same section makes clear LEAs will in future find themselves obliged to follow the 'guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State' (p. 6). And to hammer home this message *Youth Matters: Next Steps* itemises a range of 'guidances', 'circulars', 'frameworks', 'tests', 'proposals' and 'reviews' that local authorities can expect to be issued in the next few years. Each tells them precisely what they may or may not do. On past evidence this type of enabling clause has provided an 'open sesame' for progressively more intrusive interference by central government. With regards to schooling they have led not merely to teachers being told what to teach, but more recently how to teach. It would be naïve to dismiss the probability that a similar erosion of local democratic sovereignty over the allocation of resources and professional autonomy with regards to the style and focus of practice will not also occur in the case of youth work. Managers and workers alike can expect to be increasingly told by Whitehall, in evermore prescriptive ways, who they must work with, or rather on, and what it is they should 'do' to those young people.

For youth work to survive with any integrity it will be necessary to exploit niches and forgotten corners; and to hide from, or at least stay out of sight, of key state surveillance

systems. Some will have the necessary ingenuity and luck to do this, but many will find the task impossible – at least in the short to medium term. One thing we can be sure of is that intellectual, moral and ultimately political bankruptcy of managerialism, and of the failure to properly engage with and cultivate civil society, will reveal itself more. Whereas Albemarle was linked to an era of optimism and growth this is not the case with regards to the recent Green Paper. The unpleasant truth is that however much the Panglossians amongst us may seek to talk up *Youth Matters* they will fail to carry many with them. That is because the Green Paper, unlike Albemarle, brings with it no significant injection of funding. Neither did Albemarle seek to centralise nor impose a template on practice, so therefore agencies and workers did not feel nervous about or overly anxious concerning its recommendations. This time around everything is different. Not least because restrictions placed on local government funding have meant within a few months of the appearance of *Youth Matters* two LEAs announced the virtual closure of their youth services, and others have significantly cut grants to voluntary agencies. Meanwhile the ending of SRB and other funding based on specific initiatives has led to widespread, one might almost say unparalleled, levels of staff redundancies in the voluntary sector. Yet over time we can be certain that further chances to build work with young people that is associational, respectful and liberal will arise, for the reason that such work has intrinsic value and is valued by young people (see for example Hirsch, 2005). Consequently 'optimism is a moral duty' because the ideals inherent within informal education and youth work are timeless – worth struggling to sustain and give expression to.

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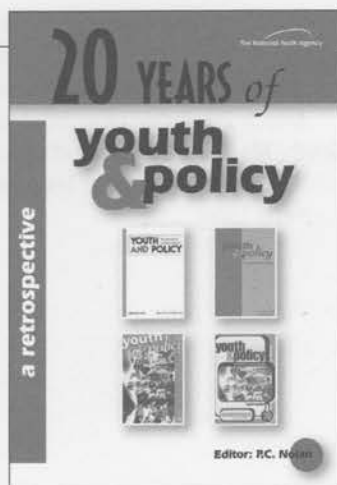
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Young Offending: The lives, views and experiences of three 'typical' young offenders

Steve Rogowski

This article focuses upon the views and perspectives of white working class young people in relation to offending and the youth justice system. It presents case studies of young people's voices with the purpose of raising questions about the relevance of youth justice policy to their real lives and concerns.

Keywords: *young offenders, youth justice, class, risk.*

Some of my qualitative research study into young peoples' experience of offending and the youth justice system (Rogowski, 2002) has already been published (Rogowski, 2000/1; 2003/4). This concentrated in general terms on the views and experiences of young offenders as gleaned from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions¹. The young people saw offending starting as naughtiness and mischief with such exploits being expressive and experimental prior to 'graduating' to more instrumental offending, such as car theft and burglaries, which in turn are related to motivations of boredom and material gain. As for the youth justice system, the move from welfare/treatment to punishment/popular punitiveness over the post-war period (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994; Bottoms, 1995) was almost unanimously condemned by them². We have seen social work being forced into an increasingly control and punishment oriented role (Goldson, 2000), again something which the young people bemoaned. They considered the operation of the youth justice system to be inherently racist, and many, not least the young women, also thought of it as sexist and as focussing on 'people like us', those from poor and deprived areas, rather than administering justice to all. The young people stressed that young offending should be tackled by making schools more interesting and relevant, ensuring recreational and leisure facilities were improved, and making sure genuine employment and training opportunities were available. Additionally, they felt parents and carers needed more help, support and resources. All this they argued would mean that young offending was seriously addressed. Furthermore, they believed that such issues should be financed by progressive, redistributive taxation. Despite an element of critical pessimism, they were also concerned with inequality, feeling that a more fair and just society would lead to less crime. Their views are certainly out of tune with New Labour's approach to the phenomenon.

This article concentrates in more detail on what might be called, difficulties notwithstanding with this term, three 'typical' young offenders. It is the lives, views and experiences of Billy, Colin and Jane that I elaborate on here³. In essence I provide three vignettes of these young people in order to give a flavour of what being a young offender entails. Those who see such young people as a breed apart or an enemy within, as they are often portrayed by

politicians and the media, will find little comfort in what follows. Instead I hope to provide a more balanced view with a deeper and more appreciative understanding being attempted.

There is an element of reportage but theory is never far away. My research adopted a cross-paradigm approach (Firestone 1990) incorporating ethnographic, feminist and critical perspectives. In particular, young offending is interpreted in terms of its wider social context and in relation to oppressions arising from class, 'race' and gender. This is in keeping with the tradition of Marxist/critical theory (Harvey 1990) and in turn Marxist/critical criminology (for example, Taylor, Walton and Young 1973; Scraton and Chadwick 1991; Walton and Young 1998). Such theory helps us understand how young offending is a response by young people to the problems and difficulties that they and their families are confronted with in capitalist/free market society.

Young offending and what is to be done about it is always near the top of the political agenda. However, the views of young people, particularly young offenders themselves, like all marginalised groups, are rarely heard though they certainly deserve to be (Truman et al, 2000). This article is an attempt to go some way to remedying the situation.

Billy's Story

Despite his occasional petulance, Billy is an amicable sixteen year-old. He is the youngest of four, with his two sisters and brother now living away from home. His parents separated when 'I was about eight' and his mother remarried but he sees his father quite regularly. The family lived in a council house in a rather poor area of Oakton and as his step-father worked irregularly there were financial difficulties. His mother has mental health problems exacerbated by marital difficulties including a volatile relationship with her second husband, drug overdoses and misuse of alcohol. After periods in hospital and spells of respite care at a mental health hostel it became clear that she could not return home. When her second husband left it meant that there was no one to care for Billy so he was accommodated in children's homes though in weekly contact with his mother. His social worker was already involved because of his schooling difficulties, these eventually leading to permanent exclusion and offending. He never really settled in his children's homes with, for example, his school exclusion meaning that he was often bored and fed-up this leading to further offending. Although residential social workers were 'impressed by his friendly open nature in which he displays a willingness to talk frankly' he could also 'respond aggressively' to guidance even to the extent of causing damage to the children's home. Because of the latter, and an escalation in his use of drugs and offending, he was ultimately sent to a secure unit pending him being sentenced by the Crown Court, a custodial sentence being likely. As he put it:

I started kicking off.....kicking doors, smashing windows..... booted one of the doors off, booted some doors upstairs.....I found a few more mates, started getting back on weed and whizz and drugs and all that.....Started going back to the unit (children's home) kicking off. I couldn't be arsed any more, it was shix! I started robbin' again, cars.....selling cars to this different guy.....robbin' factories.....all sorts really.

Rather poignantly he ended this interview, the last time I saw him, by saying:

I wish I hadn't done anything. It just happens, don't it? 'Come on,' they'd say, 'let's go and get some money...'

Offending

Billy's offending started as mischievousness, pinching some fruit and vegetables from local allotments for instance. He then graduated to shop-lifting and more serious offences:

When I was about ten or eleven.....we were walking and thingy.....it was pen knives we got, and some sweets and all that. Security came and got us. I got a caution.

And apart from breaking into and stealing cars he also committed burglaries. One example was:

Mi mate was in mi house and ... like he just went over our wall into their (next door neighbours) yard and smashed the back window.....went in and opened this porch door thing. I went in and got these super nintendos, sego massives (computer games) or whatever they are called. And then all the beer! And then went back over the wall to our house and sold it all. They (the neighbours) were quite rich so they could afford to lose a few things.

By this stage his offending had become instrumental with boredom and material gain being the main motivations as well as 'to act hard in front of mates' but it was not, as some of the aforementioned suggests, callous, unthinking and unfeeling behaviour. To some extent at least, he did consider his victims and social morality certainly had a place in his world. For example, he commented that he would try not to steal from 'poor people' because they would not be able to afford to lose material things, whereas 'too right I'd do it if they were rich ... they've got insurance and all that'.

He thought his parents had done their best in bringing him up despite the difficult circumstances that particularly his mother had to endure. Admittedly he did not get on with his step-father and nor did he appreciate his father 'waffling on at me'. He also said that if they and residential social workers had 'taken you out more and all that' it would have led to less offending. But overall he did not blame his carers for his predicament.

Like many young people, his leisure and recreational time was spent 'hanging around 'ere (children's home)' or the area where he used to live. He had tried youth clubs but found them boring and uninteresting so a typical night out could involve:

Going to mi mates' house, Chris's, or we'd come round to my house and ... like ring up his, our dealer, get a weed, go t'the shop, get some beer, go to whose house we're going in, get pissed. And then go out robbin.

Drugs and alcohol were an obvious part of his leisure time, being used to relieve boredom

or stress much as adults use alcohol. This shows the link between boredom and material gain in terms of motivation for offending; he used cannabis and other drugs to relieve boredom but in turn money is needed to buy the drugs.

Secondary school, as is often the case, was problematic and he quickly became disenchanted, not seeing it as relevant to the here and now. As a result he truanted a lot and when he did attend he caused problems by not doing his work, being cheeky to teachers, fighting with other pupils and generally being disruptive in class. He was also the subject of bullying. Billy spoke of his schooling experience thus:

I got expelled. I was fighting and wagging it (truanting). It was shix! [We should have] done more things instead of just work all day. Things like going out ... maybe swimming once a week or so instead of being stuck in a classroom all day.

Even so at one stage he did speak positively of going to a smaller, more specialist school for pupils with special needs. Like other people I spoke to he thought the smaller classes would mean he would get more attention, get to know the teachers better and vice versa.

When it came to employment and training, on our first meeting Billy had little idea of what he would like to do when his schooling officially finished and he had given it little thought. But when I last saw him, in the secure unit awaiting an almost certain custodial sentence, he spoke positively of working in a garage or for his father as an electrician. Perhaps the maturation process was taking hold or perhaps he had come to the rational decision, faced with the serious possibility of incarceration, that it would be better to comply with the system after all. If it is the latter, then it sits uneasily with his stated view (see below) that custody increases the likelihood of offending.

The Youth Justice System

Like all of the young people I saw Billy did not have many positive things to say about the youth justice system. He felt the police were unfair in focussing 'on people like us', young people from 'rough' areas, when there was so much more serious crime being committed. As he said:

They've started being really strict [on us] now, the police. We were robbing a garden shed and how many police cars do you reckon come? One? Well we climbed out of this shed and there were about three cars there and two vans, a jeep and one of those dog van things! We came out and went 'ugh!' ... Just for a little shed! We were only getting a couple of fishing rods!

Like others he thought courts and the resulting legal proceedings were solely concerned with administering punishment and that most court orders had little relevance in terms of reducing offending. Exceptions were some aspects of specified activities such as talking to prisoners, or reparation or mediation schemes, all of which he said would make him 'think a bit' (about victims, for instance). He also had a grudging praise for social workers whom he felt, despite changes in their role via incorporation into Youth Offending Teams that also include the

police, were on the side of young people in their dealings with the youth justice system. Finally in relation to this it is worth repeating that he had very negative views of custody:

They (young offenders institutions) just make you worse. When you're inside they're teaching each other new things and when yer come out yer wanna try 'em all. Then yer go try 'em all and yer get caught and you're fuxxing back inside!

Although it was difficult to get him to elaborate, many of his views on 'race', gender and class were similar to most of the other young people I encountered. He saw the police and the youth justice system as a whole as racist. For example he spoke of how he and some friends, including two black young men, were caught 'doing a graft (offence)'. The white young men, including Billy, were put in the police van and there was some friendly banter with the police but their black friends were pinned up by their necks and the police were giving them pure shix. And they said to us 'yer can go now' but the black lads had to stay and I don't know what happened to them.

And although he initially said 'I didn't know girls got into trouble', he thought the youth justice system would tend to treat them 'gentler', more leniently than young men. As for class, he thought the police spent an undue amount of time and resources trying to 'arrest people like us'. He added that this entailed focussing on certain areas, poor areas, and although these areas might have higher crime rates it was simply because the poor needed more money to survive. He put it this way:

Some areas are like ... not messed up but others ... Say, say yer live in Red Bank (a deprived area of Oakton) everywhere yer go someone's robbing someone, or they're fighting. Say yer live in Royal Park (a wealthier part of Oakton) it's really posh. Yer walk down there and there's now't going on down there is there? If yer live there yer won't go out robbing or anything, but if yer had mates on Red Bank they'll be out robbing won't they [and you would be with them]?... They need the money so they go out robbin' for it, 'cos their mums' can't afford to give 'em any. All they can say is 'I haven't got any'.

It is worth pointing out that he seemed to think that a more equal society would lead to less youth crime but he did not enlarge on this.

In relation to current policy and practice, essentially the continuation of the Tories' tough law and order approach of the 1990s, Billy was rather scathing in his views. For instance he dismissed the increased use of custody, along with innovations such as parenting classes and curfews. He felt parents were doing their best often in difficult circumstances. He said:

All parents can do is punish them or ground 'em, and tell 'em what to do. They can't like ... flaming ... sit up all hours of the night to stop 'em sneaking out of the house and going out robbing. That's what I used to do when my mum used to ground me. I'd sneak out of my bedroom window and go robbing.

For Billy there should be more emphasis on what leads young people into offending notably

the motivational factors of boredom and material gain. From this, new and improved youth facilities, improved education opportunities including smaller classes, meaningful employment and training opportunities and 'help for poor families' was the way forward.

Colin's Story

Colin is a pleasant and polite, white seventeen year old. On the other hand he has a rather wayward nature and this is when he is prone to get into trouble and sometimes lose his temper. He was brought up on the largest most deprived council estate in Oakton. His parents separated when he was eight with him, his older sister and their subsequent half-sister being brought up by their mother and her new partner. He had some contact with his father and could never really get on with his step-father seeing the latter as always telling him what to do. His mother contacted Social Services when he was fourteen asking for help saying he would not go to school, was staying out overnight, was verbally abusive to her and on one occasion during a scuffle he bruised her arm. Social workers became involved but there was little improvement in terms of his schooling or behaviour at home. His offending became a concern and eventually he was received into local authority accommodation initially with foster parents. Unfortunately he hardly ever stayed with them, subsequently staying at two children's homes. For much of the time he was popular with both residential social workers and other young people although various incidents were complained of: writing sexually explicit graffiti in his bedroom, bringing beer in and drinking it in his bedroom, being argumentative, sometimes causing damage and so on. There was also no improvement in his school attendance and his offending continued. By this time he had committed such offences as criminal damage, shop-lifting, deception, taking cars and using threatening/abusive language and behaviour.

Despite the above he had many positive qualities such as intelligence, a cheerful, friendly personality and a positive attitude towards employment and these were seen to outweigh the negatives. As a result when it came to leave his last children's home he moved to two Social Services training/semi-independence units; basically self-contained flats/bedsits with residential staff available for help and support. In many ways he made progress, having spells in employment and training, performing household tasks and managing his finances. It was also here that he met his first real girlfriend, Anne, and they eventually had a baby together. However, he also tended to allow rather notorious friends into his flat and they could take over. Other flats were burgled and damaged and in the end he was held responsible. Initially he was given three days' notice to leave but after consulting Oakton's children's rights officer he was given a month's notice. He drifted back to his old haunts on the council estate staying with friends or sleeping rough, much as he had done prior to being accommodated, before moving in with his sister who had her own house. He and Anne did talk of obtaining their own accommodation but because she was only sixteen they decided she and the baby would be better off with her parents for the time being. The last time I heard from him he was staying with friends, working for a joinery firm and in regular contact with Anne, their baby and his family.

Offending

Colin drifted into offending after various acts of mischief such as taking short cuts through people's gardens, smoking cigarettes in the school playground and shop-lifting from local shops. Again much of this was expressive and experimental. He also spoke of:

getting done for robbing a bus.....The bus driver got off to go to the toilet, so I ran on the bus and nicked all the money. I was about thirteen then. The driver came back, grabbed hold of me [and] took me from Stamford bus station and took me to the police.

Later when he was estranged from his family and sleeping rough or staying with friends his offending became even more instrumental because, as he said, he needed money for food just to survive. Once he and a friend from school were involved in a cheque book fraud and on another occasion he was caught cashing someone's benefit books. For him crime made a lot of sense with his initial offending related to boredom but later material gain being the main motivation.

It is worth repeating that although he wished his mother had supported him more through his offending, by attending at the police station for example, he recognised the difficulties she faced because she did the bulk of caring for his young half-sister. In fact it was his view that neither parent, nor his step-father, nor other carers could have done anything more to stop him offending. He simply said, 'They can't can they?' It must also be remembered that he did receive rather strict parental guidance from his step-father in particular. Colin saw this as him 'always getting on at me'.

Unsurprisingly much of his spare time was spent 'hanging around'. Again youth clubs had been tried but found wanting so he would, for example, visit friends from his children's homes and a typical night out would involve:

going to Thorpe Park (an area of Oakton) and seeing friends...chilling out at friends houses. We'll probably have a drink and a smoke. Sometimes I see my girl.

Tasks for the day, if he was not in employment or training, would consist of going to the careers office, Jobcentre and Benefit Agency. His life did therefore have a form and structure, and the use of cannabis and alcohol formed a key part of this.

He made forceful comments about his schooling, at least as far as the secondary stage is concerned, seeing it as largely boring and irrelevant to the life he was likely to lead. He was offered a place at the smaller school for pupils with special needs, the one Billy also initially enthused about, but he did not take it up. From about the age of thirteen he seemed to have decided that school would be of little use in terms of the employment opportunities that would be available to him. And subsequent events certainly seemed to prove him right. Apart from the joinery job referred to, he also obtained several other jobs such as packing (despite the negative views of some young people concerning such jobs) and shop-fitting. His lack of schooling certainly did not prevent him from seeking and obtaining some sort of gainful work.

The Youth Justice System

Colin had very negative views of the police. For example, he referred to a particular incident that he deeply resented:

I was near this house and there was this nicked car there. It weren't me actually [who had stolen it], it was Jason (friend). The police came and as I shot off they arrested me for it! And when I was in court it was me against three coppers!

He also went on to say that often when the police had him in the police station:

they kept giving us shix all the time. But not in front of their sergeants, and not when they're taping you, although they do before and after. They call you a 'dick' and all sorts. No-one likes 'em.

Again there was a feeling that the police are unfair, always targeting people 'like us', and that they always got away with unscrupulous behaviour. And these negative views continued when it came to the court and legal proceedings generally including most of the various court orders. Exceptions relate to his positive view of community service as well as the role of social workers, but not probation officers, in the youth justice system. Social workers are 'alright.....they haven't really got an attitude with you [and they are there] to help and advise'. This is seen in terms of helping young people to sort their life out, meaning that offending was less likely. Probation officers, however, were merely seen as agents of control and punishment. This is significant in the context of the role of social workers being driven in this direction.

Colin's views on aspects of 'race', gender and class echoed Billy's. Briefly, he thought: 'all police are racist' with them and the youth justice system as a whole discriminating against black young people at every stage; young women were treated 'better', more chivalrously, by the police and the youth justice system as a whole; and people like 'us', people from 'messed up areas', are the focus of the police's and even the whole youth justice system's attention. It must be emphasised that he often made references to 'us', young people from deprived areas, not least in his comments about the police repeatedly 'bad- arsing' him and his friends i.e. stopping and questioning them for no other reason than they had been in trouble in the past.

He too had little enthusiasm for current policy and practice in terms of tackling young offending. In particular he said, 'I don't agree with parenting classes;' nor did he agree with curfews or secure training orders, thinking 'it's all over the top.' Instead he thought intermediate treatment, including the old-style focus on activities and interests was:

a good idea. Why didn't I go on that? They should stick to how it used to be. Social workers should give advice and help, and all that. And you'll listen more if you know 'em better [by going away with them, for example].

He also said improving youth facilities would lead to less offending, as would ensuring all unemployed young people receive 'an allowance every week.' Concerning youth facilities he felt:

some youth clubs are OK for children but for [young people of] say about fifteen upwards there's nothing. There should be something better, something more exciting ... I don't know ... go-karting, things like that, ... discos or motorbikes may be. Something more exciting than table-tennis!

For him though perhaps his offending eventually stopped because of the maturation process, not least having a job and a partner and baby.

Jane's Story

Jane is a fair-haired, bright, and cheerful young woman. In some ways she talks and acts as someone older than her fifteen years. Despite her friendly, affable nature she also has a more belligerent side to her personality. Her father left home when she was a toddler since when she and her younger brother have been brought up by her mother, although there were 'step-fathers'/ 'uncles' around from time to time. She only had irregular contact with her father even though he 'only lives around the corner'. The family had lived at several addresses mainly on two deprived council estates in Oakton. Sometimes they had to move after hassle from drug dealers. Her mother sometimes uses hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin, also having become involved in petty crime to finance this, and having had short spells in custody as a result. It is also worth noting that her mother spent much of her childhood in care, gave birth to Jane and her brother while still in her teens, struggled on welfare benefits, and that she had difficulty coping with them both. Help and support was provided by Social Services nurseries in terms of giving her mother a break and of providing play and social stimulation for the two children.

When Jane was twelve her mother contacted Social Services saying that an uncle had sexually assaulted her daughter. The latter had been sniffing lighter fuel and he had asked her if she wanted a tin. She agreed, went to his house, began sniffing and became drowsy though she could clearly recall being sexually assaulted. It also happened on two other occasions after more lighter fuel and £2 was given. She was placed on the child protection register with a social worker carrying out self-protection work with her and protection work with the mother in respect of her. Her uncle was questioned by the police but not charged. Jane was very angry about this decision. She already had problems at school and these escalated. Teachers complained of her 'associating with older girls and looking for trouble' this leading to bullying and abusive comments to other girls and teachers. There were instances of her being put on report and being temporarily excluded, and problems at home also increased such as being confrontational with her mother and staying out overnight. She was also cautioned for shop-lifting.

Eventually her mother requested local authority accommodation and she ended up having three short spells in two children's homes. It was during this period, shortly before her thirteenth birthday, that she was permanently excluded from school. She did not settle in the children's homes, for example largely coming and going as she pleased, sniffing solvents and encouraging others to do likewise, damaging property and, much as she could be at home and school, being confrontational with residential social workers. She also committed offences of assault. Even so her periods at home gradually became more calm, and

following her third spell in accommodation she returned home for what turned out to be for good. When I last saw her she remained settled at home but still permanently excluded from school having rejected moves to other schools. The Education Department and Social Services had seemingly largely washed their hands of the situation, not that she or her mother were complaining. Instead the family were simply relieved that she was no longer getting into trouble and was behaving herself in other ways such as letting her mother know where she was when she was out and generally being less argumentative.

Offending

Jane's offending started as naughtiness such as smoking, in her case when she was still at primary school, 'messaging about in class' and generally seeing what she could get away with. As usual shop-lifting was done quite regularly with her eventually getting caught but, as she admitted, only on two occasions. As indicated, she also had a temper, perhaps this being linked to the anger she felt following the sexual assaults, but in any case she committed assault offences. On one occasion:

I hit this girl with a sweeping brush 'cos she called me a slag. She just walked past and called me a slag so I hit her with the sweeping brush. She called me a slag again and I wacked her again about three times!

On another occasion she hit another young women:

I only slapped her. She was starting on him (brother) ... She was picking on 'im so I said, 'Well I'm only thirteen pick on me,' sort of thing. She was sixteen so I just give 'er two slaps.

Her early offending was expressive and experimental, and her later offending was more instrumental but in her case it was less to do with material gain but more to do with righting a perceived wrong. She added:

It's just a thing in life [most girls] go through ... a bad stage of getting arrested and that, know what I mean? I've been brought up in a bad environment. What do you want me to do? Red Bank (an estate in Oakton) is a bad area. It's a bad environment. All Oakton is! Things get worse everyday ... sniffing, beating ups, fighting, stabbing, battling ... everyone!

She did not feel that her mother, 'step-fathers'/ 'uncles' or father could have done anything more to stop her getting into trouble, also saying that residential social workers had done their best to advise and guide her. She was adamant that even if her parents had stayed together she would have still got into trouble:

Yes of course I would! What's the difference your mum and dad being together? At the end of the day I'd still be going out to Red Bank dossing about. I'm a street person, know what I mean? Not one of those snobby persons'.

She went on that:

You can't blame the parents. Like if I got into trouble they'll blame it on my parents. If I don't go to school they give my parents a £2000 fine! That's not fair!

As with the other young people much of her life was spent 'hanging around' or as she put it 'dossing on Red Bank' and another, the largest, most deprived estate in Oakton where she now lived. And although she could say this means 'doing nothing really' in fact much of her time was structured. She was one of the few young people I saw who used youth clubs and she would also:

go swimming, [visit] our Margaret's (cousin), things like that ... [or] go out and drink a bit of beer. I know I'm only fourteen but I hang around with girls a lot older than me. That's why I'm a lot older than I am, know what I mean? When I was ten I was hanging around with sixteen year olds ... Sometimes, at weekends or Monday nights we go out to't club and have a few beers. It's only a fiver to get in and free drinks all night. They think I'm about twenty-one in there (laughing)!

And the use of drugs was also an important part of her leisure time. Although in the past she had used various solvents as well as amphetamines, it was cannabis that turned out to be her drug of recreation with her referring to 'chilling out', relaxing and thinking reflectively about the things she had done in the past. She felt everyone needed a drug of some sort, again just as many adults use alcohol.

Primary school was a positive experience. She received a good final report especially in mathematics, English and science. But her move to secondary school was unsuccessful. Although she was described as 'potentially very able', 'having a fair general knowledge' and being the 'most willing pupil.....for most of the time she has no restraints on language, misbehaves in front of staff and pupils alike [and can be] domineering and threatening.' After over thirty incidents of misbehaviour she was permanently excluded. Perhaps this behaviour was related to the sexual assaults she suffered, and she also complained of 'teachers doing mi head in. They just interfere in what your personal life is, know what I mean?' She thought teachers could have been more sympathetic towards her behaviour but complained 'they don't, do they? They just blame it on the parents'. Even so she enjoyed aspects of school life but did not see it relevant to the present or to the future. She simply hoped to become a beautician or pop singer.

The Youth Justice System

Jane's experience of the youth justice system again meant that she had negative views of the police particularly the way she was once treated in the police station; assaulted because she would not take her trainers off. Unlike the young men I saw she did not feel young women were dealt with more sympathetically or leniently. And she made similar negative comments about current responses to young offending not least regarding her experience of going to an attendance centre. She laughed as she spoke of how she 'just made things.....cards, put patterns on glasses, did P.E., stuff like that'. She was equally

condemnatory of the use of custody saying 'it makes 'em (young offenders) worse! [also] they know they're getting attention. They think it's good getting arrested and locked up. It's big and hard!'

The continuation of get tough policies by New Labour were also largely dismissed. An obvious example of this was her views about holding parents responsible for their offspring's behaviour. Perhaps surprisingly, and also inconsistent with many of her other views, she was enthusiastic about tagging, saying 'Tag! Tag! If every criminal was on the tag there wouldn't be no more criminals. Yer can't get away from that tag!' On a different tack she had positive views about social workers who:

are alright, some of 'em are good. [They] look after people, people who are abused, raped or are on drugs, are abandoned, in trouble ... things like that. They help children who can't get on with their parents.

Despite some of what she said, she thought if help and support were offered to young offenders then this was more likely to be an effective response than one based on punishment and control. For her though the maturation process had been a significant factor in her stopping offending: 'I haven't been in trouble for about a year now. I've seen a bit more sense now.'

She was keen to point out the offending occurred in both 'posh' and 'poor' areas: 'There's always somebody that's done crime. Even if yer go to a posh area everyone's done crime. Everybody makes mistakes.' Despite this she argued that 'young people from poor areas are more likely to get into trouble [because for example] they need money for their habits ... drug habits, any habit.' She related the greater use of drugs in such areas to the police focus on them. These comments can be seen in relation to class but when we discussed identity, particularly whether she considered herself as primarily working class, a young woman or white, she replied:

Well certainly not working class. Every time I talk about myself I don't say 'I'm a white working class person.' So I'll say '[I'm] a young woman or girl' [then white and then working class].

Finally in relation to Jane's story, when issues of 'race' and gender are considered, concerning the former she was certain that black young people did not commit more offences than white young people: 'What's the difference 'tween a black person and a white person apart from skin colour?' The over-representation of black young people in the youth justice system was therefore seen as evidence of racism from their initial contact with the police through to the imposition of court orders. As for gender she felt young men got into more trouble 'cos they're lads' but only expanded to the extent that 'they drink more and drink makes you violent'.

Analysis

At one level Billy's and Colin's, along with Jane's initial offending can be seen in terms

of normal adolescent development in that it was about having fun and a laugh. Indeed, delinquency/young offending might be seen as a natural part of adolescence, with its associated problems of emotional adjustment and physical development. From this young offending could be construed as a normal, transient aspect of growing up in current society and we should not be unduly worried about it. Rather than intervening as early as possible via the youth justice system, in an increasingly 'get tough' way, a more appropriate intervention would be to strengthen the developmental roles of home, school and local communities (Rutherford, 1986). For sooner rather than later it is likely that matters will work out, as it seems to have done in the case of Colin and Jane, and perhaps eventually Billy.

The negative consequences of exposure to the youth justice system have been amply demonstrated (for example, Farrington, 1977; West, 1982). At best it has no effect on subsequent behaviour or at worst it actually exacerbates criminal behaviour, as arguably it did in relation to all three of these young people. Such research was heeded during the 1980s when, for example, social workers developed system management strategies to keep young people out of the youth justice system whenever possible and used intensive intermediate treatment to develop genuine alternatives to incarceration (Thorpe et al, 1980; Pitts, 1988; Blagg and Smith, 1989). Unfortunately the Tories and then New Labour reversed this policy and practice. Thus, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has inducted a new, younger population into the youth justice system, effectively blamed parents for their offsprings' behaviour, imposed community punishment/control on young offenders rather than help and support, and expanded the range of custodial penalties (Pitts, 2000; 2001). With the exception of Jane's comments about tagging, the young people above were not in favour of the new 'get tough' approach to young offending. Indeed on occasions they said it would make matters worse by, for example, causing conflict between young people and the police if curfews were strictly enforced. Forcing parents to go to parenting classes they believed could also cause conflict between young people and their parents, even to the extent of many of the former having to leave home and face a life of even more crime, drug use and the like. Current policy in relation to law and order can be disastrous for all the young people and families who are in similar situations to those of Billy, Colin and Jane.

The practice of human service professional work with individuals, families and communities is dominated by 'risk indicators', 'risk reduction' and 'risk management'. New Labour sees the 'causes of crime' in terms of risk factors such as inadequate parenting, aggressive/hyperactive behaviour in early childhood, truancy, unstable living conditions, lack of training/employment and drug and alcohol misuse. These are all attributed to the family with no acknowledgement of the structural factors such as class, 'race' and gender inequalities that profoundly affect young people's life chances. For instance, Billy, Colin and Jane all originate from poor working class backgrounds. Their parents were unemployed or in irregular/under employment and they lived in poverty on run down estates with few community resources. They went, or were supposed to go, to under-resourced schools. Their access to meaningful work was also very limited, although Colin eventually seemed to be making the most of a bad deal. These young people generally did not have the funds to participate in an increasingly consumer oriented society. Perhaps it is hardly surprising that they turned to property crime (Greenberg, 1977). It must be recalled that even Jane's offending started with property theft. Indeed, all young people living in the social and economic conditions

just outlined are prone to resort to young offending in order to fund their increasingly important leisure and consumer activities.

In a different vein, it has to be said that Billy (despite some of his comments), Colin and Jane often thought little about the consequences for others of their actions, for the victims of offending behaviour. As such the lack of a collective value base or a moral framework becomes apparent. In some ways these young people are powered by individualism but this too is perhaps hardly surprising in the current political, ideological and economic climate. In a society currently dominated by values of self-interest, consumerism and competition where every individual is required to 'be out for' themselves, many young offenders do just that and break into houses, take what they want or steal cars and go for a drive.

Young people share status attributes simply by virtue of their age, but their claim to resources and power are significantly determined by their class, ethnicity and gender (Muncie, 1999). Such factors structure their work and leisure opportunities, and as such, working class young people for example often disassociate themselves from school and the labour market and deflect their aspirations to leisure pursuits. If these latter aspirations are not fulfilled then young offending, particularly property crime, is likely to ensue. Over the last fifty years working class solidarity, loyalties and traditions have been undermined by changes in the economy not least globalisation and the advances of technology (Leonard, 1997). For example traditional pride in craftsmanship is no longer possible and the absence of regular and meaningful employment opportunities means that there is a breakdown of collectivity and the destruction of 'respectable' working class perspectives based on regular work and regular income. This in turn can lead to an absence of strong identities or community identification which can translate into arbitrary negative behaviour associated with resistance to or carelessness about authority (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). To appreciate this, one only has to recall Billy's and Colin's comments about 'messed up' areas and Jane's about being brought up in a 'bad environment' and a 'bad area' and their failure to realise that they or their friends may have in fact contributed to such a situation.

A key question about the risk-dominated perspective of policy is whether such an approach makes for a good social/youth work practice. The short answer is in the negative because the "'science of risk" draws on an interest in management [and in turn various techniques, guidelines and procedures], establishes an excessively instrumentalist cognitive approach and undermines good ... practice' (Bessant, 2004: 60). Not least it works against a practice based on professional judgement and on a capacity to build relationships with people in which respect and trust are central ethical qualities. Billy's, Colin's and Jane's comments about social workers show the importance of such qualities in work with young offenders. In addition an approach based upon 'risk technologies' (Bessant, 2004) produces conflict for social workers and youth workers by exacerbating tensions between potentially incompatible objectives: securing the well being of young offenders/young people or managing risk. The latter attempts to control and regulate young offenders/young people rather than developing the emancipatory practice for which I have always argued (eg. Rogowski, 2003/4; also see Davies and Leonard, 2004). This is based on listening to young offenders as fellow citizens and human beings who can and ought to be partners in dealing with the problems, difficulties and concerns that are under consideration. In addition, utopian as it may seem, it hints at a future society based co-operation, equality and notions

such as the inter-dependence (as opposed to independence) of human beings.

Conclusion

Much of the above resonates with Parker's 1974 classic study, *View From the Boys* (1992). Billy and Colin were soon out of secondary school and went in search of material gain and excitement. They tried to ensure they had interesting lives and were in control. Not being able to do this without breaking the rules they decided they had no option but to offend. Eventually, faced with a period in custody, Billy decided he would not offend again but, bearing in mind re-offending rates following custody, only time will tell. He might try again to have an interesting life by breaking the rules but then decide that conforming might be a better way forward. Meanwhile Colin decided, at least to some extent, to accept conventional roles of being a father and a partner, as well as finding employment. He seems to have decided to make do with his lot and make life as agreeable as he can without resorting to offending.

Jane's initial offending is also explicable in terms of material gain and excitement, but what about her assaults? I hope it does not sound too simplistic but in her case perhaps some of it had something to do with the sexual assaults she endured. It must be recalled that one assault she committed was a result of her being called a 'slag' and bearing her past experience her anger is surely understandable. The anger and frustration arising from the fact that the perpetrator did not receive his just desserts cannot be dismissed when seeking an explanation for her violence. Like most young people though, she eventually stopped offending because of the maturation process or in her words 'seeing sense'.

It is worth emphasising, and repeating, that Billy, Colin and Jane, like the other young people I saw, largely decried current policy for dealing with young offenders. This is essentially a tough law and order approach which emphasises punishment and control, and also utilises 'risk technologies'. Despite some inconsistency, they rather felt that help and support for young offenders, as well as for their parents/ carers was a more positive response. More generally they also referred to schooling, recreational and employment/ training opportunities being improved and increased. For instance, adequately resourced youth work, sports facilities, activities, information services, clubs and so on could surely have some impact on young offending, especially as boredom is a key motivational factor. As for such changes being financed by progressive, redistributive taxation, something which Colin in particular advocated, this may seem like a 'utopian incursion into social policy' (Levitas, 2001: 449). But given the debasement in terms of the current economic, political and ideological discourse, to be accused of being utopian is perhaps a compliment (Callinicos, 1999). Many, particularly those of a postmodern disposition, might see much of the above as being grounded in outdated grand narratives such as Marxism. It is too easy to write off Marx. The relevance of core Marxist concepts – class, oppression and alienation – undoubtedly remains (Ferguson et al, 2002). This may seem removed from the lives, views and experiences of Billy, Colin and Jane, but even without adopting an orthodox Marxist position one could look to the work of such as Fraser (1997), Gorz (1999), Jordan (2000) and Montbiot (2000), all of which questions much of current economic and social policy, including that towards young offenders. It is possible to have a progressive social policy in

relation to young offending along the lines suggested by the young people in this study (see Rogowski, forthcoming).

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Notes

1. The young people were drawn from two Social Services Departments in N.W. England. They were 14 to 17 years of age and were mainly heavy end property offenders. They comprised 13 young men and seven young women, including one each of black (Afro-Caribbean), South Asian (Bangladeshi) and mixed 'race' (white/Afro-Caribbean) young men, and one mixed 'race' (white/Afro-Caribbean) young women. A total of forty-seven interviews took place. I also had access to key documents relating to their lives including Social Services files and police disclosure documents. The focus groups were used to revisit some of the main issues raised by the interviews, with three being held involving a total of ten young people.
2. And, of course, since this research was carried out we have seen an increased New Labour concern with law and order via its preoccupation with anti-social behaviour (see Squires, 2006 for a critical analysis).
3. These young people were drawn randomly from the semi-structured interview respondents; Billy and Colin from the young men, and Jane from the young women. Having said this, overall their views and experiences do coincide with, and highlight those, of the other young people in the study.

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Homophobic Bullying and Schools – Responding to the Challenge

*Ian Warwick, Rosalind Goodrich,
Peter Aggleton and Elaine Chase*

Homophobic bullying in schools not only affects young lesbians and young gay men, but also many others perceived not to conform to a stereotypical view of how boys, girls, young men and young women should act. The effects of homophobic bullying can negatively impact upon pupils' emotional, physical and educational development. Based on findings from a review conducted for the Department for Education and Skills in England, the paper outlines the extent and impact of homophobic bullying on pupils. Furthermore, it identifies how actions against homophobia and bullying might be embedded into wider policies and programmes in England that have common ambitions - to protect children and young people from harm, to provide them with safe environments and to contribute to their emotional, physical and educational well-being.

Keywords: *young people, sexual orientation, homophobia, bullying, schools.*

Background

The Government policy paper *Every Child Matters*, published in 2003 and intended to set the policy context for work in England, had at its heart both the desire to safeguard and protect children and young people and to help them make the most of their potential. Its aims, among other things, are to 'reduce the numbers of children who experience educational failure, engage in offending or anti-social behaviour [and] suffer from ill-health' (DfES, 2003:5). Too often, the paper states, children experience difficulties at home or at school which have reached crisis point before any help is given.

In a similar vein, the Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) recently published *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* in England has amongst its goals the aspiration that all school pupils should enjoy and achieve, that school should be a positive, healthy and attractive environment and that children should be enabled to fulfil their potential and leave school equipped for adulthood, skilled work and further learning (DfES, 2004).

These policies, along with the Behaviour Improvement Programme¹, the Make a Difference Campaign², and the Healthy School Programme³, offer frameworks at a national level in England into which local authorities and, indeed, schools themselves, can fit their own policies and initiatives to ensure that young people are provided with a safe and positive learning environment. This emphasis on safety, security, health and well-being is very much to be welcomed at a time when there is evidence of rising levels of truancy in schools (National Audit Office, 2005).

Bullying

Until 1989, bullying was largely hidden from public view – although not, of course, from those being bullied. The *Elton Report* of that year highlighted the negative impact bullying had on pupils and schools, its widespread nature and the fact that it was generally ignored by teachers (Smith, 1999). In 1992, the television programme 'That's Life' brought the problems associated with bullying into public view. Two years later the Department for Education produced the anti-bullying pack *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence*, which was widely distributed to schools (Smith, 1999).

As bullying in schools became more publicly talked about, it became clear that it could take a number of forms, related among other things to physical appearance, family background, the way an individual spoke, ethnicity and gender (Gillborn, 1993; Smith, 1999). In recent years, groups such as Stonewall and Schools Out have actively campaigned and lobbied to raise awareness of bullying related to sexuality. Homophobic bullying – incidents of verbal and physical bullying where terms such as lesbian, gay, 'queer' or 'lezzie' have been used (Douglas et al, 1997) – can take place, among other occasions, when a child or young person is perceived to be lesbian or gay, or when they are seen not to conform to a stereotypical view of how boys, girls, young men and young women should act (Rivers, 2000, Warwick et al, 2000).

Sustained bullying of any form at school can have a detrimental impact on a child's health, well-being and achievement (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000; DfES, 2003). There are also clear links between a child's experiences at school and their achievements, health and socio-economic position as an adult (Acheson, 1998). As a result of growing concern among young people, parents and professionals, legislation now places a legal duty on head teachers to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

To support its work in this field, the DfES has been interested in how best to address homophobia and make school environments more open and inclusive of sexual diversity. A review was commissioned from the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London to identify what is known about the extent and impact of homophobic bullying on pupils and how homophobia can best be challenged within classrooms and as part of whole school approaches.⁴

Methods

The review, which was carried out between March and August, 2004, drew on published articles and reports as well as a series of interviews with 28 key informants with expertise in the area.

Literature searches were carried out using education and social science indexes (including the British, Australian and US Education Indexes and social science indexes) using a combination of search terms (including bullying, homophobia, gay, lesbian, bisexual, masculinities, femininities, schools, pupils, discrimination). Attempts were also made to identify relevant grey literature from voluntary and campaigning groups. Publications

since 1997 were included (this date coinciding with the development of education policies brought in by the current Labour Government). Articles were selected for more detailed review if they made specific reference to homophobia and/or homophobic bullying in schools.

Key informants were identified through a number of routes. The DfES provided a list of key partner organisations which it felt should be consulted. Members of the review team also attended the Education for All forum organised by Stonewall in April 2004, at which further potential interviewees were identified. Selected key informants reflected a range of organisational views including those of key education-related unions; the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; Ofsted; the DfES itself and the then Health Development Agency. Additionally, organisations concerned with promoting the rights and inclusion of same-sex attracted young people and adults (such as Stonewall and LGBT Youth Scotland) were consulted. In total, 28 respondents were asked for their views using a semi-structured discussion guide (see Appendix A) developed in close consultation with the DfES.

Data from the literature review and interviews were analysed thematically. Published literature and interviews were used to identify whether and in what ways the impact of homophobia was felt in schools, and figures relating to the number of pupils or staff affected by homophobia were derived from published studies.

Findings

The extent of homophobic bullying in schools.

Homophobia, sometimes taken to mean ‘... an irrational fear or disgust towards lesbians or gay men’ (Wilton, 2000) is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service in its *Policy for Prosecuting Cases with a Homophobic Element* as ‘any incident which is perceived to be homophobic or transphobic by the victim or by any other person’.⁵ This definition is in line with those for other hate incidents, such as those racist in nature.

Homophobic bullying can take different forms. It can be name calling or verbal threats, forms of sexual harassment such as inappropriate touching, being continually ignored because of one’s perceived sexuality and physical violence – both slight and extreme (Kosciw, 2004; Rivers and D’Augelli, 2001; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003; Ryan and Rivers, 2003; Douglas et al, 1997).

Estimating the extent and impact of homophobic incidents in schools poses a challenge due to the basic difficulty of estimating the numbers of same-sex attracted young people in school and variations in how homophobia and bullying are perceived and measured. Few studies to date have examined homophobic bullying in primary or special schools. Nor do existing studies estimate the extent of homophobic bullying directed towards pupils who are not same-sex attracted but are called ‘gay’ as a more general term of abuse. The findings that follow therefore represent a best estimate given available data sources and in the absence of more detailed research.

Some studies suggest that around 60 per cent of pupils will have experienced bullying in one form or another during their school lives. However others, using a more restricted definition of bullying, report that around 20-30per cent of primary and 10-20per cent of secondary school pupils have experienced bullying at one time or another (Thompson, 2000). There appears to be a fairly steady decrease in reports of being bullied from ages 8-16 years (Smith, 1999) – although this may, in part at least, be due to older pupils being less likely to report incidents of bullying than younger pupils (Oliver with Candappa, in press). Thompson (2000) suggests that, at the very least, around 5-10per cent of pupils experience lasting emotional or academic harm as a result of being bullied.

In the shorter term, bullying can diminish pupils' self-esteem, lead to withdrawal from social and school life, and result in truancy and lower academic attainment (Elliot and Kilpatrick, 1994). In the longer term, the consequences of bullying can last into adult life contributing to depression, low self-esteem, social isolation and agoraphobia (Elliot and Kilpatrick, 1994). For bullies, too, there can be lasting effects such as incontrollable and aggressive behaviour and an inability to maintain relationships (Elliot and Kilpatrick, 1994).

With respect to homophobic bullying in particular, surveys of young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the UK, USA and Australia have consistently shown that between 30-50 per cent of them report having experienced some form of homophobic harassment in an educational setting (Rivers and Duncan, 2002; Ellis and High, 2004; King and McKeown, 2003; Hillier et al, 1998; Mason and Palmer, 1996).

How does this compare with more general forms of bullying? One UK study (King and McKeown, 2003) compared the experiences of around 1100 lesbians and gay men, 200 bisexual men and women and 1100 heterosexual men and women. Lesbians and female bisexuals reported being bullied at school more often than young heterosexual women (30-35 per cent compared with 20 per cent). Young gay men were bullied more often than heterosexual men (51 per cent compared with 47 per cent), men reported being more likely to be physically assaulted than women and lesbian and bisexual women were more likely to report that no-one would speak to them at school.

Secondary school teachers have been reported to commonly observe incidents of homophobic bullying. In a survey of 307 secondary school teachers in England and Wales, 97 per cent reported being aware of general verbal or physical bullying, 82 per cent were aware of verbal homophobic incidents and 26 per cent were aware of physical homophobic incidents (Douglas et al, 1997).

In our review, all key informants described being aware of homophobic incidents in schools. Importantly, informants reported that homophobic incidents were not necessarily directed towards children and young people who were attracted to others of the same sex, but often against those who were perceived not to act in ways they should for their gender. Furthermore, some incidents involved children who had lesbian or gay parents or relatives or who were in some way 'different'.

Informants also took the view that in many schools, homophobic incidents would go unreported, because a young person would not be convinced that the matter would be

dealt with sensitively or appropriately by staff or parents or carers at home – a finding born out by the work of Rivers (2001), showing that those who experience homophobic bullying are unlikely to report this to teachers or to someone at home. Furthermore, many existing school anti-bullying policies do not mention homophobic bullying as a distinct form of bullying and therefore, do not provide a mechanism for monitoring and responding to it.

The origins of homophobic bullying

There are a number of reasons why children and young people may become involved in homophobic bullying, or be bullied themselves.

Pressures to conform to stereotypical gender roles are strong in many schools and deviations from these roles (both real and imagined) may be linked to sexist and homophobic bullying (Phoenix et al, 2003). Some young men may be sensitive to comments about lacking a degree of masculinity and may adopt 'hyper'-masculine identities in response (Odih, 2002; Phoenix et al, 2003). In some schools, masculine status may be equated with opposition to school work, thus limiting some male pupils' will and capacity to learn. This may in part explain boys' underachievement at school compared with girls of the same age (Renold, 2001; Martino, 1999).

Likewise, girls' behaviour can be influenced by what they perceive as 'proper' femininity. Girls and young women heavily involved in sport may have their heterosexuality questioned because of '...traditionally assumed links between the 'macho' image of sport and lesbianism' (Cockburn and Clarke, 2002: 658). This not only affects their participation in such activities but also may affect their relationships with boys – as a boy or young man who is teased and bullied for not going out with a 'proper girl' may be encouraged to end the relationship (Cockburn and Clarke, 2002).

Status at school can also be gained from wearing the right sorts of clothes, being good at sport, and (for boys at least) being popular with girls (Paechter, 2003; Swain, 2000; Ashley, 2003). For boys, the latter can in some ways be counter productive. On the one hand, relationships with girls can validate a boy's masculinity. On the other, it may lay the boy open to teasing, as too close a relationship with girls can be perceived to be sissy-ish (Renold, 2000; Renold, 2003).

These public displays of conformity to perceptions of being a 'proper' girl or a boy are one thing but Phoenix et al (2003) noted that, in private, many boys and girls do not agree with the public expression of homophobia, despite acknowledging the degree of influence it has over their lives at school.

The impact of bullying can extend to children who are not same-sex attracted themselves but who have lesbian mothers and/or gay fathers (Clarke, 2001) or, as key informants noted, have other relatives who are lesbian or gay. That said, for children with lesbian mothers, research suggests that the quality of their relationships with peers in general appears little or no different than for children with heterosexual parents (Golombok et al, 2003).

As yet, there has been no national study of the impact of homophobic bullying on school pupils – a significant gap, informants in our review believed. However, there have been smaller-scale studies which show that the harassment of same-sex attracted young people can contribute to lack of sleep, loss of appetite, isolation, nervousness, elevated rates of actual or attempted suicide and self harm, absenteeism, truancy and limited achievement at school (Dyson et al, 2003; Fineran, 2002; O’Shaughnessy et al, 2004; Rivers and D’Augelli, 2001; Rivers, 2001; Ryan, 2003; Ryan and Rivers, 2003; Warwick et al, 2000; YWCA, 2004).

The longer term impact of school bullying was identified in Rivers’ (2001) study in which 53 per cent of adult lesbians and gay men questioned reported contemplating harming themselves, and 40 per cent indicated that they had attempted to harm themselves or attempted suicide on at least one occasion.

Addressing homophobia and bullying

It has taken time for homophobic bullying to become viewed as a social and educational issue requiring attention and intervention across the whole school (Warwick et al, 2001). This requires teachers and others to focus not only on issues of direct relevance to lesbian, gay and bisexual young people, but also on social relations more generally. Gender stereotyping of roles and responsibilities, the association of academic success with effeminacy for boys and manliness for girls, and schools’ predominantly ‘heteronormative’ cultures can legitimatise (inadvertently or otherwise) homophobia and the bullying to which it can give rise.⁶

Whole school approaches

Within such an environment, staff, pupils and other members of the school community can fail to understand or appreciate the diversity of pupils’ sexuality-related needs. In some cases, teachers who have challenged homophobic behaviour have found their efforts forcefully resisted by parents and others (Atkinson, 2002; Mills, 1996; Warwick et al, 2001), particularly where community members have strong religious beliefs and view the expression or discussion of same-sex sexuality as wrong (Halstead and Lewicka, 1998; Athanases and Larrabee, 2003). It is important therefore that the whole school, from governors downwards, is sensitised to ‘heterosexism’ and homophobia, and is helped to recognise that there will be parents, pupils and staff who are sexually attracted to their own sex or in the process of questioning their sexuality (Epstein and Johnson, 1998).

That said, there are encouraging practical examples across the UK of whole-school approaches to preventing homophobic bullying. In the north west of England, for example, work in over thirty schools has led to the development of an audit checklist for use in identifying and responding to such bullying (Mulholland, 2003). This encourages an assessment of anti-bullying and equal opportunities policies and support from senior leadership team members, and encourages training for staff about homophobia and bullying.

Recent case study research across England and Wales has highlighted that action to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying can take place in all types of schools, be they urban or rural, single-sex or mixed, state controlled or religiously affiliated. After identifying that a problem existed, each school in this study, among other things, provided leadership to address bullying and homophobia, built partnerships with local agencies, and made changes to their curricula (Warwick and Douglas, 2001).

In Scotland too, innovative work is underway. For example, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) Youth Scotland, is working closely with the Scottish Executive Education Department and the Health Education Board for Scotland to tackle homophobic bullying. Both in initial teacher training and through continuing professional development, teacher training institutions are taking an authority-wide approach to addressing homophobia and bullying.

Although teachers often report being unprepared to address homophobia (Douglas et al, 1997), there are many ways in which to build upon their existing skills. Interactive teaching and learning activities – perhaps coupled with readings, videos and presentations by members of an expert panel – have been shown to be useful in assisting pupils to learn about different forms of sexuality, gain a realistic view of same-sex attracted men and women, and help them to reflect on their own sexuality-related values and understandings, as well as those of their peers. Support services for pupils – either in school or a system of referral – through which young people can voice their concerns, have also been seen to be effective. (Robinson and Ferfolja, 2001; Milton et al, 2001; Douglas et al, 1997; Quinliven and Town, 1999; Sears, 1997; Van de Ven, 1995; Van de Ven, 1997).

Key informants in this study noted that, very often, funding for anti-homophobia activities in schools came from local health services and not through mainstream education provision. They felt that a clear sense of direction was needed at central government and local levels and endorsed a whole school approach to tackle the problem. They commented, however, that too often policies on homophobia and bullying had not trickled down into practical teaching activities in the classroom. Homophobia may be sidelined, instead of being made central to the whole curriculum, into Physical, Social and Health Education (PSHE) or Citizenship classes, for example.

Tailoring strategies

Informants were also concerned that the needs of children and young people from Black and minority ethnic communities were not being adequately met. Since a recent national survey has shown that people prejudiced against any ethnic minority are twice as likely, compared with the population as a whole, to be prejudiced against lesbians and gay men, the links between race, gender and sexual inequality needed to be more closely examined (Citizenship 21, 2003). Teachers need to be enabled to talk about a range of different forms of discrimination, so as to build alliances with pupils to address intolerance and prejudice. This has already been done, for instance, in parts of Australia, where policy documents discussing student diversity incorporate issues related to same-sex attracted young people as well as gender, disability and ethnicity (Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, 1999).

While principles of good practice in addressing discrimination related to race, gender and homophobia overlap, key informants cautioned against uncritically adopting equalities strategies successful in other fields (for example, some anti-racism approaches) without customising them to enable dialogue to take place about homophobia, sexual orientation and bullying.

Having said this, there may be a number of approaches and activities common to tackling racist and homophobic bullying. Advice on preventing bullying related to racism, religion and culture, recently published by the DfES on Teachernet, notes that those in schools can usefully ask themselves a series of questions as part of a school self-evaluation process.⁷ Enquiring into a school's existing documentation (such as a commitment to preventing racist bullying clearly stated in the school prospectus); ensuring there are opportunities for discussion, monitoring and review; identifying the perceptions of children and young people, promoting a positive school ethos and inclusive curriculum; working with parents and in partnership with external agencies (such as the police) are all areas which could be used to generate ideas about how best to prevent homophobic incidents (or other prejudice-driven bullying).

Yet specialist knowledge, as well as an understanding of common pedagogical processes, is required of educators in schools in assisting students to understand and respond to either racist or homophobic bullying. When addressing racism, for example, educators may wish to assist pupils to discuss how concepts such as 'race', 'ethnic identity' and 'human rights' are understood, not only in the UK but also in selected countries across the world. There may be a degree of affinity between those concepts and others such as 'sexuality', 'sexual identity' and 'sexual rights'. Understanding their similarities and differences, and being able to explain when each is most appropriately used is central to effective work with young people (see Aggleton et al, in press)

Building on existing policies and programmes

At a broader level, there are a number of existing policies and programmes in England through which homophobia in schools can be addressed. These include:

- Existing anti-bullying initiatives – such as the DfES Make a Difference campaign and Don't Suffer in Silence;
- The DfES *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*;
- *Every Child Matters*;
- The Primary National Strategy;
- The Behaviour Improvement Programme;
- as well as through
- Initial teacher training and continuing professional development programmes

Importantly, existing anti-bullying initiatives could be used by schools to raise awareness of the common themes and differences between different forms of bullying – including that related to gender and sexual orientation.

Although it may be less immediately evident how other initiatives can contribute to reducing homophobia in schools, their aims – to promote the achievement and well-being of pupils – are inclusive of all young people (and their families).

The DfES *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*, for example, is aimed at both primary and secondary school-aged children. At primary level, a broadened curriculum can acknowledge the diversity of family life and promote opportunities for play and learning which question gender stereotyping. At secondary level, the curriculum can acknowledge and cater for diversity among pupils and build on their strengths and interests. All pupils, including those attracted to others of the same-sex, should have an opportunity to voice their concerns and be supported where necessary. On leaving school, young people should be well-equipped for adulthood – including understanding and valuing sexual diversity.

Significantly, addressing homophobic incidents at school is likely to contribute to the attainment of at least four of the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters*: helping children and young people enjoy good mental and physical health, protecting them from harm, helping them get the most out of life and to not engage in anti-social behaviour. The associated inspection framework for the policy could encourage schools to seek the views of children and parents/carers about homophobia and bullying and how these were dealt with by the school.

Continuing professional development and initial teacher training could both be strengthened to address homophobia and gender stereotyping. Teachers should be able to demonstrate that they hold high expectations of all pupils, respecting their different social and cultural backgrounds, that they treat all pupils consistently, that they promote positive values, attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils and that they are aware of the statutory requirements relating to their teaching responsibilities.

In-service training could be provided by specialist organisations, as well as through the Citizenship and PSHE Continuing Professional Development programme. The former could address issues such as policies and actions to prevent hate crimes as well as the implications of the Civil Partnership Act (2004). The latter could address homophobia and gender through discussions about personal identity, gender roles and sexual orientation.

Conclusion

Preventing homophobic bullying in schools and challenging their heteronormative cultures are issues which need to be responded to at national, local and school levels. Homophobic bullying can occur in primary as well as secondary schools and many studies have shown how it can affect pupils' educational achievements. Strong leadership is needed to counter homophobia by encouraging learning about diversity within the school curriculum, promoting non-discrimination, addressing problem behaviour and raising educational standards and attainment across all pupils. Furthermore, pupils who have experienced bullying, witnessed it, or are themselves bullies, may require opportunities to voice their concerns and worries.

Both nationally and locally, there is a growing will and expertise to do something positive about homophobia and its effects in schools. Within advocacy, lobbying and other organisations, there exists the depth of expertise and the willingness to share that can contribute to a new dialogue concerned with both preventing and reducing homophobic incidents as well as raising standards and achievements in schools. Ultimately, the goal should be that of enabling all members of the school community – both adults and young people alike – to stay safe, enjoy and achieve, and make a positive contribution that is recognised by all. This, no less and no more, is what tackling homophobia in schools is all about.

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Notes

- 1 For further information about the Behaviour Improvement Programme see: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourimprovement/> Accessed 4 October, 2005
- 2 For further information about the Make a Difference Campaign see: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/>, <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying> and <http://www.ncb.org.uk/aba>. Accessed 4 October, 2004. For further information about bullying in schools and an online version Don't Suffer in Silence available at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying> Accessed 4 October, 2005.
- 3 For further information about the Healthy Schools Programme see: <http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/> Accessed 4 October, 2005
- 4 In addition, the review addressed whether and in what ways issues of equity and diversity, in relation to sexual orientation, were being addressed within the school workforce and what implications this had on recruitment, retention and promotion. However, for reasons of space we report in this paper only on issues affecting pupils in particular.
- 5 Definition adopted by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in their *Policy for Prosecuting Cases with a Homophobic Element*. The policy goes on to note that 'Not every incident that is reported amounts to a crime and even when a crime can be proved, there may be insufficient evidence to prove to a court that it was motivated by homophobia or transphobia.' The full policy is available at: <http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/hmpbcrlf.html> Accessed 4 October, 2005.
- 6 By the term heteronormative culture, we mean to describe contexts in which heterosexuality is assumed to be the norm to the exclusion of other forms of sexual difference.
- 7 See <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/racistbullying/> Accessed 14 March 2006

Appendix A: Discussion Guide

Review of homophobia and schools

Background

- The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is keen to learn more about the impact of homophobia (and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation) on pupils and staff in schools.
- The DfES wishes, with key partners (including both statutory and voluntary organisations) to find out how best to assist schools to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying and discrimination related to sexual orientation.
- We would like to ask you about what you see as the key issues in this area. This should take around 30 minutes over the 'phone.
- We are contacting around 25 key statutory and voluntary organisations, as well as a number of key individuals. Although we will list the organisations and individuals in the report, we will not attribute specific quotes to them
- With your permission, we would like to tape record the interview. This will help us later to write-up the themes and issues you highlight.
- Check that the interviewee agrees to the tape-recording

For the review, the DfES wishes to find out what is known in relation to three questions:

- I. What is the extent and impact of homophobic bullying on pupils?
- II. How is homophobia and sexual orientation addressed both within classrooms (issues relating to the curriculum) and as part of whole school approaches?
- III. To what extent and in what ways are issues of equity and diversity in relation to sexual orientation being addressed among the school workforce and what implications does this have for recruitment, retention and promotion?

In response to each of these questions, we would like to find out from you whether there are key reports/studies you would recommend as valuable to this work, as well as your own views about the key issues that the DfES and its partners might address to carry forward work in this area.

- 1) Extent and impact of homophobic bullying on pupils
 - a) Reports/studies you recommend
 - b) Your views about the key issues that the DfES (or its partners) might address to learn more about the extent and impact of homophobic bullying
 - 2) Addressing homophobia and sexual orientation in classrooms and across the whole school
 - a) What, in your view are the key issues here?
 - b) Are there particular reports/studies you might recommend to help develop understanding of these concerns?
 - c) What are your views about the key issues the DfES (and its partners) could address to assist schools respond to and prevent homophobic bullying?
- i) Prompt: recent examples of work that has helped schools move forward in this area

- 3) Addressing issues of equity and diversity in relation to sexual orientation among the school workforce (with particular regard to recruitment, retention and promotion)
 - a) What, in your view are the key issues here?
 - b) Are there particular reports/studies you might recommend to help develop understanding of these concerns?
 - c) What are your views about the key issues the DfES (and its partners) might address to assist schools in this area?
 - i) Prompts:
 - (1) All school staff (including support and other staff)
 - (2) Recent examples of work that has helped schools move forward in this area

Thank you for your time

Reaching socially excluded young people

A national study of street-based youth work

*David Crimmens, Fiona Factor,
Tony Jeffs, John Pitts, Carole Pugh,
Jean Spence and Penelope Turner*

"When you've worked in an area for some time, you get known and then you get trusted. This credibility extends beyond the young people you've actually worked with to the others on their networks; young people you've never met ... This only happens because you're there, because you've been there."

This research, undertaken by a team from the Universities of Durham, Lincoln and Luton, addresses the question of the role of detached and outreach youth work in the post-1997 policy environment of outcome-driven youth initiatives, and in particular, how mainstream detached and outreach youth work might articulate with the Connexions Service to facilitate the involvement of socially excluded young people in forms of education, training and employment which are both relevant and accessible.

The research aims to explore the nature and range of street-based youth work with socially excluded young people in England and Wales, to identify the effectiveness of agency strategies and practice interventions, and to establish how street-based youth work can best contribute to the Connexions Service and its key partnerships.

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Reaching socially excluded young people

A national study of street-based youth work



The National Youth Agency



Fragmenting the All Wales Coherent Route: Removing the link between local and professional qualifications

Hamish Murphy

Reviewing the historical development and recent growth in the Welsh system for the professional education of youth and community workers, this article questions the way this All-Wales Coherent Route has been allowed to develop, arguing that 'coherence' has weakened and 'progression' has been stunted by changes to the status of qualifications in England that have been adopted in Wales. A new division between support and professional roles is seen to be at the heart of these changes and threatens to place the practice of 'youth work' at a crossroads where key face-to-face activities are either carried out by less qualified support workers or professionals re-position themselves to reclaim direct contact with young people and resist further relocation into secondary and managerial roles. The article calls for a properly managed and resourced system for youth work training in Wales.

Keywords: professional education, youth and community work, coherence, progression.

After unprecedented interest and participation in training in Wales during the past few years, the All-Wales Coherent Route has grown way beyond what was originally envisaged. Set up for qualifications in 'youth and community', it now encompasses youth work, community development work and play. Until recently, it involved three national bodies (Wales Youth Agency, Community Development Wales and Play Wales), four higher education institutions (Newi, UWN, UWIC and Trinity College), four further education (FE) providers, almost every local authority in Wales and two from England, alongside a number of voluntary organisations. Already a loose system built on goodwill, it has become so enlarged that its coherence is in danger, with progression diluted by a proliferation of routes, unclear communications and no thought of strategic planning. Its frailty has been exposed as pressures grow to increase the range and levels of qualifications taken into its structure; as workforce planning demands in Wales more work-based 'professional development' (WYA, 2005: 14) and as Her Majesty's Inspectorate calls for development planning to establish a 'well-qualified and integrated workforce in youth support services' (Estyn, 2006: 6). Added to these three pressures, the Welsh Assembly's decision to replace the independent national voice for youth work in Wales, the Wales Youth Agency, with an Assembly-run alternative, will potentially shake up already strained relationships, weaken a fragile consensus and may act to further deplete the goodwill reservoir.

The shine on the All-Wales Coherent Route has recently been dulled by the separation of professional and local qualifications. Until January 2005, the Foundation Certificate,

which acted as the keystone of the Route, fulfilled two main functions. It acted as the local qualification for those seeking the appropriate skills, knowledge and the qualified wage as part-time youth workers, and simultaneously set them on their way to a professional qualification as a 20-credit module within the first level of higher education. It was this overlap that acted as the common bond that combined local courses with professional ones.

The separation of qualifications from job roles, adopted by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers (JNC) in 2004, has created a climate for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and, inadvertently, an imperative for parity between England and Wales. Whilst for some experienced workers, NVQs might provide a more suitable and pragmatic alternative to more academic routes (and we can argue about the nature of the education needed), the issue here is that the previously embedded uncomplicated progression is about to go, whilst the Route adds to its complexity through a further pathway using NVQs. This lowering of local qualifications in Wales from those within higher education to NVQ levels 2 and 3 may ease the transportability of workers within and between the two countries but in the long term, may bring lower wages for part-time youth workers.

The goodwill needed to sustain the All-Wales Coherent Route may have been drawn on too often. Willingness to collaborate has declined and support from those involved is waning, especially amongst those who exercise discretion over secondary mechanisms (e.g. franchising) that to date have provided the Route's main structure. They are witnessing the Route beginning to unravel, its Welsh variants downplayed. What will be argued here is that a properly constituted and funded organisation needs to take charge of the All-Wales Coherent Route to bring stakeholders together and address the problems identified above.

Participation in Training in Wales

Over the past 10 years, since the birth of the All-Wales Coherent Route to Qualifications in Youth and Community Work in 1995, the number of courses in Wales and enrolled students has increased dramatically. At the start of the decade, there was only one higher education institution (HEI) providing professional education for youth and community workers. That was North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWI) in Wrexham where, in that year, around 30 students graduated. In 2004, over 200 students graduated¹ from three HEIs including those from a postgraduate diploma and a franchised undergraduate diploma course. In 2006, Trinity College Carmarthen will add another 20 or so but these graduates from professional courses, though demonstrating the big increase in qualifying professionals, do not show the dramatic take-up of those engaged in training, nor the widening array of new routes to professional qualifications and the swell in the number of courses underway. The number of franchises, for example, has grown from one in 1995 to thirteen currently. A relatively simple system built on goodwill has over the past ten years grown to the stage where goodwill has perhaps ceased to provide a sufficiently strong glue to hold the All-Wales Coherent Route together. But first, what is this All-Wales Coherent Route?

The All Wales Coherent Route

Considered 'the envy of England' by those involved (see Taylor, *Ymlaen*, 2003:22), the All-Wales Route to qualifications in youth and community work has, since 1995, provided a coherent and progressive system. Beginning as a loose association of training providers, employers and the Wales Youth Agency, the Route grew to include the other participants at various stages.

In its infancy, the Route delivered modules belonging to Newi, the only provider of professional qualifications at the time in Wales. Delivery soon moved beyond the walls of the Institute through franchises with 10 consortia. Whilst welcomed by most, the Route left some local authorities unhappy, preferring their own in-house courses, and resistant initially, to what was considered top-down change. Gradually all 22 Welsh local authorities have participated making the Route truly 'all-Wales'. The family has grown with HEIs in Newport (UWN), Cardiff (UWIC) and Carmarthen (Trinity) starting professional courses. UWN brought in three further franchises including the Staff College run by the Wales Youth Agency.

Franchised courses have been devised with two main occupational awards in mind – 'foundation', which had become the recognised local qualification in Wales, and 'certificate', halfway to the diploma, the professional youth and community qualification. During the first seven years, emphasis was on 'foundation' where employers encouraged, often insisted on part-time workers gaining this within two years. Employers adapted the course content, delivery and settings to suit local circumstances. Participants attended for 30 hours of a taught course (the Human Context module) and undertook 60 hours of managed practice (the Concurrent placement). Critics called the foundation too academic. Its main strengths were the perception that it led to quality youth work, better-motivated staff and more professional services (Coherence, 1999). Progression was considered an add-on benefit with students new to higher education brought in and enabled to flow through because of their familiarity with youth and community work. This 'widening participation' function set the profession at the cutting edge of government policy, bringing under-represented groups into education, with franchise delivery proving highly successful (Murphy and Miller, 2001). Progression became a defining component of franchising – some franchises became keen to deliver a full diploma, many stuck with certificate, whilst others restricted their involvement to foundation. Within each pathway, progression was simple. But moving between pathways became complicated by each HEI having a different weighting for modules, a different blend of these and a different focus for their professional courses. This has led to problems, in particular, with those taking successfully completed Foundation Certificates to other HEIs. For example, the Foundation Certificate worth 20 credits in its home course attracted less credits in other institutions.

Only a trickle in the early days, little time was taken to ease students into their next stage. But as numbers grew, employers and franchises found they were both pressurised by students and enabled by the numbers to broker deals with HEIs that brought easier transfer arrangements and even new courses into existence. Students justifiably wanted to know, as they approached the end of their franchises award, what the next stage would be for them in their journey to a professional qualification. As the number of courses grew, the threads of equivalence, progression and co-ordination were woven, sometimes awkwardly, into the

framework. However, this caused the overall picture of cohesion to become obscured as each HEI explained the conflicting ways in which credits from other institutions were treated – goodwill proved insufficient in the face of institutional procedures.

An End to Easy Progression

Until January 2005, progression opportunities had never been better for voluntary and part-time workers in Wales. Though more courses were still needed, a vast array of opportunities had arrived to progress from basic skills through further and higher education and onto postgraduate courses, even PhDs. Of particular significance was the overlap between pre-professional and professional education offered by embedding the local youth work qualification within higher education. In January 2005, in the wake of changes² made within the JNC, the Education and Training Standards Committee of the Wales Youth Agency decided to align the Welsh local qualification with the pattern set by the JNC. What this means is that the 'local qualification' in Wales for youth workers has been replaced with those for support workers, effectively lowering the locally recognised qualification and splitting it between the equivalent of NVQ level 2 and level 3. Previously the local qualification equated with higher education, with level 4 of the new Qualifications Framework in Wales, whereas levels 2 and 3 are pre-higher education. Both the current Foundation Certificate and the Wales Youth Agency's Staff College OCN local qualifying course are validated at level 4. Presently holding either of these two qualifications can evidence the competencies needed to gain employment within both the new Youth and Community Support Worker and professional ranges, though their usefulness is mainly with the former since they overtake the skills and knowledge gained at levels 2 and 3 but only offer a small contribution to professional education (20 HE credits of the 240 needed for the professional qualification).

Discontinuity between Professional and Support Roles

With lower qualifications now accepted for entry into youth work in Wales, redefined as youth support work, the probability is that these level 4 qualifications will wither as practitioners and employers settle for the minimum. Should this occur, the training overlap between those in support roles and those in professional ones will disappear. More importantly, the 10-year project in Wales to raise qualification levels for youth workers will have gone with it. As John Holmes has pointed out, both young people and youth workers are in danger of having their engagement de-professionalised. Holmes explained the relationship between minimum qualifications, professional status and pay:

The fight to maintain standards is part of a larger struggle to ensure that professional autonomy continues in youth work and the work does not accurately become described as a sub professional 'ancillary' or 'technician' role. Over recent years the government statistical office, with sociologists, have revised the old Registrar's Generals Socio-economic and Social Class classifications into a new Socio-economic classification (ESRC Review of Government Social Classifications, HMSO, 1998). In this new 17 category classification 'Welfare, community and youth workers' are classified as level 4 'Associate

Professionals', on a par with nurses, authors, writers, journalists, police officers (sergeant and below). This is lower than most teaching professionals, medical practitioners, social workers, librarians etc. classified as level 3 'Professionals' but higher than nursery nurses, playgroup leaders, medical technicians and other teaching professionals classified as level 7 'Intermediate service occupations (Holmes, 2003, p1).

What Holmes is indicating here is that lower status for the profession brings lower wages. If there is less autonomy then there is less money. Whilst the economic case is important, the potential that young people and communities will receive less skilled intervention is more worrying.

We are seeing in Wales an increase in resources for youth support services and community development but this seems to divert professional workers away from face-to-face work into supervisory, partnership and managerial roles, leaving direct contact to less trained and perhaps less competent support workers. Not only does this bring professional remoteness, it also weakens ownership of that fundamental professional relationship between the worker and the young person or community group. If professional workers are nudged into an intermediary role, between support workers and employers, between those in contact and those in partnerships then they may be giving up the very space that defines youth work – that intersection between young people and their world. Currently, it looks as if the profession is moving up the street, leaving that crossroads to support workers.

Teachers, now helped by an army of classroom assistants, have resisted retreating from their spaces for learning. The classroom assistants occupy that same space but under the direction of the professional teacher. The spaces and time slots for youth and community work are much more complicated than they are for teaching. The format is infinitely more complex than the regulated pattern of a classroom during the school day. This makes the deployment of professional youth and community workers a much more complex task. Employers are faced with the option of ensuring some young people and community organisations receive the regular intervention of a professional worker or of sprinkling professional intervention across a range of settings and times so that access is possible but not always guaranteed. We are seeing a drift towards the latter position made easier by last year's JNC settlement and aided by a new division between support and professional roles. Until 2005, there was a continuity within youth and community work that unified unqualified, locally qualified, other qualified (e.g. social work) and professionally qualified – together they were youth and community workers. Now they are separated into support workers and professional workers.

Professional youth and community workers, finding themselves no longer in concert with young people and communities but standing instead between them and managers (Brent, 2004, p73), may be relieved to give way to support workers, retreating almost as external consultants, to engage at a distance with the support workers to interpret or direct action. On the sidelines of the more complex and spontaneous informal learning, there is already a tendency to rely on more established, controllable and curriculum-driven formal educational forms such as courses or classes (Stanton, 2005: 71). With less contact with learners, the employer's view will begin to dominate – professional workers becoming divorced from ordinary people, emasculated by distance from their key professional relationship, and so

recast as managers of problems seen through the eyes of support workers.

This is not a new situation for youth and community work. For many years it could have gone either way – youth and community workers, professionally trained, being deployed close to those who need their help most or youth and community professionals moved into a secondary position as quasi-managers overseeing the educational relationship at a distance. Some, including we assume the JNC, see this second option, professional work aided by competent youth support workers, as a useful division of labour. Others suspect that this is a cost-cutting exercise that may in the short-term bring some financial gains to the profession but in the longer term will justify leaving support workers to deal face-to-face with young people and communities as professionals retreat from the very relationships that define their professional *raison d'être*. Lower paid support workers will find themselves occupying spaces for which they have had little training. They are likely to overlook the learning possibilities which emerge in the practice environment because they have not been educated to recognise or develop informal educational methods. Meanwhile, professional workers will be off-scene, working on rotas, timesheets, programmes, work-plans, evaluations and strategies – all legitimate activities but perhaps, in the future, detached from direct contact with real people.

Progression

Though unclear at the time of its birth, the All-Wales Coherent Route began to display a form of progression in tune with professional values. It exhibited democratic tendencies where at the extremes, those with no formal qualifications sat alongside those with PhDs to undertake a local qualification in youth work. This levelling depicted those with higher qualifications as intellectually ready but, perhaps, ill-equipped to engage easily within challenging communities. Those emerging from local communities, being home grown had, perhaps, the street-level skills that eased communications but sometimes were deficient of the intellectual knowledge required to analyse and evaluate local problems. These levelling and democratic tendencies, alongside the content and structure of the All-Wales Coherent Route, facilitated a receptiveness to professional training. Those who imagined university education to be inaccessible discovered, through their youth work, that they could access courses that were part of higher education and that ultimately led to a degree. Those who were seeking skills in working with local communities were, to some extent through placements, inculcated in indigenous cultures to better equip them to develop appropriate youth work interventions, to apply their knowledge successfully.

As well as making a significant contribution to widening access and participation in HE (around 40 per cent come from 'premium postcode areas' – those communities where experience of higher education is low; 30 per cent arrive with no formal qualifications), the progression opportunities within the All-Wales Coherent Route helped to build motivation. Many barriers were recognised and overcome. Workers began to experience progression opportunities for themselves that reflected those that they were trying to create for those young people they met in their practice. Money tended not to be a problem. Franchise courses were mostly free with employers latterly developing apprentice-style sponsorship utilising new funding from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Courses were offered

in evenings, over week-ends, residentially, as blocks, for small and large numbers, and in English and Welsh. Over the last ten years, thousands of learners (over 2,200 in Newi franchises alone) have been provided with opportunities to develop their intellectual and practice skills, studying the ideas, developing the arguments and strategies to address inequalities and oppressions that they and young people faced, and this within a coherent pathway that itself seemed to be addressing inequalities and oppressions.

Cohesion

For a system of professional education to be legitimately depicted as coherent, it has to make sense in terms of the levels, range and outcomes. These need to be both internally logical and externally fit-for-purpose. The learning gained at earlier stages should be built upon to enable bigger ideas, more complex skills and fuller understandings to be developed later. The blend of subjects, practices or modules should be both mutually supportive and cumulative so that those learning can see connections and intended overlaps as well as being afforded an opportunity to specialise and tailor learning to their own needs and interests. The outputs should also seem appropriate with awards demonstrating a competence recognised by the learner and acceptable to the field, alongside outcomes capable of validation within higher education. Behind these obvious levels, range and outputs lies a coherence that relates to the ideological struggle between the competing functions of professionals as instruments of the State and as educators amongst the less powerful. As educators more likely to side with those excluded, the movement up the levels will increase access to more analytical and critical forms of thought, intellect and argument so that future contributions to the learning of such socially excluded groups will be more progressive and powerful. The educational blend should provide a deeper and broader understanding of local and global influences as well as an appreciation of how these affect different classes, races, disabilities, genders and generations. The paper qualifications will prove less satisfying to such organic professionals who will be seeking to identify where and how discrimination and disadvantage fester so that they can intervene constructively. With the strides made in education for women, black and Asian learners and those with disabilities, the remaining bastions of privilege appear to be based on class.

The unprecedented interest and participation in training has so far been accommodated only because a system was already in place – the All-Wales Coherent Route. The looseness of the system, now enlarged to the point of incoherence, has exposed poor communications and little strategic planning. Its frailty becomes obvious as pressures grow to increase activities. The perception of unequal distribution of new resources or threats to existing ones has led to feelings of competition, so shrinking the pool of goodwill needed to sustain the Route. This loose association, which is the Route currently, depends solely on a willingness to collaborate since there is no constituting document, no management and no infrastructure. The All-Wales Coherent Route, as a concept, relies too much on the goodwill and support of those involved exercising discretion over secondary mechanisms to provide a structure. As demands on the Route have increased and reservoirs of support diminished, the Route has begun to unravel, pulled back into those secondary and separate processes that give it substance.

The contraction of goodwill and increasing numbers are exposing the Route's limitations whilst, simultaneously, geographic and functional boundaries are being stretched as interest grows from English local authorities and 'community development' and 'playwork' join the Route. Welsh Assembly Government aspirations for improved workforce development and Estyn's call for better planning to drive forward the Welsh version of Youth Support Services (*Extending Entitlement*) will go unheeded where there remains a reliance on this diminishing reservoir of goodwill within a virtual organisation that barely holds together the current training agenda for youth and community workers.

What is needed is a properly constituted body to coordinate training and solidify relationships within the Route. Stakeholders in Wales should come together to establish clearer pathways, ease transfer and lever in the necessary resources to facilitate some planning. For example, we now need pathways to be created with coherence and progression more in mind. We also need clarity over how youth support services are being interpreted in Wales, whether practitioners are remaining in direct contact with young people or are being moved to more remote managerial positions. And we need confidence in Wales to respect and develop Welsh solutions to distinct Welsh problems. Maybe it is time to recognise that youth work in Wales has become distinct, is being developed differently from that in England and so needs its own infrastructure. It has its own Education and Training Standards (ETS) Committee that is emerging as an autonomous body. It is time now for a separate organisation to oversee the All-Wales Coherent Route and, as has already been considered by the Welsh ETS, it is perhaps time also to establish a Welsh joint trade union and employers negotiating body – a Welsh JNC.

By raising these issues it is hoped that professional workers in Wales will be spurred on to fight for their direct contact time with young people and community groups, to assert a practitioners' view on the *Extending Entitlement* version of youth support services so that those involved in training can spend time taking care of this bulging jelly – the All-Wales Coherent Route. Goodwill is no longer sufficient – the care and planning of the Route needs to be the specific responsibility of someone. Taking full-time and part-time routes together, we should not forget that in ten years, over two and a half thousand people in Wales have successfully gained youth work and academic qualifications through their involvement in the All-Wales Coherent Route to Qualifications in Youth and Community Work. Let us put a stop to its fragmentation, pull it back together and put a new shine on it.

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Notes

- 1 Page 3, Wales Youth Agency (March 2005) *Workforce Development Plan for the Youth Service in Wales* – www.wya.org.uk.
- 2 See Griffiths, Alun, *Guide to the new JNC agreement in Ymlaen*, Wales Youth Agency, Spring 2005 pp24-26.

ARCHITECTS OF CHANGE

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Reviews

Roland Meighan

Damage Limitation: trying to reduce the harm schools do to children

Educational Heretics Press 2004

ISBN 1-900219-27-1

£10.00

pp112

John Adcock

The press release for this book says: 'it is primarily for parents and grandparents. It answers one need – that of home-based educators who say they do not know what to say to friends who, by force of circumstances, have to use schools. The book offers some advice and suggestions. It answers a second need – for those who understand what Bertrand Russell was saying when he wrote: "There must be in the world many parents who, like the writer, have young children whom they are anxious to educate as well as possible, but are reluctant to expose to the evils of existing educational institutions"'.

With major contributions from the book's compiler and other experienced teachers and writers – Linda Brown, Hazel Crawley, Charlie Cooper, Jane Dent, Clive Erricker, Kim Evans, Michael Foot, Derry Hannam, Clive Harber, Ben Koralek and Philip Toogood – this book does offer helpful advice and suggestions. It gives some 'briefing (of those same parents and grandparents) on how to get educated despite school'. This advice is also of value to teachers and administrators – and particularly politicians!

This briefing includes Roland Meighan's reminder that all parents are 'home educators' during a child's early years with the implication that we could build on this knowledge when looking for alternatives to the traditional school (p.6); a teacher's suggestion that a booklet informing parents and pupils on how to survive the system would be a good idea (p. 19); a list of items children would like to see in a 'good' school with the warning that they are unlikely to encounter many (p.13); ways in which parents and grandparents can utilise available surroundings to facilitate 'natural learning in action' and 'compensate for schools' limitations' (p.3); Michael Foot's observations of how his grandchild explored and experimented during the early learning years (p. 52); Jane Dent's heartfelt account of how she dealt with unsatisfactory aspects of her own child's schooling (p. 37); the sensitive insights given by Hazel Crawley in *The Do It Yourself Approach* offering practical and timely ways in which parents can understand and assist pupils who, for a variety of reasons, are unhappy at school (p. 76).

Good as it is, I think the book misses an opportunity by developing in the wrong direction. Although it is prefaced by the welcome caveat that it is 'not an attack on individual teachers, who often try to make their classrooms as learner-friendly as the circumstances over which they have little control, will allow ...', that is followed, throughout, by attacks on the school-based system which most parents – and grandparents – are compelled to use, a

system which, if we are honest, they can do little, by themselves, to remedy. Such readers might think too many words are used to decry the system and too few spent on what to do about its shortcomings. Readers know already how harmful the system can be – that is why they buy *Damage Limitation*.

A different slant would have overcome this. If needed at all it would have been better to get the criticisms of the outmoded system out of the way in the first few pages and to have utilised the rest on proposals for individual survival within the denounced system and, ultimately, for a gradual and plausible replacement of it. The latter – the only real solution to the immense social problems raised by the writers – would benefit every child and not just those fortunate few whose carers are sufficiently enterprising and knowledgeable to discover books such as this.

For instance 13 pages are devoted to over 100 anti-school quotations from such eminent thinkers as Churchill, Yeats, Russell, Shaw, Tolstoy, Illich, Einstein, Cicero and John Stuart Mill. The explanation for their inclusion is that people wishing to limit the damage done by traditional schooling need to have to hand responses to mass media and official support for the often negative and harmful system the government has on offer. Listing quotes makes for absorbing reading but, in my view, it may be preaching to the converted, namely those who are already thoroughly unhappy with the stubborn promotion of a restricted Nineteenth Century teaching scenario in an age which, in every other respect, has changed beyond recognition.

I do not think the cause of radical educational change is enhanced by relentless criticism of our schools. Only a small proportion of people in Britain or the USA have joined the 'alternative-education' movement – or even know what it is. Yet the support of millions of such people is required if a deeply entrenched 150 year old system is to be replaced by one that offers ongoing individual learning experiences to children, parents and grandparents. Those needed millions will not clamber aboard if they see their schools persistently censured by a well-intentioned but remote minority. Reformers must acknowledge that many parents see much that they genuinely like in 'their child's school' and are grateful for the openings it presents to themselves and their children. What they need to have demonstrated is that as 'good' as they think individual schools might be in some of the things they do, in 2006 society has to hand something far, far, better. That is the essential follow-up message that needs to be relayed at every opportunity by contributors to this and similar well-meant books.

John Adcock Educational Writer Nottingham.

Sue Robertson

Youth Clubs: Association, participation, friendship and fun

Russell House Publishing 2005

ISBN 1-903855-38-1

Bren Cook

Not since the publication of the latest Harry Potter has a book been so long awaited. However unlike J.K Rowling's offering there won't be too many people queuing up outside of supermarkets at midnight to get a copy because I don't think they know that they need it. To have written a book about youth clubs at this moment in time is a very brave thing to do because of the dominant fashions in youth work. However I'm glad that Sue Robertson has done so. Despite a government commitment to 'places to go and things to do' I'm not convinced they necessarily mean youth clubs. I feel that leisure centres or ice skating arenas are more in tune with policy makers thinking. Far from meaning that there isn't a place for this book, on the contrary Robertson begins to raise an urgent debate about the very future of youth work.

The book is a typical Russell House Publishing publication in that it is A5 size, colourful and useful. You can't judge a book by its cover but you can get an inkling from the track record of the publisher. The blurb on the outside declares the main thrust of the work:

- Documents the history of club work
- Explains why it is so valuable
- Sets out a powerful case for preserving and developing it.

The inside of the book delivers that promise. In eight chapters it covers the following ground:

1. Why Youth Clubs?
2. The roller coaster history of youth clubs
3. The role of adults
4. Good practice in youth work
5. Equal opportunities
6. The management of youth club work
7. The youth club in the community
8. The way forward for youth clubs.

After laying out a justification for youth clubs Robertson does something that the world of youth work rarely does, she takes a critical look at history and the place of the club within it. This is crucial in helping us learn about the present. I have been concerned recently that despite being 46 I've been turning into an old timer that harks back to the good old days when youth workers were real youth workers out on the prairie of radical social educational methodology and indulging in rose tinted glasses thinking. The author has been able to avoid that, drawing on the work of Davies, Spence, Booton, Jeffs and Smith et al, to take the reader through the ups and downs, the feasts and famines of youth clubs. In a critical and informative manner that confirms in my mind the need for sacred spaces for young

people and a capital re-investment commensurate with Lady Albemarle's dosh. She explores the world of policy rhetoric particularly in the last few years arguing that the government agenda's in most things relating to the young would be helped greatly though youth club work. I found the book refreshingly on the side of youth clubs. I have to admit that this is not a fashionable stance to take certainly not in the world of *Transforming Youth Work* or the Children Act 2004.

Robertson lays out a rationale for investing in youth clubs by describing the contribution they can make to social inclusion, social participation, social capital, social connectedness and generating social bonds and bridges. She also gives some ideas about where the money could come from and takes a critical sideswipe at the temporary and often superficial initiatives that have been foisted upon services in the recent past. By focussing on the youth club Robertson, far from being an apologist for the vaguely nostalgic, makes a plea for not throwing the baby out with the bathwater. By being able to articulate, in current terms, a rationale for youth clubs she has made me think about the new agenda around Children's Trusts and the role of local government. It would be a mistake not to listen to what this book says and to try and synthesise it into our new realities.

One difficulty this book may have is the pace of change is so fast that it could become a historical document before you get to read it. Understandably there is no detailed reference to *Youth Matters* the governments very 'light green' paper. I just hope the author sends a copy in for the consultation.

I liked this book very much. Partly because it offers a service in need of a core product, a very good description of one, and partly because it is well researched and sourced, not sentimental but clear in its purpose. I wished I had something like this when I was a student, it would have given me a framework to refer to and loads of references for essays. I do worry though that the arguments for association, participation, friendship and fun may be lost in the great turn of the century reforms. If they do we could always re-read the chapter about the history of youth clubs and start again.

Bren Cook is a policy development officer with a local authority.

Phil Harris

Drug Induced: Addiction and Treatment in Perspective

Russell House Publishing 2005

ISBN: 1-903855-53-5

pp133

Aylssa Cowell

When first asked to review Phil Harris's *Drug Induced* my heart did not leap with joy. It's a fairly small unassuming book and I was somewhat unprepared for how much I was going to enjoy it. Deidre Boyd, editor of *Addiction Today* in her

foreword calls *Drug Induced* a 'wise book' that readers should thank Phil Harris for writing and I agree with her. Harris challenges the way we view and treat addiction in an excellent critique of widely held beliefs within the drugs field.

Drug Induced puts addiction and treatment in perspective, but it is from the perspective of a drugs worker who, we are told in the introduction, was constantly challenged by what he read about addiction and what he worked with on a day to day basis. It is a collection of articles and seminars that Harris has accumulated over a number of years rewritten to form the body of the book. Unlike many other books of this nature, his chapters whilst being short and concise flow well into each other and never seem disjointed.

When we think of addiction we generally think of it as something within us which we will be a slave to for the rest of our lives and this is a view point that Harris strives to challenge throughout this book. On a personal note I recently gave up smoking after 12 years of 'joyously' puffing away. I was given Nicotine Replacement Therapy, or the patches and gum if you're interested, which after 2 days I realised were just stupid. I was still getting my Nicotine but just not in an enjoyable way anymore, so off the patches went and here I am 3 months later still not smoking. If I were on an American chat show this is where you'd all clap. About 3 weeks ago I went out and smoked about, honestly, 15 cigarettes, then the next day nothing, no withdrawal, no cravings, just a knowledge that I would never smoke again. Why am I telling you this I hear you ask? Well the reason is that this is the filter through which I read this book and perhaps why I agree with a lot of what he has to say. On the other hand I know instantly that some of you will hate it and this I believe is part of its charm.

This book I believe is not only for those who work with drug users. Harris has managed to write several chapters which should be essential reading for all who work with young people, his critique of peer pressure, the importance of relationships throughout adolescence and why some young people are more prone to drug dependency than others are brilliant. Harris also argues that addiction is not only the biological action of the drug but it is also the cultural context in which it is taken. Individual circumstances will determine if someone has issues with drug dependency and how long these issues will take hold for. Harris argues that it is not just the drug that people are addicted to, it is also the lifestyle. You cannot separate the lifestyle from the drug, aptly stating 'you cannot treat social exclusion with methadone'. If someone has nothing in their lives other than their drug use it will be difficult for them to let that go. They have nothing else.

Drug Induced is an excellent book which takes the reader through various theories regarding addiction, challenging the assumption that addiction is biological. I realise if addiction was purely biological it would be easier to treat and easier to explain, but it's not. As Harris points out it is a complex web of cultural and biological circumstances that intertwine and render a common treatment useless. Harris argues that Methadone can never be the only solution, that people should be assessed about their readiness to change using Motivational Interviewing techniques – if someone is not truly ready to change their behaviour they will not change. This is also a criticism of the biological disorder view of addiction. If you believe you have a disorder and therefore you cannot control your actions the belief will be held that you really can never change.

He also calls on counsellors to step out of their comfort zone and to use techniques that cater to the individual needs of the client instead of the individual styles of the counsellors! In his latter chapters Harris successfully tackles the difficult subject of dual diagnosis and brilliantly subjects Prozac and anti-depressants to the firing line.

Much to my own surprise I thoroughly enjoyed *Drug Induced* and found myself repeating to colleagues much of what I read. I found it to be a refreshing, courageous book that radically challenges many of our widely held beliefs about addiction and treatment; it is just up to you now to read it.

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Bernard Moss

Religion and Spirituality

Russell House Publishing 2005

ISBN 1 903855 57 8

£13.95 (pbk)

pp108

Philomena Cullen

The impetus for Bernard Moss' book *Religion and Spirituality* is a commendable concern to bring to the attention of all practitioners, the religious and spiritual needs of people who come into professional contact with them. Although in the past religion and spirituality have indeed been neglected areas, in secular Britain in the last decade or so, interest in spirituality has been developing in new ways outside the domain of the slow emptying of most of the established Christian churches. Spirituality is an increasingly elastic concept as well as a growing business. Moss's book therefore makes a welcome contribution to expanding the debate in this rapidly changing context. His starting point is a recognition that the worlds of youth and community work, social work, healthcare and so on, have begun to acknowledge the 'invisible presence' of religion and spirituality in the lives of service users and are required to take account of it in their practice, irrespective of individual practitioner's personal perspective on the matter. It aims, in the words of the author, to provide 'a modest signpost' for practitioners concerned to take religion and spirituality seriously.

The book firstly seeks to provide a theory base offering some definitions and comments on the key concepts and an overview of the legislative imperative. He acknowledges that although religious and spiritual needs are on practitioner's agendas, they remain difficult concepts to define and even harder to assess and meet. To prevent those new to the territory becoming lost in hotly contested definitions of religion and spirituality, he suggests that practitioners should focus on adopting a functionalist perspective in the debate. He encourages practitioners to leave aside the content of a given religious or spiritual belief

and instead think about the purpose and meaning it provides to those who subscribe to it. Rather than seeking to be informed about various faith based communities, practitioners should rather evaluate how a chosen world view enriches a person's understanding of the world and their capacity to celebrate diversity. Such a template is, I fear, too conceptually limited and vague. I would have preferred an approach that clearly said that religion is not synonymous with spirituality and then guided the reader through some of the consequent nuanced definitions and debates about its ability to both oppress and liberate an individual or a community.

As a practising Christian, Moss is very careful to present a balanced understanding of both the positive and negative effects of religion, providing a chapter apiece on both the case for and the case against religion, stressing the importance of the reader making up their own mind. He is less assertive about stating that denying religion a place in practice is a form of proselytism in itself and that the imposition of secularism negates service user's spirituality. The rest of the book examines some of the practice implications within an anti-discriminatory framework that prompts practitioners to examine their own attitudes while taking account of the religious and spiritual needs of service users so that the fullness of their personhood and dignity are respected. The practice 'snapshot' on religion, spirituality and mental health is particularly helpful as is also the final section that signposts the reader to both written and online resources for further study.

However, it is worth emphasising that the book provides only a basic introduction to some of the issues that practitioners may have to face in their attempts to deal with religion and spirituality. As such it is limited in its scope and analysis. It studiously avoids any rigorous interrogation of specific religious beliefs and practices and addresses the positive and negative effects of religion in only the broadest terms, arguing that to do any more would be to indulge in the entirely separate enterprise of religious apologetics. The overall effect is therefore accessible but a little bland and could disappoint any reader who is seriously primed to grapple with religion and spirituality, both on a personal and professional level.

The author's central challenge for practitioners is that failing to take the religious and spiritual dimension of people's lives into account is to fail to meet the demands of best practice. Moss clearly thinks that this is a contentious position and he is at pains to make the case for reluctant or hostile readers as to the reasons why religion and spirituality should have no place within the professional arena. However, his assumption that there is so much predetermined polarisation in the debate – you are either for or against religion and spirituality in human services – is I would suggest, an over-simplistic assessment of where the debate is at for most practitioners.

After the last decade or so, where interest in the interface between practice and religion and spirituality has become a burgeoning concern spurred on by legal imperatives, surely the issue for most practitioners is not about a rampant militancy in either direction but much more about levels of comfortableness in exploring how spirituality (or 'a chosen world view') is given expression in the lives of service users.

Whether this book does come to be regarded as a classic in the way the series editor suggests, will surely be judged as to whether it manages to reassure practitioners that

engaging with religious or spiritual beliefs is not too overwhelmingly complex that it cannot be attempted; that practitioners can control the impact of their own religious or spiritual stance on their practice and that we are in a time of auspicious opportunity to meet the growing demand from service users for holistic service provision. Although it is a missed opportunity that Moss says little about collaboration with religious professionals in meeting religious and spiritual needs, the overall impact of the work will hopefully be to send practitioners out more confident as to how to engage with the religious and spiritual needs of service users that they will inevitably meet. For this alone it should be recommended.

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Roy Coleman

Reclaiming the Streets: Surveillance, Social Control and the City

Willan Publishing 2004

ISBN 1-84392-077-8

£30

pp278

Rajesh Patel

The case for CCTV needs to secure a balance between control and protection. Coleman explores this in his work *Reclaiming the Streets – Surveillance, Social Control and the City*. The prominent image in the minds of the public at present is that of the screen-grabs from the events of July 2005 and would seem to show that the use of CCTV surveillance is primarily one of ensuring safety. However it seems that this very public use of CCTV is of a forensic nature, it does not prevent crime per se and actually illustrates how powerless the state is in the prevention of crime. At the time of writing this double-edged sword may be swinging back to seeing CCTV as control. Given that the investigation into the death of Jean Charles de Menezes remains incomplete perhaps the whole point of CCTV is one of state revenge as opposed to protection especially given that for any 'successful' bombers the likelihood of any prosecution is somewhat remote.

However, moving on I feel that omission of these events, hardly fair to Coleman given that these events took place long after publication, now temper the popular view of CCTV. Yet they do need to be factored in as the case is weighed up and even prior to 7/7 the significance of these types of visuals on the psyche is clearly evident.

In terms of youth policy and the audience of this journal I would have liked to see more exploration of the notion of public space and young people. Given that the purpose of cities seems to be about the growth of the service/entertainment industries such as restaurants, bars and night clubs inherently attractive to many young people, although younger teenagers are not able to make usage of the facilities primarily because of the cost involved. For youth workers it is useful to understand how space is controlled and Coleman hits this note on the button when he explores the control of space not just today but also

from a historical perspective. This he does extremely well in showing that private public partnership is not just a modern-day invention but is deep-rooted and that capital and political intervention have played a dominant role in this relationship as demonstrated by his exploration of the development of policing.

His focus on Liverpool offers an opportunity to visit the notion of risk over the past two hundred years and dispels any notions of gentler times where 'ladies' could walk the streets safely at nights, painting a much darker picture with undertones of menace. I particularly valued the inclusion of some writing on the position of Black people in Liverpool who despite playing a major part in securing the economic success of the city in the early part of the twentieth century were seen as an undue influence on the rule of law. Coleman cites the Black community, seemingly hemmed into Toxteth by harassment in the town centre, presenting a sanitised view of the city. This allows Coleman to move into investigating current developments as cities become modernised and cloned, personifying the term 'Disneyfication'. This whole reinvention of cities is an immensely valuable investigation as we discover that the state and private partnership attempts to attract consumers into the city are 'policies' that have been around almost as long as the city itself. It is precisely the inability of younger teenagers to consume that perhaps emphasises the prominent social order of commercial activity in urban spaces and the neo-liberal agenda that is investigated thoroughly by Coleman.

The irony of living in a society where risk is used as a means of social control and to control dissent is explored in detail by Coleman. He produces a thorough overview of the theoretical discourses of social control that will be mainly of interest to academics given the language used. The notion of risk in working with young people is ironic as by and large they are the ones most likely to be victims of violent street crime yet CCTV is presented largely as a method of reducing risk to 'law-abiding' adults.

While the state increasingly purports to be shrinking, perhaps technology is not investigated as completely as possible given that mobile phone records and internet usage are being used in courts as evidence, emphasising the forensic nature of their usage. The title after all refers to surveillance and the focus on CCTV in isolation appears rather narrow.

The deployment of CCTV image in contemporary media has become in many ways iconic. In the case of Jamie Bulger they become inextricably linked with the deed. However given the mundane nature of 99.999% of most CCTV footage its usage, though not its usefulness in solving minor crime is miniscule so essentially Big Brother in all his forms is ever present and invasive. The link though between grainy CCTV image and deeply evil criminal acts has become forged therefore the absence of any detailed analysis of image and its cultural meaning is for me a major omission in the book. This presentation of the sensational enhances the popular case for CCTV and it is primarily this that needs to be countered if we are to balance the picture (no pun intended).

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Josie Melia

Wavelength: A Handbook of Communication Strategies for Working with Young People

The Trust for the Study of Adolescence 2005

ISBN – 1 871504 58 9

pp141

Debi Roker and Louise Cox

Young People's Support and Campaigning Groups: Learning From a UK Wide Survey

Trust for the Study of Adolescence 2005

No ISBN

pp12

Anna Rowley

Both texts are informative helpful guides for both practitioners and community groups. The well-presented use of format, colour and language make these publications easily accessible and show an obvious awareness of the needs of their target readers. The content of each is encouraging and positive – easily transferable from paper to practice.

Young People's Support and Campaigning Groups is a methodical journey through the 'how's?' and 'whys?' of support and campaign groups. This publication follows research conducted on behalf of the Trust for the Study of Adolescence, and presents the findings in an open and factual manner. The writers take each topic one step at a time, using colour, short paragraphs and a variety of formats to present the information. Roker and Cox set out by clearly defining the aims and objectives of their research. This 'aimed to provide information about a range of support groups in the UK, particularly those for young people who are marginalized and/ or disadvantaged.' (Roker and Cox, p.4). They go on to explain how the research was conducted, who took part and who funded it.

The authors sought to produce a guide 'for any organisation that is thinking of setting up a support group for young people. It is particularly aimed at those setting up groups for marginalized or disadvantaged young people...' (Roker and Cox, p.3). The accessibility of the publication really stands by this aim. The information is clearly delineated and covers topics such as, what groups already exist, how the groups were started, how often they meet, their links to larger organisations and how each feels they make a difference, through activities such as printing a newsletter, writing to elected members and demonstrating. There is a section where each group that took part in the research was asked if they had learnt anything they would like to pass on, such as 'work with adults to address their use of policy language and complex language...' (Roker and Cox, p.8). This is an encouraging section highlighting as it does the views of people who have set up groups and learnt from them allowing them to share their learning with others. This is a brief publication, but offers a surprising amount of valuable, practical information. The final section is a list of useful contacts for those who would like further advice, information or perhaps funding.

Wavelength: A Handbook of Communication Strategies for working with Young People

is a practical guide to communicating with young people. It amounts to a comprehensive handbook of strategies to use in a range of settings. In the introduction it is described as '...ways of engaging with young people for different purposes and in different settings, with the overall aim of supporting and empowering the young people involved' (Melia, 2005, p.1). This handbook is aimed at those working directly with young people in almost any capacity.

The book is separated into two main sections separated by colour. The first is an overview of the theory and practice of communicating with young people. It briefly covers issues of adolescent development, types of communication such as active listening, non-verbal communication and communicating through activities, and how these styles differ between adults and young people. There is also information about establishing relationships through communication, how to create a welcoming environment and entering and exiting strategies when working with groups and individuals. This section was easy to read and informative and while this information was by no means comprehensive, it covered vital points that could be further developed by the reader.

The second, more substantive section is a collection of photocopiable activity sheets, containing activities, games and ideas. These activities are divided into categories, such as, the written word, visuals, moving, sorting and handling and drama. It is useful to find activities relevant to each group's need. Each is presented with an overview, a list of examples, a description of how the basic activity works, some tips for practice and a list of variations on the theme. I found these sheets extremely helpful though inevitably some were a reminder of ideas I had already tried while others gave a fresh outlook regarding how to approach topics and issues. These sheets offer a real wealth of practical ideas that can be used when working with most young people. This is a handbook to be 'dipped' into, not only is it an accessible resource to have in any workplace, but also an inspiration. I really enjoyed reading this publication and the challenge it posed by demanding I look at old ideas in a new way.

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Susan Warner Weil, Danny Wildemeersch, and Theo Jansen

Unemployed Youth and Social Exclusion in Europe: Learning for Inclusion?

Ashgate 2005

ISBN 0 7546 4130 9

£50.00 (hardback)

pp273

Howard Williamson

This book is based on a comparative European study of 'activation' programmes for unemployed young people in Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and England. The research took three years, and the product is an almost overwhelming array of evidence, perspectives, arguments and assertions. It is difficult

to know where to start. Fortunately, there is a brief Foreword written by Karen Evans, herself a distinguished writer on European youth transition research. She once argued that youth employment and training programmes needed to be considered and evaluated, at international level, on the basis of how they were 'espoused, enacted and experienced'. This is an immensely useful framework, for it allows for the presentation of formal aims and objectives, a depiction of how things were actually put into practice, and then a review of how that practice was received by those at whom it was directed. Too often, research has dwelt too long on one of these dimensions, rather than comparing and contrasting all three. Consider, for example, the UK Youth Training Scheme, espoused by Norman Tebbit as 'the most advanced set of youth training proposals ever set before Parliament' (which was probably true when he said it). Enacted within strict budgetary controls and rising numbers of participants which jeopardised the desired quality from day one, and (consequently) experienced by young people as an exploitative and cheap labour programme that took many of them precisely nowhere.

The authors of this book found a similar picture of provision in many of the arenas they explored. But they have refined and calibrated that picture to the nth degree. Indeed, they express the hope that, as the European Union enlarges and the challenges around youth unemployment and social exclusion intensify, those who advocate solutions to 'learning for inclusion' will retain a permanent question mark. There is no magic bullet and there is always the risk of an enormous gulf between policies and the ideologies underpinning them, and the reality of the lives and perspectives of the young Europeans who are their 'target'. The book in fact concentrates on the 'interstices and impediments' that are endemic to the different objectives and agendas being played out in education, training, employment and guidance programmes for the young unemployed.

The construction of the text is fascinating (and sometimes frustrating, given the small print). It must have been both gruelling and gratifying to write, producing – ultimately – a sense of achievement at having written something rather different from anything that has gone before. For, although firmly grounded in the empirical realities of a range of policy and practice, the authors constantly leap above this messy landscape to theorise, suggest, debate, and contest a host of issues. It is virtually impossible to isolate and identify one issue above another: all weave together in complex, contradictory and inevitably challenging ways. By way of example, however, the authors discuss the tensions between the economic and social objectives of the EU, which often appear, and are frequently presented, as being quite separate. As a result, activation projects can easily be perceived as instrumental in 'delivering' young people into jobs to serve the market economy, with a complete discounting of any social dimension within this process. Notwithstanding the personal damage that may well accrue from such a position, the authors argue for the explicit re-instatement and recognition of the social aspects, implications and consequences of such provision. They envisage new balances between the economic and the social, and this is but one piece of a jigsaw of argument that culminates in an advocacy of 'reflexive activation'. This stands in stark contrast to what tends to prevail currently – what they call 'restricting activation'. That tends to see the 'problem' in terms of the unemployed individual and the response as a labour market insertion programme largely oblivious to the individual's wider needs or circumstances. The idea of reflexive activation is that this narrow perspective is broadened: the problem is social exclusion, the state has broader (economic and social)

responsibilities, and the condition of unemployment is integrally bound up with the wider contexts of individual lives.

Perhaps it did not really need such a creative presentation and analysis, nor such a thorough empirical inquiry, to tell us this. On the other hand, perhaps it did. I have often been a critic of empirical studies that fail to think beyond their box, and of more theoretical accounts of a variety of youth provision that do nothing to move the policy agenda forward. So I applaud this publication for pulling a host of strands together. Few punches are pulled, especially in the extensive discussions of the unlikelihood that activation projects will significantly insert vulnerable and marginalised young people into secure and sustainable employment.

The book is not dismissive of activation projects. However, for them to have both a perceived and experienced value, they need to be much better connected to the wider world 'out there': 'to be meaningfully linked to the environment' (p.218). By this, the authors mean that such programmes must engage both with the labour market and with civil society: in other words, to work on the circumstances of both unemployment and social exclusion. The authors draw heavily here on Lave and Wenger's work on situated learning, maintaining that unemployed young people can, and should work alongside others in developing broad-based solutions to their marginal circumstances.

All good stuff, but evidence and argument about the multiple layers and complexities of 'activation programmes' (for good and for bad) still fail to connect with the political wind and tide. I was saying similar things, at a local/national level, over twenty years ago. The authors here are still calling for that paradigm shift that would see technocratic, performance management based approaches replaced by those that took a more 'whole system' perspective. Policy needs to connect with 'the complex narrative about the human condition of the unemployed and the socially excluded who are experiencing the dark side of globalised life in late modernity' (p.247). Yes! I would love to know what the reaction has been to *Balancing Competencies*, the formal report to the EU on the research project around which this book was composed. I would not be surprised if the Lisbon Strategy and the Youth Pact consigned it, like the young people to whom this book seeks to give a voice, a place and a purpose, to the margins.

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Roger Harrison and Christine Wise

Working with Young People

Sage 2005

ISBN 1-4129-1946-0 (pbk)

Price £14.99

pp219

Carrie Packham

As the leader of a youth and community course and manager of a small charity for young people I was pleased to review a book that looked as if it would be generally useful. As opposed to the previous one I tackled *Sex in Russian Society* – interesting but not widely applicable to youth in the UK. Like all youth and community workers and tutors of youth and community students, I am always pleased to see a new source book that can be used by practitioners and students. I met this text with the some enthusiasm. My colleagues who have seen the text echoed this keenness.

Like the excellent materials on the Infed. Website, which have been primarily created to meet the needs of a particular student group, this text has been produced to cater for the needs of students undertaking the Open University Foundation Degree in Working with Young People. A newly established, NYA and JNC endorsed, professionally qualifying course that forms part of the Introduction to Working with Young People module.

It is an interesting collection of chapters, called by the editors a reader, with a title that is 'designed to signal to both students and readers that we are seeking to address practitioners working with young people in a range of contexts and roles' (p. 1). Some of the chapters are revised versions of texts from other sources, but 5 of the 18 are newly commissioned. Presumably to meet needs the editors identified as not being met by their patchwork of existing sources. With the overall aim of 'giving a flavour of the issues and debates which are current in the field' (p.2). The chapters are loosely held together in three overlapping parts, with the themes of first – defining the field; second – issues in practice; and lastly – professional development. The editors state the approach of the reader is based on defining that the work with young people will be characterised by the voluntary participation of the young people and where the aims of the work are broadly educational.

The introduction to the reader is a useful way of explaining their choice of texts and the way that they see each chapter relating to and building on the others. This is useful as it is often not apparent from the texts themselves, and the key messages of each chapter are often not as clear as the introduction indicates. However although the chapters are useful in themselves and can stand alone as a useful text for those who are working or training in youth work there are some omissions. Particularly in relation to who we work with and why, and theoretical approaches. The selection aims to cover key themes which are being discussed in the field, and the ways in which they are being written about. Harrison and Wise admit that they have constructed their own account of what constitutes the field. This is apparent through their particular emphasis on needs based and problem solving approaches. Chapter seven by Gina Ingram and Jean Harris entitled 'Identifying and

meeting young people's needs' although a revised version of material from *Delivering Good Youth Work* (2001) by the same authors, reads like a set of notes, and starts with the sentence 'This is a systematic process underpinned by several theories' (p. 87), but nowhere are we told what these theories are. Not only is this a weakness of the chapter which reinforces a worker, as opposed to a young people-led approach it reflects a weakness of the reader. For example, the chapter by Wenger on 'A social theory of learning' is only one approach to education and I am rather surprised that in the whole text there is no mention of the work of Paulo Freire, or bell hooks. The influence of Freirian thinking on youth work and informal education is apparent through other contributors use of Freirian concepts (e.g. Smith's use of the concept of praxis). The contribution of the Freirian approach has been acknowledged in numerous youth work texts, and recently by Dod Forrest, a youth worker from Aberdeen and member of the Rowan Group at the University of Aberdeen, writing in the autumn issue of *Youth and Policy*. Forrest sees the influence of Freire's work on youth work as being substantial enough to state that 'the writings of Paulo Freire provide explanation, inspiration and a declaration that "another world" is not only possible but necessary' (2005:104).

The other gap in the text is the voice of those with whom we work – young people. There is no explanation as to why young people and their lives have not been specifically addressed, or to make the case that the voice of young people as participants in our work permeates the text. Ironically this lack of attention to our participants in favour of the worker and our potential loss of identity in relation to other professions and methods of work reflects the current context of our practice.

The three contributions to the collection by Neil Thompson are all valuable, one on the practical skills of 'think, feel and do', another on anti-discriminatory practice and a third on reflective practice. There are useful newly commissioned chapters which provide much of the contextualisation for our work. One by Spence on the 'Concepts of youth' and others that relate to our changing practice and the dilemmas that workers increasingly face, for example as a result of targeted work (Westergaard) and the ongoing struggle for the workers identity in the face of change (Tucker).

However, the book as it stands needs either a lengthening of its introduction or a commentary between the chapters that would locate each one either in relation to its approach or for contextualisation. For example the DfES 'Common core of skills and knowledge for the children's work force' does not come from the same social justice approach as The NYA 'Ethical conduct in youth work' statement of values and principles that precedes it, but relies heavily on empathic notions. The content of the two chapters should have been contextualised, compared and debated.

The text would also have been improved as a resource book or reader by the inclusion of reference to other related texts or sources such as web sites and government reports. My concern is that people may reproduce and quote the chapters included here as being seminal and key works, and the basis for our practice, rather than one which is, as the editors note, 'necessarily partial, personal and located in a particular time and place' (p. 7). Nevertheless it is a useful contribution to the development of resources for workers and students, and I will certainly use parts of it, if with caution.

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Judith Stinton

A Dorset Utopia: The Little Commonwealth and Homer Lane

Black Dog Books 2005

ISBN 0 9528839-4-5

£11.95

pp145

Tony Jeffs

This is the third biography of Homer Lane and therefore the third substantive narrative of the project with which his name will always be associated – the Little Commonwealth. Victor Lytton in his introduction to the first of these by Lane's friend, colleague and in all probability lover Elsie Bazeley remarked that mere 'knowledge of the existence of the Little Commonwealth caused the hearts of many to dance' (1928: 7; see also Wills 1964). How right Lytton was. And how thankful we should be for this contemporary biography, not least because it may just cause a few new 'hearts to dance'.

Born in New Hampshire in 1875 Lane trained as a handicraft teacher. Soon afterwards he moved into play work and by 1905 was superintendent of Playgrounds in Detroit. However an injudicious aside offered during a meeting that appeared to endorse abortion obliged him to resign. Subsequently he taught in a settlement before moving into 'residential' work with young people. Lane by this time was deeply influenced by John Dewey, whose lectures he had attended during his period of teacher training, and Maria Montessori. During his spell as a play and settlement worker he became convinced that 'delinquents' were overwhelmingly young people who had indulged in the 'wrong sort of play' – mischievous rather than evil. He also observed that in localities where supervised play provision was available the levels of offending were lower than elsewhere. Via the settlement Lane became involved in a remarkable educational experiment, the Ford Republic. Located in a rural area adjacent to Detroit this was a home for young 'offenders' run according to the tenets of the American constitution. Not only did its young citizens live together according to democratic values they also built their community and sustained it via productive endeavour.

Word of the success of the Ford Republic and the more famous George Republic Freeville reached England and a group of reformers and progressive educationalist decided to open something similar here. Amongst these was the Earl of Sandwich who made a property available on his Dorset estate and Lane was recruited to get it up and running. It opened

in 1913. The Little Commonwealth, as it was called, was a farm community of around 50 people comprising eight or nine little ones aged from nine months to nine years; four or five adults; and the rest were boys and girls age 14 to 18. The latter sent primarily by magistrates because they were beyond parental control or had been convicted of a variety of offences. Sent is the wrong word for Lane trusted them to make their own way there on the train once they were released from custody. From the beginning Lane sought to create a democratic community in which the young people were responsible for the day-to-day running of the community. Decisions were delegated and the shared life meant all were required to help run the place, care for the 'babies', work on the farm and in workshops and abide by the judgements of the 'court' made up of their fellow citizens. Given the backgrounds of the young people the Little Commonwealth inevitably endured periods of disruption and tension but over time became, by all accounts, a balanced, creative and happy community. Something that could never be said of the alternatives that existed then, or now.

As do the earlier biographies Stinton describes the ways of the Little Commonwealth in detail. Helpfully she also tells something of the backgrounds, and subsequent lives, of some of the young people who became citizens. She also provides a full account of Lane's life. The Little Commonwealth closed in 1918 after five years. Closure occurring as a consequence of accusations of sexual misconduct made against Lane by two young female residents. Whether Lane was guilty as charged, or not, we shall never know. Stinton, having weighed the evidence, believes him to have been an innocent victim. However certain incidents in Lane's earlier life in America along with his subsequent sexual peccadilloes after he set himself up as a therapist speak of a man whom contemporaries might well have labelled a 'cad'. Eventually despite the best efforts of friends, high and low, to protect him Lane was deported. This followed a high profile court case that came about as a consequence of 'gifts' bestowed on Lane by a young female client. He died in 1925 in Paris shortly afterwards.

Tragically the 'scandal' surrounding the accusations that initiated closure and the questionable nature of Lane's relationship with some of his clients who came to him for therapy have diverted attention from his manifest achievements during the brief five years the Little Commonwealth existed. As Stinton rightly reminds us his remarkable experiment enabled the citizens of the Little Commonwealth, almost without exception to break the 'mind forg'd manacles of the slums' and gain 'self-respect ... make their own decisions [and] form lasting relationships' (p. 112). As such it was a remarkable success just as the American Republics, upon which it was based, were. Here was a model of what might be achieved if only we focussed on the making of young citizens rather than upon retribution and control. Sadly it is impossible to imagine contemporary magistrates having either the powers or independence of mind to send young offenders to a similar institution. Or that the 'safety-first' minds managing our youth justice estate would dare to even consider replicating this sort of innovative, imaginative and democratic programme. Worse, with our 'children's prisons' now managed by companies driven solely by the need to provide their shareholders with a dividend we have, for the first time since the nineteenth century, a powerful lobby dedicated to maximising the numbers of young people who are incarcerated. Companies who, for obvious reasons, will lobby to impede the emergence of the type of creative, democratic alternatives Lane and his backers endeavoured to fashion.

Few deserve one let alone three biographies. Lane for all his blemishes probably does. We should be grateful to Stinton for unearthing fresh material on his life and work. Also for her determination to ensure the alternative to the grim Bastilles that existed in his lifetime and ours that he helped create is not forgotten. This, like Bazeley's book before it, will hopefully 'cause some hearts to dance'. One would dearly like everyone, high and low, in the youth justice business to be sent a copy.

References

Bazeley, E. (1928) *Homer Lane and the Little Commonwealth*, London: Allen and Unwin.
Wills, W. David (1964) *Homer Lane: A Biography*, London: Allen and Unwin.

Tony Jeffs Durham University.

Anna Craft

Creativity in Schools: Tensions and Dilemmas

Routledge 2005

ISBN 0-415-32415-7

£22.99 (pbk)

pp192

Jim Rose

Anna Craft has written an important and challenging book on the increasingly important topic of creativity in education. Although written mainly for teachers, the book will be of interest to all those who are involved in the processes of education from whatever background or perspective.

The book covers a wide range of issues concerning creativity not just those applying specifically to work in schools but in regard to the wider environment and the problems confronting all of us in the coming years as the ever-frightening consequences of our consumerist and wasteful society continue to make their impact. Craft shows how the context for creativity extends beyond the boundaries of education; the need for creative and innovative approaches, given the rapidly changing social and economic structures across the global economy, is imperative.

In many ways the book is surprising, which is perhaps not a bad thing for a book on creativity. The capacity to make interesting or unusual links and connections across disciplines or fields of human experience is after all, as the author shows, one of the defining criteria of creativity. This is shown in the discussion on the potentially destructive elements of creativity and consideration of the broader cross-cultural and ethical issues that are not always identified in a society where creativity is generally regarded as a good thing, although perhaps within limits! This connects to what the author refers to as the

'darker side' of creativity; when real decisions and choices have to be made on what are the core values we use to inform ourselves and where do they come from? What determines whether creativity leads to good or destructive consequences and outcomes?

The book is constructed in three parts and the Introduction provides a helpful map of the pathways running through each chapter showing their links and development. In summary, Part I looks at creativity in schools through 'a number of lenses' to discuss issues of language, curriculum and pedagogy. Part II introduces us to the broader perspectives concerned with principles of creativity with regard to such issues as cultural relativity and the environment, whilst Part III considers implications and tensions for those engaged in the processes of education and the sort of approaches and levels of engagement that are required to encourage genuine creativity in young people.

The book is well written and authoritative, dealing with sometimes difficult subject matter in a clear and accessible style. The arguments are clearly set out and references do not intrude into the flow of the text but illustrate the point being made and direct to further reading. The historical development of the place and purpose of creativity in education is well traced and the varying definitions of creativity and the distinctions that need to be made and understood between teaching creatively, teaching for creativity and creative learning are carefully set out and explained.

In terms of contemporary education policy and organisation the author considers the place of creativity in the light of various reports, outcomes of working parties, statements from established bodies such as the QCA and in the numerous curriculum documents and guidelines emanating from central government. She helpfully identifies some of the apparent internal differences in definition between key documents related to Foundation, Primary and Secondary stages.

Perhaps the most significant discussion and one with which teachers, and indeed all those involved in working with children and young people today will readily identify, concerns the 'tensions and dilemmas' that arise in trying to balance the demand for control and conformity with the encouragement for creativity and self-expression. This is a tension that can be detected at various levels. It is apparent at the widest societal level in terms of balancing individual freedom and maintaining social cohesion. Also in education it emerges in the conflicting demands of a centralist and specified national curriculum requirement for all pupils and the encouragement to foster creative approaches in both teaching and learning, approaches that need time and space to grow and flourish.

For teachers involved in day-to-day classroom activities there is the balance to be achieved between the possibilities that are always there when working with children and young people and the constraints that are felt in having to respond to the ever increasing regulatory framework requiring seemingly endless recording and the amount of specified content in subject areas to be covered in lessons. The issue of 'what' and 'how much' has to be taught inevitably impacts on the 'how' teachers work in the classroom and engage with their pupils. These pressures often take their toll on teachers and others working with children and young people but this book, whilst acknowledging this, moves the discussion on in terms of a discussion about the broader nature of 'pedagogy' and what is needed to

actively engage with children in creative and worthwhile activity.

This is a book to be read carefully, the topic is important and as the author shows has far-reaching implications. There is a focus on the world of practice and educationalists will find it invaluable as will others in more informal settings where adults seek to engage children and young people in creative approaches to thinking about the wider world in which we live.

Jim Rose Nurture Group Network London.

Nel Noddings

Happiness and Education

Cambridge University Press 2003

ISBN 0521807638

£25.00

pp308

Don Blackburn

Mention 'happiness' in almost any company these days and it is likely to provoke a guffaw. It seems to be one of those topics guaranteed to generate derision, or at least substantial embarrassment in company. Happiness is associated with Ken Dodd, 'happy clappy' evangelicals, naivety and lack of sophistication, at best worthy and at worst risible.

One explanation for this state of affairs may lie in the tenor of the times, where cynicism, victimhood and general crabbiness seem to be the order of the day. Best selling books include themes such as 'Ten Crap Towns', complaints about the decline in spelling and how to manipulate other people. TV treats include a celebration of grumpiness by both men and women. An observer from another culture might draw the conclusion that contemporary adult society in the UK is rather unhappy. Much of this may be due to a gradually ageing population preferring reminiscence about a lost 'Golden Age' rather than discussing the possibilities of the future.

As Noddings points out 'happiness' is also missing from the language and dialogue of schooling. There is a general expectation that schooling ought not to be enjoyable; it is work that counts and preparation for the vale of tears that constitutes adult life. She argues cogently that discussion and debate about the aims of education need to be reinvigorated and replaced in any discussion about schools and other educational institutions.

The book is full of wonderful discussions about a range of topics relating to happiness – such as the importance of a love of place in individual's lives. By this she does not mean a chauvinistic attachment to the state, but rather a genuine joy and appreciation of particular places, exemplified in the work of poets and novelists whose writing is suffused with a

desire to share the joy of the experience.

Noddings is at pains to point out that she is not arguing for a particular form of teaching based on overly romantic ideals, but that the method of teaching should be reasonably chosen to achieve its appropriate intentions. She argues that '[a] problem that has plagued educational theory for decades is the search for one best method to be used for everything' (p.123).

The book was written for an American audience, but the discussion and points that she makes are equally applicable in the UK. One of the most pernicious aspects of the so-called 'National Curriculum' (in reality the National Syllabus) is that in the UK, discussion about what education is for has more or less disappeared from both teacher education and the educational press. The dominance of instrumentality and pragmatism is almost complete. The rhetoric of work and the economy smother any other possibilities, and financial success becomes the only criterion of value. This is true at all levels of the system from nursery to university. In one sense we should not be surprised at this. The combination of lack of educational understanding and minimal imagination in 'Secretaries of State for Schooling' is outdone only by an overarching authoritarianism and lack of principle. The language of coercion and sanction has replaced that of encouragement and support. Compliance and acquiescence are demanded of teaching staff - policed by the apparatchiks of OFSTED.

The book for me also stimulated questions about the lack of discussion about our social aims. What kind of society do we want to live in? As with the debate about educational aims, there is a singular lack of attention to this question in what passes for political and social debate in the UK. Is work and the economy the only or dominant reason for living? Are we content to allow our politicians, on behalf of their business friends, to dictate the outcomes of social and political activity? Have we really handed over to Blair the responsibility for telling us how our society ought to develop?

However, we cannot simply place the blame on the politicians that we elected. British society has often been indifferent to discussions about the nature of social life, and particularly suspicious and intolerant of enjoyment and happiness in the young. If adult society is as unhappy as the discussion above suggests, is it any wonder that children's happiness in schooling is not top of the agenda?

For Noddings, the way back to sanity revolves around some straightforward and deceptively clear principles - 'The best schools should resemble the best homes' - which she illustrates continuously with appropriate and illuminating examples. This clarity is another feature of the text which stands as an exemplar to other authors in its intelligibility and coherence.

Noddings book is an excellent reminder of the intense debate that used to rage around the question of what schools are for. Her book should be required reading for anyone interested in education and politicians should be made to read it and pass an appropriate test before they are ever let loose on any of our educational institutions. There is a substantial range of good references to allow the interested reader to pursue the debate, and many of these seem to have been chosen also for their ability to interest and engage the reader. The book is highly recommended as a stimulating read for anyone interested in education or working

with children and young people.

However the book has a much wider importance than this. It is a humane, wise and invigorating reminder of the older and broader question of how we ought to live. It is also written in a style that encourages enjoyment and celebrates learning for its own sake.

Don Blackburn University of Lincoln.

David Clarke

Pro-Social and Anti-Social Behaviour

Routledge 2003

ISBN 0 415 22761 5

£8.99 (pbk)

pp.172

Peter Squires and Dawn E. Stephen

Rough Justice: Anti-social behaviour and young people

Willan Publishing 2005

ISBN 1 84393 111 1

£18.99 (pbk)

pp238

Bernard Davies

Book titles, like appearances, can be deceptive. No doubt the invitation to review these two books together was prompted by their focus on anti-social behaviour. Reading them end-on, however, simply demonstrates how, even when the topic is supposedly the same, aims, perspectives and ways of analysing can produce texts with little recognisable connection.

Clarke, it is true, is also concerned with 'pro-social behaviour' – defined as 'the broad range of actions intended to benefit one or more people other than oneself'. Ultimately however it is not this wider remit which separates these two books. Nor is it just that, within a series for those 'new to higher level study whether at school, college or university', his is 'an introductory text aimed at students new to this area of Social Psychology'. It is mainly that, notwithstanding some passing qualifications, he treats his discipline largely as a given whereas Squires and Stephen see their's (criminology) as a critical part of the problem they are trying to unpick.

Within its genre, the Clarke book has its strengths. Though at times embarrassingly chatty – do we really need to know the author was born on Halloween? It is accessible and well organised and includes mock-type exam questions, a glossary and even a guide to writing essays. Its content largely comprises short reviews of a wide range of theories and of some of the research done to test these.

It is here though that its limitations – especially when read alongside *Rougher Justice* – show through. It does offer brief evaluations of the material considered including reservations about the ethics of some laboratory experiments and some consideration of relevant gender and race issues. And its five-page chapter on ‘reducing and controlling anti-social behaviour’, though inevitably superficial, quite inadvertently manages to pop some warning shots across current policy-makers’ bows – by, for example, pointing to evidence that ‘those exercising (through physical activities like sport) behaved more aggressively’! Nonetheless, overall the book is value-neutral. As a result the (by definition, novice) reader could easily conclude that, in this complex field, any theory will do – that one is more or less as valid and useful as another.

This certainly is not a charge that can be levelled against the Squires and Stephen book whose commitments – both professional and political – are manifest. Their central thesis is that, despite – or maybe because of – the vagueness of its definition, ‘anti-social behaviour’ has become the defining feature of current youth justice. Moreover, this has happened even though, by fast-tracking young people into custodial sentences, it is expensive and inhumane; for reducing youth crime it is counter-productive; and it is ‘undermining traditional principles of justice and due process’.

The book provides a valuable history of the term – particularly of the shift from:

... a conception of ASB as the special preserve of a group of ‘usual suspects’ – working class ‘delinquents’, gang members and the ‘deprived and depraved’ juveniles ... – towards ... a series of performance options that any young person might choose to adopt. (emphasis added)

Its main concern however is with the consequences of this shift: with how increasingly young people have come to be treated as offenders first and people second. In this ‘blaming the victim’ has become the taken for granted starting point for more and more youth policies, in the process requiring families to take on roles previously assumed to be collective (‘community’ and state) responsibilities which can strain their already fragile dynamics to – or beyond – breaking point. This ‘death of the social’ – of the refusal to take into account often deep-seated structural pressures on young people’s behaviour – not only makes nonsense of all New Labour’s rhetoric about being tough on the causes of crime. It also actively undermines its claims to be tackling ‘social inclusion’ by creating newly stigmatised and demonised segments of the population. And, far from supporting those wider New Labour agendas aimed at reducing ‘dependency’ and giving service users wider choice, it leaves the parents and children who are the targets of these policies even further undermined, voiceless and so even more powerless to apply their own often modest but well grounded ideas for dealing with their children’s obstreperousness.

One of the most favoured of these self-defined solutions – consistently confirmed by wider surveys as well as by the authors’ own research – is to provide for more outdoor play facilities and other leisure activities for young people in their own localities. Yet, as all services and professions get caught by the backwash of New Labour’s relentless youth enforcement strategy and its consequent ‘criminalisation of social policy’, Squires and Stephens add evidence to what youth workers all over the country are reporting. Namely

that increasingly 'provisions for young people have come to be associated with crime prevention and "diversion" activities rather than as forms of service delivery in their own right'.

In sharp contrast to Clarke's modest contribution, the last thing the Squires and Stephen book could be called is 'easily accessible'. Its commitment to integrating a range of policy analyses and critiques of research perspectives and findings with accounts of the authors' own, from-the-bottom-up empirical material make for considerable repetition while their determination to dot every 'i' of a huge array of references adds to its density. At times all this threatens to bury the book's crucial insights and conclusions. These however, at a time when a Prime Minister is acting as if he personally can social engineer fundamental change in individual and family mores and behaviour, have never been more needed. We need particularly to take seriously the authors' reminder that, though value-based campaigns in defence of civil rights and judicial process are essential, in themselves they are not sufficient. What we also need – and what this book starts to offer – is credible empirical work, especially qualitative and from the front line, to underpin the huge array of anecdotal evidence now accumulating of the futility, and indeed counter-productive effects, of the current policy obsessions.

Perhaps Squires and Stephens could be persuaded to write a more minimalist version of *Rough Justice* in the style of Clarke's book?

Bernard Davies, former youth worker and independent consultant.

Peter Gilbert

Leadership: Being effective and remaining human

Russell House Publishing 2005

ISBN 1-903855-76-4

pp129

Bob Payne

In *Leadership – Being effective and remaining human* Gilbert has provided us with an interesting, challenging and often overwhelming read. The book is interesting because it seeks to explore key themes for those who have leadership or management roles in work with young people, and who are required to balance effective and rigorous pursuit of targets and goals with a commitment to values and principles which should pervade our activities at all levels. The book's challenge lies both in the journey it requires us to make into some uncharted territory and also in the revisiting of apparently well worked out positions. It is overwhelming in the sheer quantity of material it contains and vast list of sources it cites and refers to.

At the end of the day I have to say that I came away only a little clearer about the nature of

leadership than before I began the journey through the book's contents. The distinctions I hoped to find between leader and manager, between role and situation, between business and service, were insufficiently clear. There is an immense amount of useful material here which can be available as a resource or used to enhance professional development opportunities but in reading it as a text I was continually distracted by the mass of references and the introduction of new and sometimes disconnected ideas.

Put it on the shelf and draw on it sparingly for specific purposes and it may throw light on a varied range of situations, but not a tome to be consumed from end to end in a weekend's reading.

Bob Payne Consultant and Lecturer De Montfort University.

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Suzella Palmer and John Pitts

Where is *Youth Matters* taking us?

Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith

Young Offending: The lives, views and experiences of three 'typical' young offenders

Steve Rogowski

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