SOCIOLOGY SINCE 2000

JONATHAN BLUNDELL & JANIS GRIFFITHS

Summaries of over 50 pieces of contemporary sociological research

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01 FAMILIES & HOUSEHOLDS

SOCIAL CHANGE, FAMILY FORMATION & KIN RELATIONSHIPS

NICOLA CHARLES, 2005

CONTEXT **One of the best known family studies of the 1960s was Rosser and Harris's study of family change entitled *The Family and Social Change*.**

It was based on data gathered from a sample of people drawn from the Welsh port of Swansea and suggested that, although there had been many structural changes in families, the extended family still existed as a real force in people's lives.

This study is part of a series of research projects based in Swansea which attempt to use the Rosser and Harris study as a baseline for finding out what has been happening to families over the last 50 years. In particular to investigate the effects on the family of structural changes linked to deindustrialisation and the breakdown of traditional patterns of family life and formation.

It has been argued that social networks and family life are in decline as people choose not to subscribe to the traditional rules governing behaviour and instead create their own patterns of living. This study is an attempt to investigate what has happened to kinship patterns and family formation in the last forty years and to investigate the significance and impact of changes in the family.

FIND OUT MORE

Charles, N. (2005) *Social Change, Family Formation and Kin Relationships*, published by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

The full report along with a range of support material can be accessed from the Report's home page on the ESRC website: **www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/ViewAwardPage.aspx?AwardId=1098**

A summary of the study and further information is available through the web pages of the Sociology Department at Swansea University (**www.swan.ac.uk/sssid/Research/Res%20-%20Sociology.htm#R&H**)

Rosser, C. and Harris, C. C. (1965) *The Family and Social Change*. London: Routledge

METHODS

The aim of this study was to understand the effects of social change on intimate and kin relationships and to look at the importance of kinship in providing social support and a sense of identity with reference to social change and the differences between social classes and ethnic groups.

A survey of 1,000 households in Swansea was conducted over a five month period in the summer of 2002. It consisted of a questionnaire based on the original survey and provided quantitative data. It was necessary to make alterations to Rosser and Harris's original survey to take account of social changes. The original intention was to sample 2,000 households but the response rate was lower in the 2002 survey, with only 43% of households cooperating compared to 87% in the original study. The sample therefore over-represents older age groups and under represents younger people.

In addition an ethnographic study took place, consisting of interviews with 159 respondents. Samples were gathered using snowball techniques and over 100 women were interviewed. Interviews took place over more than two years and each was recorded and transcribed. The interviews took place in three areas of Swansea: one was an area of deprivation, one was inner city and ethnically mixed and one was an affluent area. Questions focused on who counted as family, social networks, support, identity and family change. They also covered the social significance of neighbours and friends.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study provides a measure of social change with reference to patterns of marriage and family diversity. Gender roles are discussed and the impact of demographic changes analysed. In addition, it is useful as an example of a study that updates a previous piece of research.

KEY FINDINGS

Changes in the patterns of marriage and parenting reflected national trends. In the 1960s most of the population lived in nuclear family units but by 2002 there had been a significant increase in the number of people who did not have partners.

Just over half of those surveyed were married and another 5.5% cohabiting. Many of those in relationships had no children.

In Swansea in the 1960s 20% of households consisted of classic extended families with three generations sharing a home. But in 2002, only 0.5% of people lived in this way and most of those belonged to the minority Bengali community where families lived with the husband's father's family.

There were also geographical changes in family life. The typical pattern in Wales was of migration from Wales to England but by 2002 increasing migration to the Swansea area was occurring so that many respondents had parents from England and other parts of Wales. Nevertheless, the strongest pattern is of geographical stability in the sense that most people lived near their kin and maintained regular contact. By way of contrast, some of the ethnic minority community had parents in other countries.

Despite the slight increase in the number of people living away from the families, frequency of contact had not declined, with nearly 80% of mothers and daughters having seen each other in the previous week. Other relationships such as fathers and daughters and fathers and sons were not quite so frequently in each other's company, but the basic hierarchy of relationship contact remained constant between the 1960s and the 2000s. The only relationship to have declined significantly was that between siblings, so parents maintained strong connections with their children, but their children did not necessarily have strong relationships with each other.

Kinship in Swansea was marked by social support. Kin could lose the status of family members if they did not maintain contact or did not offer some degree of support. However, friends and distant relatives gained the status of kin if they were seen frequently. There were class variables in some patterns: working-class people were more likely to live near their families and to remain in one particular home.

Fathers and sons were far less likely to work in the same trades and occupations than in the 1960s but the main change was in the levels of employment among women. In 2002 a significant 30% of women were in work that had higher income and status than their partners. This marked a significant dynamic for social change because Rosser and Harris had found that the mother-daughter relationship was at the heart of family. In 2002 women spent less time in the home and saw their mothers less frequently even though they were still in frequent contact. The decline was greatest among working-class women. The nature of the mother-daughter relationship had changed so that women who saw their mothers frequently were often those who relied on their family to undertake childcare duties.

Middle-class men and those from minority ethnic groups were much more likely to be highly involved in family networks than their working-class counterparts. Men in these groups were providers for their families. In the relatively deprived areas of working-class Swansea, men were notable by their absence from families and from work. In this area women formed the household groups and were more likely to work. It also seems as though women in working-class areas were more likely to tolerate a son's cohabiting girlfriend than to accept a daughter's boyfriend.

EVALUATION

Despite the issues that the authors raise about the representativeness of the samples, this remains an important study into the nature and causes of structural change in the family because it replicates a previous study and therefore can provide measures of change that are more precise and detailed than can be gleaned from analysis of official statistics.

'AFTER I'VE DONE THE MUM THINGS': WOMEN, CARE & TRANSITIONS

SUE INNES & GILL SCOTT, 2003

CONTEXT **Increasing numbers of women have been entering the labour market since the 1960s. The government policy known as 'welfare-to-work' has emphasised the role of women as workers, encouraging single mothers to enter the labour market as soon as their children are of school age.**

However, at the same time many women are still expected to carry the main responsibility for the care of children and other dependent family members. This has placed a burden on women who are expected to take on the primary responsibility for the family as well as to be good employees.

Many feminists have argued that caring should be recognised and valued as a useful contribution to society. This study is concerned with the role of caring in the lives of women entering the labour market in an area of Glasgow. The women come from an area of particular poverty and low employment in a city with a history of unemployment and disadvantage. In recent years Glasgow has made a big commitment to tackling the issues of regeneration and implementing government policies that support women's return to work after having children.

Although the increase in labour market opportunities for women is seen as positive by many people, it is still the case that the paid work done by women is often poorly paid. This is partly because the domestic care that women undertake affects their access to better-paid jobs and opportunities. It is true that there are significant numbers of women in professional work but many have disrupted histories of work, are concentrated in poorly paid jobs and are more likely to take on part-time or casual work. Caring roles cost women pay when they are in work and a lifetime risk of poverty that increases in old age due to their low pension contributions. This risk is highest for those with few qualifications.

FIND OUT MORE

Innes, S. and Scott, G. (2003) 'After I've Done The Mum Things': Women, Care And Transitions. *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 8 (3) (**www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/innes.html**)

The research was funded by:
The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (**www.crfr.ac.uk**)

The Scottish Poverty Information Unit (**www.povertyinformation.org**)

METHODS

The aim of the study was to understand the nature of caring among women who were entering training and work and had dependent children. The study was qualitative because it wanted to look at the everyday life experience of these women. It hoped to gain an understanding of the problems experienced by mothers in low-income households and their feelings regarding the compromises they had to make in order to maintain their role as carers.

The women who participated in the small-scale project were all participants in a programme of training aimed at women and those of ethnic minority heritage. The women were selected for the study because they all had dependent young children and their first child had been born when they were very young. Most had limited experience of paid work and were categorised as unemployed despite having young families. All were white, local to Glasgow and half were lone parents. 12 women participated in the study.

The methods consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with focus groups taking place before and after the main data gathering period. The participants also filled in care diaries for a period of three weeks.

EVALUATION

The research is influenced by feminism in that it allows us to understand the implications of work and training from a woman's point of view. The implications are that government policies intended to support women into the workplace do not fully take account the realities of caring and the complexity of women's lives. Nevertheless, women do want to experience training and so need more sensitive approaches to take account of their needs. Despite its small and geographically limited sample, this study is important to an understanding of the role of poorer women in the home.

KEY FINDINGS

The most important single finding was that caring is a complicated social practice, far more so than is acknowledged by government policy or even by previous research.

It requires forward planning and high level organisational skills. For example, as one meal is completed, another has to be planned. Parents negotiate and worry about what they must do and how they combine their caring needs with the needs of training and employment.

The study found that women were the main carers in most families and if problems arose it was their responsibility to plan and organise for the family. Another complication for the carers was their children's attempts to dictate the levels of time and attention they received. The children were active players in the caring relationship, a fact not often acknowledged by researchers and policy makers.

A huge range of tasks needed to be carried out, some of which simply served the child's basic needs. These included feeding, shopping, cleaning and other household jobs. A whole range of other tasks were important but not part of any economic equation of time allocation: these included emotional work and support, firmness, discipline and putting aside oneself for the needs of the child. These two elements were not always entirely separate, a parent may express love by providing material resources, sometimes at personal cost. This might consist of clothing the child or feeding it well.

Domestic labour could not be separated from care. When children are small, domestic labour must be carried out when the children are present. This problem becomes more acute when combined with the needs of training and work. School closure days for older children, the needs of other family members and the need to cope with sudden emergencies all impacted on parental planning. For poor women, additional issues arose. Grandmothers sometimes cared for children, but this could involve the family in some favour for the grandmother such as shopping after work. However, the older generation could be a support, often by buying things for the children or undertaking small household tasks.

Informal networks to support childcare were not always reliable. Many women were also caring for their mothers or other family members and so were not simply looking after their own families but supporting an older generation of sick and disabled people.

Women experienced pressure in the timetabling of various tasks through the day. They may have had to pick up children from school but to rely on public transport to do so. In some cases, if children were located in a number of different schools, this could lead to very complex time management issues. The types of work available would not necessarily be flexible enough to accommodate these pressures. Social care work is often shift based, but childcare is usually in school or office hours.

The women gained self-confidence from work. They wanted paid work and were offering a good example to their children.

The conclusion is that families need not only good childcare but also integrated and family friendly services that take into account the complexity of the caring role. They cannot afford childcare unless they have a good job, they cannot get a good job without childcare.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research is central to an understanding of social change and the family because it looks at how state policy affects the daily life experience of women in the most disadvantaged sectors of society. Importantly, it refers to changing gender roles and domestic labour, suggesting that there is a tension for many women between their domestic responsibilities and personal ambitions for themselves and their children. It shows awareness of children as active participants in a relationship with their parents although the children themselves are not studied.

FACING FAMILY CHANGE:

CHILDREN'S CIRCUMSTANCES, STRATEGIES & RESOURCES

AMANDA WADE & CAROL SMART, 2002

CONTEXT **The political and social debate about the effects of divorce and family break-up on children shows no sign of dying down.**

Much of the research on this issue has focused on the long-term social and behavioural effects on children's development and behaviour. Happily, most of the research actually suggests that children cope pretty well with family break-up although researchers have often been reluctant to talk about family break-up with the children involved for ethical reasons, in case of causing further upset. This has meant that studies have often relied on data gathered from interested adults such as parents and teachers.

Recent approaches to sociology and to social research have shown that children are not passive victims of their parents' lives and that they are worthy of study in their own right. They make choices and are active participants in family life. This research attempts to explore how children aged between five and ten cope with the family changes that come about after the breakdown of parental relationships.

The aim of the study is to listen to the views of children about the separation of their parents. Relatively young children were chosen because they appear to be under-represented in the previous research. The study also sets out to question how children may best be supported in the break-up of their families, so there is much here of relevance to social policy.

FIND OUT MORE

Wade, A. and Smart, C. (2002) *Facing Family Change: Children's Circumstances, Strategies and Resources*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The study can be downloaded from
www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1842630849.pdf

There is a support and advice website for young people whose families are separating at **www.itsnotyourfault.org/**. This includes short interviews with children.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research uses ethnographic methods to look at public policy with regard to the family. It criticises the traditional middle-class nuclear family stereotype as being an inappropriate basis for family policy with regard to children. The findings show that children do not have to be overly distressed by parental separation, their experiences of family life have as much to do with the quality of parenting they have received as the kind of family structure they find themselves part of. Family structures themselves are very varied and few fit the pattern of a traditional nuclear family. Good parenting does not always come from the biological parent but often from a step-parent or grandparent. Government policies intended to support and help children through family break-up are not especially successful because of the inability of policy makers to recognise that it is not family structure that is important to children, rather the quality of their family life.

METHODS

The sample was drawn from four Yorkshire primary schools, chosen to reflect children from rural and urban areas and different ethnic and social class groups. The intention was to discover the perceptions of children from a variety of different backgrounds and to reflect their views of the world. There were slight variations in the age groups interviewed in each school and the researchers attempted to make their sample reflect a cross section of the community at each stage. All of the samples were relatively small for a study intended to be representative of children all over the country. Between 40 and 60 children in each school were involved in the first stage of the research.

The study progressed through a series of stages:

- **Stage one:** children of all ages were interviewed about their reactions to family break-up in small informal focus groups. This was irrespective of whether they had experienced break-up. This approach had the advantage of making the children familiar with the researchers. Children were required to create a story involving family break-up and to talk about their responses and strategies.
- **Stage two:** individual semi-structured interviews with children who had experienced divorce or separation. It was important to gain an overview of all the possible family relationships that children experienced as by no means all children have married parents. The numbers involved in this stage of the study were significantly smaller than in stage one. Between 12 and 15 children were interviewed individually in each school. Interviews touched on the child's situation and younger children were asked to draw pictures.
- **Stage three:** further interviews were conducted with a small sample of eight children who had experienced court procedures or professional help to support them through parental separation. These children were recruited with the help of outside organisations and not through the schools. They were interviewed in their own homes.
- **Stage four:** the researchers visited 12 projects set up by professional and charitable organisations designed to support families and children through relationship breakdown.

There are strict ethical guidelines covering work with young children and so parental consent was required for all stages of the study. The strategies employed were different for each school and the researchers had to face a number of unanticipated problems, for example one child forged a parental signature agreeing to participation when the parents had not actually given their consent.

KEY FINDINGS

The children came from many types of family with only half coming from the situation of two married parents who divorced.

The researchers discovered that there were four types of family experience among their sample of children. These are different from the analyses in many sociology texts describing family structures in Britain today.

- **Aggregated:** children whose parents formed unstable partnerships. The most recent family break-up could be just one of a series of family changes they have experienced.
- **Divorced:** families that were relatively stable until the adult relationship broke down.
- **Meshed:** families which were characterised by close emotional ties and where children had a very strong awareness of their parents' emotional state.
- **Diasporic:** relationships involving geographical distance between the children and their parents so that one parent might live away because of work or for legal reasons related to immigrant status. The parents might well have a strong relationship, but not choose or be able to live together.

For many children divorce was an additional pressure in lives where there may be ill-health and disability among parents, poverty, poor housing, family violence, crime, alcohol and drug dependency and neglectful patterns of parenting. Many children spent time in care or with another family member.

The reactions of children to separation depended on the quality of the relationship that they had formed with adults before the separation began. Some children were traumatized while for others the whole of their lives was so unsettled that the divorce or separation was part of a general pattern of instability.

The children who coped best with family break-up were those whose parents were able to maintain supportive links with them. The children who were distressed by family break-up were the ones who felt that one or both of their parents cared less about them than they had before the break-up. This could come about because the absent parent was casual about access agreements or was spending time on developing a new partnership with another adult. A third group of children had close ties to one parent and perhaps also to a step-parent and displayed little interest or concern with their biological parent, sometimes even rejecting the missing biological parent.

The research discovered that children were actively interested in their parents' lives and developed the following coping strategies to deal with situations they could not control:

- **Diversion:** actively ignoring their parents by, for example, watching TV or withdrawing into another room.
- **Emotional expression:** such as displays of anger or crying or the keeping of diaries about feelings.

Sometimes these strategies were interpreted by adults as the children being unaware of adult behaviour but in reality they were very aware and were learning how to cope in ways that made sense to them.

Children coped well with parental problems and while they valued the opportunity to talk, they also required the opportunity to be distracted by other activities to take their minds off their worries.

Many children turned to grandparents and friends to cope. Peer groups were not always helpful because some children bullied others by insulting their families so the children had to be careful about confiding in others. However, playing with friends acted as a useful distraction.

In terms of social policy, the researchers conclude that schools can help by teaching children emotional strategies to deal with their worries but playground cultures of bullying and teasing make life difficult. Children prefer to talk in privacy about problems. Teachers are limited in the support and help they can offer because schools have few private areas and it is not acceptable for adults to be alone with children.

Very few children are helped or seen by specialist agencies set up to help children who are involved in legal proceedings caused by family break-up. The officers of the courts do not always take children's feelings and wishes into account even though the law states that they should.

HARD LABOUR: THE SOCIOLOGY OF PARENTHOOD

CAROLINE GATRELL, 2004

CONTEXT **Debates in the media still question whether it is right for women to work and bring up children at the same time, whereas in reality there are increasingly large numbers of women attempting to combine both of these roles.**

This study is written from a feminist perspective but takes into account males and fatherhood in its account of parenting. It claims that despite equal opportunities legislation and the increasing presence of women in the professional workforce, the parenting of small children is still seen as a female responsibility and so women are expected to choose between careers and their roles as mothers in a way that men are not. Gatrell suggests that combining work with parenthood is very complex and that women work because they have a commitment to work itself. The purpose of this study is to improve the situation of working parents in Britain.

The study is based on heterosexual women in highly paid professional work as the public debate about women and work focuses on those in careers rather than those who simply have jobs. It takes into consideration the fact that while people may feel that they ought to be led by social attitudes and conventional practice, they also have choices and may not all choose to conform to the social expectations of others. The aim of this study is to understand the lived experiences of parents where mothers are pursuing careers.

The key areas of study were:

- the transition to parenthood: what happens to people when their babies are born?
- combining parenthood with paid work: the conflict between the two roles of worker and parent
- the social construction of commitment towards children and work: how are we expected to show that we are good parents?
- experiences of equality legislation and policies: are the laws supporting parents effective?
- the experiences of the sample in the context of wider debates and the policy implications to be drawn.

FIND OUT MORE

Gatrell, C. (2004) *Hard Labour*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Interview with Caroline Gatrell on BBC radio 'Woman's Hour': **www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2004_50_mon_03.shtml**

Feature in the Guardian (**http://lifeandhealth.guardian.co.uk/family/story/0,,2250751,00.html**)

Feature in the Daily Telegraph (**www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/01/22/ndaddy122.xml**)

METHODS

Much of the text is devoted to a review of secondary data and literature on the subject of parenting and work. The actual primary research was based on a qualitative study of 20 heterosexual married and cohabiting mothers and 18 male partners. All of the women were professional or managerial workers qualified to degree level or higher and each had at least one baby or preschool child. This sample was chosen because these are seen as the women mostly likely to continue with careers after childbirth.

In-depth interviews took place between 1999 and 2001. Participants were drawn from across the UK. Partly this was done to make the women anonymous because the numbers in some of the professions are so small that they might otherwise be recognised.

Most of the participants were white but they included an Australian, a New Zealander and some respondents from ethnically mixed backgrounds. A snowballing approach was used to locate a sample, a process whereby one participant recommended another and so on. Some participants went to a great deal of trouble to participate, thus suggesting that they had a political commitment to the aims of the study. The children were generally young - under eight - and most mothers had one or two children, though three couples had more than two.

Mothers and fathers were interviewed separately except when they requested to be interviewed together (three couples). Most mothers described themselves as working part time though part time could be taken to mean as much as a forty hour week. Four mothers were full time workers and five were the major wage earner of the household. The mothers worked in a variety of professions including architecture, law, medicine, university and school teaching. Their pay scales would have varied, even though all would have earned more than the average wage.

KEY FINDINGS

Becoming a parent
The months following the first birth were traumatic for many women. Most returned to demanding jobs within 12 weeks of giving birth and some had experienced physical and mental health problems as a result of a poor birth experience. Women had often devoted less time to their partners, thus putting strain on the relationships. Many new parents reported that they were permanently tired and emotionally unprepared for the dramatic changes in all of their relationships, including those with their own parents.

Guilt and motherhood
There are extensive media and academic arguments about whether mothers should be the main carers for preschool children with many writers still claiming that it is the mother's primary role to socialise children. Mothers felt guilty that they worked, especially if female relatives and friends had given up work for their children. Working mothers felt that work conflicted with parenting whereas males did not experience this pressure.

Domestic labour
The main responsibility for domestic work in the home becomes female when children are born, even if there has been equity before the birth. This was acknowledged by fathers. Women accepted it resentfully in order to preserve their relationships. The ironing of the man's shirts became the focus of strong emotions for both men and women. Some couples had paid help but usually this was organised and financed by the woman.

Fatherhood
Fathers in dual career homes were more involved in childcare, including the emotional side and caring for sick children. Whilst women are often criticised for prioritising work, fathers are criticised for displaying commitment to their children by giving up or reducing work. There are also practical difficulties for men, for instance baby changing rooms are usually located in women's toilets.

Commitment to work
Women were not just working for economic reasons but showed considerable commitment to work and saw their jobs as part of their self-identity. They enjoyed work and disliked the low social status and lack of stimulation of full-time motherhood. They had worked hard for their careers and did not want to give them up. Some felt that they wanted insurance against the possibility of single parenthood if their relationship broke up. The women were highly organised and felt they put more effort into work after motherhood. The price paid was a decline in their social lives.

Workplace discrimination
Equality legislation is ineffective, cumbersome, difficult to use and does not protect women from workplace discrimination. Employers do not fully value mothers and do not support fathers either. All but two of the mothers had experienced discrimination. In some cases the costs to mothers' careers had been high, for example a hospital consultant had been forced out of a job and demoted because she wished to work part time and this could have affected the rest of her career. Family-friendly policies did not support men who needed family time either. There is a double discrimination because employers view the needs of fathers who are supporting women in their careers as of limited importance.

EVALUATION

The sample was very small and unusual in that all the couples had relatively high joint incomes. In five couples the male was the principal carer and this is less common in wider society. This study is therefore not representative of the whole population of Britain. It is however high in validity because the interviewing technique encouraged men and women to talk about their feelings and their work in detail and in their own words. Importantly, this study pays serious attention to male viewpoints which is unusual in feminist research.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

The research is relevant to social policy and its effects, particularly equality legislation. It also suggests some reasons why family size is decreasing and the status of children changing. In terms of gender roles, a picture emerges of more flexible parenting for both men and women.

DADS ON DADS: NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS AT HOME & AT WORK

WARREN HATTER, LOUISE VINTER & RACHEL WILLIAMS, 2002

CONTEXT **Studies of gender in the 1970s tended to look at gender inequality from the perspective of females because much of the research was prompted by the influence of feminism.**

More recently, researchers and theorists have been taking more interest in the roles and perspectives of men, so that the concept of a 'crisis of masculinity' has become more important in the study of gender.

Family policy still tends to view parenting as primarily a female occupation, for example there are significant differences in paternity and maternity leave options, not simply explicable in terms of what is necessary for physical recovery from childbirth. There are also significant gender differences in benefits with female parents entitled to a portion of their salary for some months after childbirth.

As women increasingly combine work and parenting there has been a research focus on women's lives and experiences, but this ignores the fact that men are taking more responsibility for the care of children. Men's roles as fathers have been understudied and this research is designed to redress the balance.

If there is a more equal balance in parenting responsibilities between the genders, then women should benefit from the support of their partners and men will benefit from the pleasure of spending time with their children. Both genders ought to experience a more equal balance in family and working life.

FIND OUT MORE

Hatter, W., Vinter, L. and Williams, R. (2002) *Dads on Dads: Needs and Expectations at Home and at Work*. London: Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

The full report can be downloaded at **www.equalityhumanrights.com/Documents/EOC/PDF/Research/dads_on_dads.pdf**

Ipsos-MORI (**www.ipsos-mori.com**)

METHODS

This study aims to discover just how involved fathers are in the lives of their families, men's attitudes towards being a 'father' and how fatherhood relates to the reality of men's lives who are in employment. It also set out to explore the barriers faced by men who wish to balance their work and family life and the reasons why men do not demand more access to family-friendly policies and practices.

The research was conducted by Ipsos-MORI, a commercial research organisation and consisted of 61 qualitative interviews with fathers, their partners and the human resource managers from six organisations employing the fathers. The organisations selected covered a range of occupations and working patterns. Six or seven fathers with at least one child aged 10 or under were interviewed in each organisation. The interviews were highly structured with a clear schedule.

Three focus groups also took place which involved the fathers discussing the issues in more depth. The facilitator's contributions were scripted and the timing of discussions controlled.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This report is important to the study of the family in Britain because it addresses the relationship between the family and social structures and social change. There is a focus on the relationship between family life, economy and social policies and it addresses the changes that are taking place in families, but argues that in fact there is less change than many people would like to see in family relationships. It supports the view that male and female differences in parenting patterns are as much a result of state policy and economics as they are of relationships in the family itself.

KEY FINDINGS

The role of the father

Traditionally the role of the father has been that of breadwinner for the family and this remained very important for many of the men. They still saw the traditional roles as related to the 'natural' abilities of the genders and some did not wish to challenge traditional gender roles.

However, a qualitative shift was evident in that many fathers emphasised how important it was to be present in the home for children. This presented many men with role conflict and tension. Dads tended to fit into different types:

- Enforcer: responsible for discipline
- Entertainer: played with children
- Fully involved: took nearly equal responsibility
- Useful: supported the mother but in a secondary role.

Some fathers were 'weekend dads' in that they were busy during the week but set weekend time aside for their family. A number of factors affected male involvement in families including the demands of work and their own inclination.

Fatherhood and work

Although fathers paid lip-service to the idea that fatherhood had changed their attitudes to work, there was little evidence that it had changed their behaviour. This was in direct contrast to the findings on women. Partly this was due to gender pay differences but also it was clear that few men wished to give up work or even reduce their hours. Certain types of work could both support and block family life; shift workers might be able to spend daytime with their families but also had to work long hours. Senior employees were often trusted to work from home.

Balancing work and family life

Employers expected men to prioritise work so this left men little time for their families. Many were satisfied with this but there was a tension for others who, for example, were not able to take time off to care for sick children. Often employers had an informal policy that was supportive of family life but formal policies were not so flexible. Men expected to make up time in other ways and did not demand or want special treatment. It was accepted that women rather than men would take advantage of family friendly policies.

Family friendly policies and men

Fathers tended to be unaware of their employment rights with regard to their families. Sometimes this was due to the organisation's reluctance to either tell men or promote such policies, even when they know that these polices actually were useful for recruiting and keeping good staff. Fathers themselves often thought that they were not eligible for parenting leave. Most fathers valued understanding from their managers more than policies.

While women do not have pay equality with men, family finances often dictate gender roles. The higher wage earner must protect his job. Many of the decisions that follow from this position become economic rather than related to attitudes or inclination. Men were not able to take unpaid parental leave and part-time work is lower status and lower paid so it affects promotion. Most fathers felt short leave breaks on good pay would be valuable.

EVALUATION

This study offers a valuable contribution to our understanding of the reasons for continuing gender inequalities in domestic labour and childcare despite the choices that are now acceptable and available for families. Family friendly policies in work places do not address the needs of fathers and fathers are therefore excluded from events such as school sports days and unable to take time off when their children are ill. It is a serious criticism of government claims to be family friendly and supportive of the family, but which has made policies which make it difficult for men to take time with the families. In addition, the long hours culture of many British workplaces mean that men do not have the confidence to challenge their traditional roles.

RECYCLING AND THE DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOUR: IS GREEN PINK OR BLUE?

CAROLINE J. OATES & SEONAIDH MCDONALD, 2006

CONTEXT **Feminist sociologists such as Ann Oakley first researched housework in the 1960s and 1970s, describing it as women's work carried out with little recognition or reward.**

Other sociologists, notably Willmott and Young, claimed to find evidence of a gradual move towards a more equal sharing of domestic tasks in 'symmetrical' families. Subsequent research has focused on different aspects of the division of labour between men and women, such as the amount of time spent on domestic tasks and how these are allocated.

Recent research findings do suggest a slow change away from a traditional division of labour with the woman responsible for most tasks within the home, to a more egalitarian situation, especially when both partners are working outside the home. Some activities are mainly the responsibility of one partner, with the other partner helping occasionally or performing them on special occasions (for example, a woman may have responsibility for providing meals every day but her male partner might cook a dinner for friends). Patterns of childcare have also changed over time; often there is a commitment to sharing initially but then a reallocation of tasks when children arrive. Men tend to be responsible for 'big' jobs that are only required occasionally (e.g. mowing the lawn, maintaining a car) while women tend to be responsible for smaller tasks that need to be done routinely and regularly.

The nature of domestic labour has changed with, for example, more appliances being used and less time spent on household tasks. Women who work full time tend to spend less time on work in the home and the household may buy in domestic labour or services. Women spend a lot more time on domestic labour than men, but the amount of time women allocate to these tasks is declining while men are spending more time on cooking and cleaning.

Oates and McDonald's study looks at one of the newer tasks within domestic labour: the recycling of waste. The amount of waste homes generate continues to grow because, for example, reliance on packaged convenience foods and takeaway meals creates more waste than traditional forms of food. Local authorities are now required by European Union regulations to reach targets for the percentage of types of waste being recycled and are consequently looking for ways to encourage people to recycle. Understanding who within the family recycles is an important aspect of this.

As a new task, recycling goes against the more general trend of a decline in the amount of domestic work. It also offers no immediate benefit to the household so the incentives to do it are less obvious. Recycling is clearly a domestic chore and the routines involved are similar to other tasks, but it had not often been studied as such before.

METHODS

The study consisted of a survey involving a short questionnaire sent by post to a large sample, producing quantitative data.

In November 2000 the researchers sent 1,532 questionnaires by post to households in Sheffield who had joined a paper recycling scheme involving kerbside wheelie bins. This was three years after Sheffield City Council had launched its pilot recycling scheme in an area of mixed housing (private and public). The sample consisted of every fourth household on the Council's database of those households which had accepted a recycling bin, so that the sample was spread across all the areas and streets taking part. A letter of explanation and a prepaid return envelope were sent with each questionnaire.

The questionnaire was piloted both with people who had experience of survey design and with members of the public before it was sent out. It was designed to find out who did most of the recycling and who had initiated it for the household, rather than to ask how or why recycling took place. This made it possible to keep the questionnaire brief. There was a 31% response rate (469 useable replies), which is considered an excellent rate of return for a postal survey such as this.

KEY FINDINGS

Initiating recycling

Females were the initiators of recycling in 45% of all households and were joint initiators with males in a further 26%. Men were the initiators in 16% of households and in a further 3% the initiator was someone outside the household such as a relative or neighbour. In case a high proportion of one person (female) households were distorting these figures, the researchers provide separate figures for households with more than one person. These confirm the pattern, with females as initiators in 42% of households and joint initiators in a further 31%.

Sustaining recycling

The main recycler was female in 40% of households and recycling was shared in a further 38%. Men were the sustainers of recycling in 15% of households. The figures for households of more than one person were 35% females as sustainers, 46% joint and 11% male.

In 61% of households the person who had initiated recycling was now the sustainer. The most common change was from one person initiating to shared sustaining of recycling.

The answer to the question in the researchers' subtitle is therefore 'pink', or at least pink in more households than it is 'blue'. Recycling is a new household task which females have been far more likely than males to initiate and then to sustain, although in around half of all households men played a part in recycling. Green activities seem to fit into the pattern of more established household tasks rather than reflecting any greater involvement of men in a new kind of task.

However, recycling was shared in a high proportion of households. Often then, there is more than one recycler per household and men are more likely to be involved as part of a joint activity. This was less likely in households where there were children; with children present there seemed to be a more gendered division of tasks.

Oates and McDonald see a need for further research on different kinds of recycling tasks (this study only involved paper recycling) and qualitative research to try to achieve greater depth in understanding what happens in individual households and what joint responsibility for recycling really means.

FIND OUT MORE

Oates, C. J. and McDonald, S. (2006) 'Recycling and the Domestic Division of Labour: Is Green Pink or Blue?' *Sociology*, vol. 40 (3)

Details of a related research project involving the same researchers can be found at: **www.sustainabletechnologies.ac.uk/Projects/decisions.htm**

EVALUATION

This is an example of a survey carefully designed to reach large numbers and to achieve a high response rate, but to manage this it was necessary to keep to a small number of questions that could not dig beneath the surface. It provides a clear finding that recycling, despite its newness, fits into the established patterns of a gendered division of labour, but there is a clear need for further research of a more qualitative nature to investigate why and how this happens.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research is part of the ongoing debate about the domestic division of labour and whether or how much it is changing. It focuses on a new domestic task, recycling, where it might have been expected that there would be greater equality than with more traditional household tasks. However, this research found no evidence of any significant change in the established domestic division of labour.

TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY: FAMILY DYNAMICS & CHILDREN'S CONSUMPTION

JULIE EVANS & JOAN CHANDLER, 2006

CONTEXT **Social changes have affected parent child relationships within families. As the numbers of women in the labour market have increased, family size has dropped and in many dual income families more disposable income is available.**

It is argued that modern children increasingly are becoming important consumers, with a vast market of products targeted specifically at them: toys, games, electronic gadgets, clothing ranges, foods and theme parks for example. Commentators have argued that children have become the route that advertisers use into whole household spending.

One concern for sociology is the extent to which this specific targeting of children is creating new family tensions and dynamics as children have the ability to influence the spending decisions of their parents. British society has become increasingly polarised between the wealthy and the poor over the past thirty years so this is particularly problematic for families with limited access to resources for spending on children, especially as the actual amounts spent on children do not vary hugely between rich and poor households. Poorer households therefore spend a larger proportion of their income on children.

Children are increasingly seen as 'spoiled', with parents caving in to the unceasing pressure from their children. It is argued that children are able to exert power over their parents through the 'nag factor' or 'pester power' and that parents are then trained by children to spend more. Parents however, are also aware that children lead lives that are more complex than they experienced and that new forms of childhood are developing in response to these pressures.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study is useful for an understanding of consumption and identity as well as for insight into the nature of childhood and changing status of children in modern families. It refers to gender roles because of the importance of mothers in determining spending and considers the importance of economics in how family spending decisions are made.

FIND OUT MORE

Evans, J. and Chandler, J. (2006) 'To Buy or Not to Buy: Family Dynamics and Children's Consumption.' *Sociological Research Online*, vol.11 (2) (**www.socresonline.org.uk/11/2/evans.html**)

METHODS

The aim of this study is to look at whether sociologists influenced by postmodernism are right in claiming that consumption is more important than class in shaping social identities.

The authors suggest that to look at household spending without looking at household resources and income is too narrow a focus. Poorer children are more subject to pressure to consume than wealthy children because they may be excluded from other forms of status or identity. In the past owning things was seen as a measure of wealth, now lack of consumer goods will mark someone out as poor. This causes problems for parents who are under pressure to provide for their children.

The methods used were qualitative because the study was concerned with the detail of family dynamics and parent-child relationships and these are not easily revealed using quantitative methods such as questionnaires. 45 children (24 girls and 21 boys) between the ages of 7 and 11 were studied. This age group was selected as it is reliant on parents to buy them things, but at the same time they are capable of discussing their actions and thoughts. There were 24 girls and 21 boys. The children were accessed from schools in two areas in the south west of England which had contrasting levels of deprivation.

A range of methods was used, for example diaries were kept for a weekend, focus groups took place and the researchers went into schools and asked children to write the end of a story in which characters negotiate with adults to obtain goods such as toys and clothes. Parents who had consented to their children participating in the study were contacted and invited to take part. Just under half of the parents responded, creating a sample of 19 (14 mothers and five fathers) responded. They were interviewed in their homes with the exception of two fathers who were interviewed at their place of work.

KEY FINDINGS

Parents tend to prioritise children's requests based on a range of factors. Children exerted pressure but it became clear that parents went to significant lengths to justify expenditure on certain items. The criteria that they generally used were:

- value for money
- educational value
- use value.

Some parents also responded to a 'fun factor', recognising that fads and fashions were important to children because they were part of popular culture and therefore necessary. Parents tended to ignore children's requests unless they were repeated regularly. They assumed that something only asked for once or twice was likely to be forgotten quickly. Children recognised this and learned to ask repeatedly for items.

The data suggests that the educational value of items was a significant factor in the decision whether or not to purchase. Parents valued educational toys and those parents from the less affluent areas in particular wanted to ensure that their children did not fall behind in the education system. Computers and electronic goods were high up the list for such children in secondary school, but sometimes toys such as Barbie were justified for much younger children because children 'learn through play'. Social class was not especially significant in terms of buying certain items; middle-class parents also justified purchases as educational so computer games were likely to be bought if parents saw them as educational rather than purely a source entertainment. Middle-class parents took a wider view of what was 'educational' however, seeing social benefits in activities such as game swapping.

Parents also referred back to their own childhoods in order to decide how much to spend on children. Many parents justified high expenditure at birthdays and Christmas either on the grounds of having had lots spent on them and wanting their children to experience lots of gifts themselves or of not having had much and wanting their children to do better. Most parents recognised that childhood had changed significantly and was now more fashion orientated in terms of toys and consumer goods than their own childhoods.

Many parents saw these changes as having come about because the world was more risky. Children were not allowed out into public spaces to play so they were offered things that would entertain them at home where they could be supervised. Bedrooms were equipped with media technology because it was seen as safe but, at the same time children became more exposed to consumer pressures. Children's diaries reflected the way that they were expected to entertain themselves within the home. Again risk was a feature of both rich and poor areas: stranger danger, older children and traffic problems were all mentioned. Some parents were anxious to keep their children away from peer pressure as well and had to negotiate between the need for their children to be popular whilst at the same time keeping them safe from 'bad influences'. Children saw these concerns as realistic because they understood that they would be insulted if they wore the 'wrong' clothes or ate the 'wrong' food. This was a particular issue for less affluent children who were concerned to avoid abuse for wearing 'charity shop' clothes.

Parents would give in to pressure from children if it became obvious that they were marginalised by not possessing certain items. Children were very much aware of not fitting in so peer pressure was a significant dynamic in the items children pressurised parents to buy.

Mothers were often the adults who would discuss family expenditure and coordinate present lists, even in families where the parents had split. Provision of toys was seen as good parenting and many parents enjoyed the response of their children to toys. They would deprive themselves in order to make their children happy and this all had the effect of supporting consumer culture.

EVALUATION

Because the study is both small scale and centred on one area of Britain, it can be argued that it is not representative of all parents. Nevertheless it offers an interesting insight into parent-child relationships, with an emphasis on parenting. The study is qualitative and interpretations of data are not always as clear cut as the researchers claim. For example, it is possible that expenditure was justified on educational grounds retrospectively rather than parents genuinely believing items to be useful for learning. Additionally, we learn little of how much is spent or the proportions of family income that is spent on children.

02 CULTURE & IDENTITY

GOTH: IDENTITY, STYLE & SUBCULTURE

PAUL HODKINSON, 2002

CONTEXT **Until the 1980s studies of youth subcultures such as mods and skinheads focused on the origin and meaning of their norms and values and the effects of the labelling of these groups by the police and media.**

By the 1990s a number of problems with these approaches had been identified. Firstly, it seemed that the period of specific subcultures was over. Muggleton (2000) suggested that in the postmodern world there were no subcultures anymore, rather a variety of styles from which individuals could pick and choose. Secondly, it was argued that subcultures had never been as 'fixed' as the research had implied. There was great diversity within groups, groups overlapped, people moved between groups, there were less committed 'members' on the fringes and so on.

Hodkinson takes issue with the postmodernist view that subcultures have been replaced by styles. He is interested in what Goths have in common, regardless of where they are because, he argues, this is a subculture which is not limited to particular places.

He identifies four criteria that distinguish a genuine subculture:

- **Consistent distinctiveness:** while there will be some internal diversity, a subculture will have a distinctive set of shared values which continues fairly consistently over time.
- **Identity:** do the participants share a sense of group identity, of being 'us' rather than 'them'?
- **Commitment:** how far does participation influence the daily lives of participants, with activities related to participation taking up a substantial part of their free time?
- **Autonomy:** although shaped to a degree by the media and consumer goods, a subculture is sustained by activities undertaken by participants (for example, running record labels, fanzines and websites).

FIND OUT MORE

Hodkinson, P. (2002) *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture*. Oxford: Berg

Muggleton, D. (2000) *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style*. Oxford: Berg

www.paulhodkinson.co.uk/

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research makes an important contribution to the continuing debates on youth styles, identities and subcultures. Hodkinson makes a convincing case from the categorization of Goth as a specific subculture. Therefore at least one subculture existed in Britain in the late 1990s at a time when other commentators and researchers were suggesting that the era of 'spectacular' subcultures was over.

Other writers on subculture in the same period, such as Sarah Thornton in *Club Cultures* (1995), stressed the role of the media and consumer industries in shaping subcultures. Hodkinson shows the central importance of participants in the subculture, through their organizing of events, producing fanzines, websites and so on.

METHODS

Hodkinson's research was ethnographic, using a variety of mainly qualitative methods including participant observation and semi-structured interviews, although he also used a mutilple-choice questionnaire.

Hodkinson describes himself as a critical insider. He says that he was an 'enthusiastic participant in the Goth scene' from the early 1990s. This allowed him easier access to Goths and Goth events around the country. It is unlikely that an 'outsider' researcher could have gained as much of an insight into Goths as Hodkinson was able to. Hodkinson was clearly, to other Goths, not just adopting the style for the purpose of the research; in fact, his participation in the Goth scene became more intense because of the needs of the research. However, Hodkinson says that he had to remember to be 'critical' as well as an 'insider'; he had to step back to assess his role and his findings.

Hodkinson interviewed 72 individuals in 56 interviews. Among those interviewed were DJs, event promoters, fanzine editors and band members. The interviews were face to face except for four conducted by post and five by e-mail. Hodkinson was able to use his status as an insider to make the respondents feel at ease and allow the interviews to take the form of open, flowing conversation.

The questionnaire was given to a sample of 112 people at the Whitby Gothic Weekend in October 1997. As well as asking about occupation, ethnicity, relationships and children, Hodkinson asked about what they liked about the Whitby Gothic Weekend, their attendance at Goth events, the most important aspects of the Goth scene and where they bought music, clothes and accessories.

EVALUATION

Hodkinson's enthusiasm for Goth may lead us to question his objectivity, despite his claim to take the role of a 'critical insider'. However, the extent of his immersion in the research and his use of a combination of methods mean that he succeeds in giving us a detailed account of British Goth style in the late 1990s.

KEY FINDINGS

Despite the view that there are now a range of 'pick and mix' styles in the postmodern period, Hodkinson identifies Goths as a distinct subculture as he finds that they meet the criteria set out above.

Consistent distinctiveness

Although Hodkinson found a diversity of styles within the Goth scene he argues that Goths have a style which remains distinctive.

Goth had its origins in the post-punk style of Siouxsie and the Banshees and Bauhaus in the late 1970s. The term 'Goth' was used by the music press and its use gave a sense of permanence to the style, helping to 'fix' key themes. These themes have survived although the details have changed.

One key theme has been the sombre and macabre, shown in the dominance of black in clothing and an interest in vampire fiction and media. However, by the late 1990s this theme had evolved, with an acceptance of bright colours and piercings for both sexes. There was also more wearing of skirts, fishnet tights and mesh tops, providing a visual link to the fetish scene.

Despite the outsider view of the Goth scene as being obsessed with the dark and the macabre, the general outlook of Goths is not characterized by gloom and depression. In fact, Goths see this as a misleading stereotype held by outsiders.

Hodkinson found there was an unusually high acceptance of non-hetero sexualities among Goths. Goths of the same sex kissing or holding hands attracted little attention, and there was some open expression of bisexuality, with many saying they were attracted to Goths of both sexes.

One female respondent said in interview:

'They (male Goths) can actually get closer to another male. They wouldn't feel ashamed of hugging another man or crying on his shoulder or something like that whereas if they were more macho then perhaps "huh, you poof, you can't hold my hand" or you know.'

Identity

The visual distinctiveness of Goths made it easy for Goths to recognize other Goths and to be recognized as Goths, and as clearly different from outsiders. Some respondents, however, emphasized their individuality and were hesitant about group identity. Even these, however, at some point in the interview expressed feelings of identification and similarity, such as this respondent:

'Goth is a tribe… it's just a group of people that get together and say… "we have something in common – we have how we dress, how we look, how we feel and the kind of people we're interested in, in common." '

Hodkinson discusses other aspects of the identity of participants, using data from his questionnaire, such as ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and sexuality. For many respondents, being a Goth was a very important part of their identity. One respondent put it like this:

'It is the most important thing in my life, there's no doubt about it, it is the most important thing in my life – I couldn't fathom existing without it at all.'

Commitment

For many respondents, participation in subcultural events (for example, specialist Goth club and pub nights) was a major activity. These served to strengthen commitment to the Goth subculture as they involve socializing with other Goths rather than outsiders. The social rewards involved often meant a deep and long term commitment, rather than the shallow, short term adoption of a style.

Many Goths also attended annual or biannual festivals and other events that meant traveling outside their local area. Of the questionnaire respondents (contacted at such a festival) the vast majority had traveled to a previous Goth event that year and 36% said they had traveled to ten or more events.

Autonomy

Hodkinson shows how participants took an increasingly important and creative part in shaping Goth subculture in the 1990s. There were some successful Goth businesses, such as Nightbreed Recordings mail order service, and some participants were making a reasonable living from their activities.

Autonomy also shows in the shopping habits of Goths, buying from specialist shops and providers in order to acquire subcultural capital. This subcultural media – the Goths' own fanzines, flyers, posters and web sites - promoted the subculture and created links between Goths in different places.

YOUNG MASCULINITIES

STEPHEN FROSH, ANN PHOENIX & ROB PATTMAN, 2002

CONTEXT **Recent sociology has seen a growth in the study of young men with masculinity often viewed as a specific problem to be understood.**

But this has not always been the case. Until the 1970s, much of the sociology written tended to overlook the significance of women and girls. Study after study would take samples of males alone and then use the findings as though they applied to both men and women. The advent of serious academic feminism brought an attempt to redress the balance as female writers pointed to 'invisible women' in all branches of sociology. For nearly thirty years, gender as an issue was taken to refer to the problems of women in society alone. But now things have changed.

The growing confidence of women has challenged the dominance of males resulting, it is claimed, in violence and uncertainty among young men who are attempting to construct a masculine identity in a world where traditional work patterns have collapsed and there are fewer clear models of what it is to be a man. This book arises out of a large-scale project on 11-14 year old boys in London schools which started in 1997. It explores the experiences of the boys, focusing on how they create a sense of identity.

EVALUATION

This research uses focus groups and semi-structured interviews to compare and contrast male identities and explores how some boys put up a 'front' of masculinity with their friends that they are willing to shed when around girls or in a 'soft' situation with the interviewer. Many studies of masculinity ignore femininity but girls are included here, giving the study some balance.

The study shows how racism forms part of the construction of masculine identity for some boys. The ambivalence of white racist boys towards blacks and the aggression they display towards Asian heritage males is actually part of the formation of a male identity for these young men.

The respondents were much younger than boys usually studied in research into gender and masculinity and the study shows that gender attitudes and formation are set at quite an early age. Despite being based in schools and education, the scope of this study is wider - it considers a range of contemporary masculine styles in its concern with how identity is constructed by younger teenage boys.

The detailed discussion of the methods makes this a useful text to look at for an understanding of how qualitative research can be carried out in a structured and organised fashion.

METHODS

The aims of this study were to:

- represent how boys think about their emerging masculine identities
- develop a methodology for interviewing in which boys felt able to speak freely and to review and reflect on their views.

As the research progressed it became clear that a sample of girls was required in order to act as a control so that attitudes that were actually general to the whole generation were not seen as being only male, a process described by Mac an Ghaill (2000) as 'over-gendering'. The boys were taken from 12 secondary schools in London, four of the schools were male only and eight were co-educational. The initial sample consisted of 245 11-14 year old boys.

The boys were studied in focus groups and a second interview took place with 71 of the sample. Twenty four girls were interviewed, with the focus on their thoughts about boys.

Interviews took place on school premises. The rooms used were arranged to encourage openness. Group interviews were unstructured but the interviewer had a list of topics and hints in case certain issues did not arise naturally. The interviewer took the role of a facilitator, encouraging the respondent to develop and reflect on issues raised in the conversation. The second interview was used to explore contradictions, gaps and repetitions from the first group interview and offered the respondent the chance to comment on the process of the interview itself.

The interview process was important. The interviewer felt his role was to encourage the boys to talk about themselves and so aimed to create a non-judgemental and positive atmosphere in the room. After each interview he made notes recording his impressions of the interviews, including his emotional response. He began to like the boys even when they were open about their racism, homophobia, bullying and violence but did find one who enjoyed the social company of girls and who disliked football to be self-righteous, elitist and annoying.

KEY FINDINGS

Masculinity in London schools consisted of three elements:

- Boys had to be seen to be different and separate from girls and things that were feminine by association.
- Popular masculinity required the male to be 'hard'. This was illustrated through success at sport, 'coolness' and casual attitudes towards school work and the ability to use profane language - 'cussing'.
- Some boys were more masculine than others. This could be based on ethnicity or class.

Hegemonic masculinity did exist and was identified in terms of antagonism to girls, 'hardness', antagonism to schoolwork, sporting prowess and fashion sense. However, most boys in fact struggled to emphasise their masculinity. One notion of boyishness suggests that boys can be unable or unwilling to talk, especially about their emotions. In practice however, once the boys started the interviews they were able and willing to talk. However, the myth of male inarticulacy is so strong that there is a danger of it becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Boys' attitudes towards girls were contradictory. They saw themselves as tough and active but then described girls as more mature because of their ability to work in school and their willingness to handle their emotional lives. They did not want girls as friends, despite the fact that they were freer to talk about emotions without fear of ridicule. They preferred their girlfriends to go to other schools. Girls were equally contradictory; they saw boys as immature, vulnerable to peer pressure and silly in group situations. Despite this, they preferred 'bad' boys who were funny and sporty as boyfriends.

Football was a marker for masculinity. Boys were expected to indulge in football talk, even if not sporty themselves. Equally, style was also an important part of masculinity and the boys wanted to look good although they were anxious to play this down by claiming it to be a feminine trait. This was a particular feature of African Caribbean masculinity.

Males tended to be insecure with regard to their emotions and valued the fact that they were able to discuss problems and issues with their mothers. Some mentioned how much they were able to display their emotional side with animals, contrasting this to the less intimate relationships that they had with people. Few mentioned pets in the group scenario for fear of being seen as 'wimpish'. They wanted to look after and care for their children in the future, despite experiencing some poor fathering themselves. Many of the boys wished for closer emotional contact with their fathers.

The boys tended to dislike males from other social classes. Private school boys felt that state school boys were hostile towards them. They also felt themselves to be better than the state school boys because they were intellectually superior and more privileged. They also rejected them for their macho attitudes towards girls and sexuality. Some of the private school boys felt that state schools were 'impoverished, with uncommitted and useless teachers and particularly hard and streetwise boys'.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study is useful in exploring core themes of socialisation, culture and identity and of social differentiation, power and stratification because it looks at the ways in which some boys attempt to construct a dominant masculine identity which includes racism and sexism. It explores different conceptions of culture and the variety of forms of masculinity that are available to boys, with reference to notions of self, identity and difference.

FIND OUT MORE

Frosh, S., Phoenix, A. and Pattman, R. (2002) *Young Masculinities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Mac an Ghaill, M. (2000) *The over-gendering of boys*. Paper presented to 'Boyhood' seminar at the Royal Danish School, Copenhagen

REDUNDANT MASCULINITIES?
EMPLOYMENT CHANGE & WHITE WORKING-CLASS YOUTH

LINDA MCDOWELL, 2003

CONTEXT **In the 1960s and early 1970s boys and men were dominant in almost all social contexts. However, the later part of the twentieth century saw massive transformations in social organisation that affected attitudes, behaviour and life chances.**

Up until the 1970s boys left school and walked into unskilled manufacturing jobs with relatively high rates of pay. Much of this work has now disappeared. For young unqualified people the best on offer is low wage, casual and insecure work in the service sector; shops, fast-food outlets, bars and cleaning. Men without steady work are less attractive to independent young women and so the routes into traditional male adulthood of family, marriage and work are closing.

Something of a reversal of status has occurred in so far as females are now the gender of achievement in school and at work. There are strong arguments to suggest that many young men, especially working-class young men, are finding the transition to adulthood difficult. Young males have been the targets of negative reporting by the media, are more vulnerable to suicide and mental illness and many are caught in cycles of violence and vulnerability to violence. Consumerism has become an increasing part of identity but the key elements of masculine identity in the 1990s and 2000s - work and consumption - are no longer available to these young men.

FIND OUT MORE

McDowell, L. (2003) *Redundant Masculinities? Employment Change and White Working-Class Youth*. Oxford: Blackwell

Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994) *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study has considerable relevance to issues of masculine culture and identity because it explores young male popular culture and the impact that it has on young men, with reference to the difficulties they have negotiating the gap between media masculinity and their own personal experiences. It looks at how young men develop conceptions of self-identity through work and acknowledges the importance of class, leisure, and consumption in the creation of identity.

METHODS

The aim of this study was to investigate the way in which changing work and gender identities were affecting the attitudes and aspirations of 15-16 year-old young men in two British cities. The cities chosen as case studies were Sheffield and Cambridge. 24 young men were selected from estates on the outskirts of the towns. Ten were from Cambridge and 14 from Sheffield.

The sample consisted of white English working-class boys with low educational attainment. They were interviewed three times in the year after they left school, making this a longitudinal study. Not all were from backgrounds of extreme poverty, for example unemployment among parents was more typical of the Sheffield sample.

The young men were identified with the assistance of schools. A list was made of low achievers and then letters were sent to each boy's home address. The addressing of the letters took place in schools because under the provision of the Data Protection Act schools are not allowed to release addresses. A prepaid card was included in each letter, asking the recipient to return it if he was interested in participating in the study. The letter explained that there would be three interviews and that at each meeting the boys would receive a cash payment of £10. As many were from low-income homes, it was hoped that the payment would encourage further participation and discourage dropping out of the study.

Interviews were arranged in a range of public places. As the research progressed many respondents invited McDowell into their homes for interviews if they knew a room was available. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 30 minutes and one and half hours. Cues were provided in advance in the form of a list of topics that might be covered and newspaper headlines were used to help in discussions.

KEY FINDINGS

Although many young working-class men are in paid work, that work is often low paid and they still need to rely on their families for support. Young working-class men are therefore forced to remain dependent.

The problem is that, for uneducated men, the available work is feminised, service sector work. This has led to the perception that much young working-class male aggressive behaviour is led by a sense of insecurity in male identity - what Mac an Ghaill (1994) has referred to as the 'crisis of masculinity'.

A person's ability to gain a job may depend on gender, class, qualifications and personal qualities. It also depends on the place where they live when they start to seek work. Young people living in the parental home may not have access to a car or public transport, probably move within a localised area and mix with a limited social circle.

The boys in the study rejected identities as hard cases or 'nutters'. Most felt themselves to be normal and yet they habitually engaged in anti-social behaviour in school: bullying, shoving, fighting and breaking school rules about smoking. They argued that it was important to fight back and some had poor reputations in school because of their willingness to engage in physical aggression. Only three had been arrested, though more of the sample had engaged in petty criminality. Five had been excluded from school for various periods of time and most had truanted.

The boys still saw the role of females in traditional terms and were unaware of the relative educational success of girls. Their comments revealed casual sexism.

Whilst they were still in school many were optimistic about their chances of finding work despite their having none of the social or educational characteristics that would make them employable. By the end of the study, many of the respondents had found work or courses of some kind. Many of the boys had experience of more than one job over the period of the study having gone through redundancy or sacking, boredom and low pay. Conditions in the workplace were usually poor: no paid holiday, no job security and no contract. Average family incomes in Cambridge were higher than in Sheffield so many of the Sheffield families allowed their children to remain at home rent free. The main method of obtaining work was through local contacts with fathers and relatives helping the young men find a job.

The sample proved to be reliable workers who were trying to make the best of the limited opportunities open to them. They seemed unaware of the pay gap that would open up between themselves and those who were going on to higher education. Most were making serious efforts to get jobs or to combine work with some form of training or qualification.

The sample group had low incomes and many contributed to their family budgets so there was little opportunity to enjoy themselves, especially as they were trapped in a narrow social and geographical area. Despite these limitations all the boys subscribed to youth cultures in the forms of style, music, clothes and clubbing. The young men found things to do that allowed them to go out in the evenings without spending money. These included watching TV or DVDs at friends' houses and 'hanging about' on street corners and in local parks.

Two years later McDowell managed to make contact with many of her original sample and found many of the boys still drifting about in casual work and low-wage employment, with the exception of one who had managed to gain a university place. Many had dropped out of further education which suggests that their commitment was to work. Many were in significant relationships and planning to set up home independently. Those who had left home had done so because of family disputes.

EVALUATION

The gap between the middle classes and working classes is widening and the detailed analysis in this study suggests that a number of factors contribute to this process, including the changing nature of work.

The study reveals how young working-class men negotiate between the aggressive masculine forms that are expected of them and their own traditional working-class norms and values with relative ease. These are not the dangerous and disaffected youth of the media and government stereotyping.

JOINED-UP TEXTING:

THE ROLE OF MOBILE PHONES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

HELEN HASTE, 2005

CONTEXT **One of the most dramatic shifts in recent behaviour is associated with the mobile phone. Phones are now seen by many as essential equipment and even young children are phone owners.**

In a short space of time a gadget has evolved into an indispensable part of modern social life. But the mobile phone does not merely represent a change in communication technology; it has redrawn and recreated a whole series of social interactions above and beyond the ability to have a direct conversation with people in inconvenient locations.

New sets of social norms relating to the use of mobile phones have had to be developed. Young people need to be aware of what is involved in terms of ownership, use and etiquette. The rules governing the mobile phone are socially created and are developing into a social code that has significant meaning. A redrawing of what is personal and private is necessary due to the changing place and nature of mobile phone talk. The boundary between the 'public' domain of conversation and the 'private' is being redrawn as people become unwilling listeners to the mobile telephone conversations of others.

There are also 'style issues' to be considered: because the mobile is attached to a person, in much the same way as clothing, it becomes part of their persona. Thus mobile phones have become subject to fashion, they are expected to make a statement about a person's standing among the peer group.

FIND OUT MORE

Haste, H. (2005) *Joined-Up Texting: The Role of Mobile Phones in Young People's Lives*. Nestle Social Research Programme, Report No. 3

The study can be downloaded from **www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle/NSRP-4-TEXTING.pdf**

A press release is available at **www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle/pr03.htm**

Nestle Social Research Programme (**www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle**)

METHODS

The aims of this study were to:

- consider how young people use their phones to communicate
- iInvestigate forms of communication and other new technologies.
- investigate how mobile phones reflect style and identity
- discover age, sex and locational differences in mobile phone etiquette and use.

The study was carried out by the market research organisation MORI. A random sample of 200 schools and colleges was selected, stratified by geographical area. This created a representative sample of schools and colleges. Letters were sent to the headteachers and principals and, as a result, a sample of 25 institutions was selected, stratified to ensure that a range of school types and geographical locations were covered.

The survey consisted of a self-completion questionnaire. The interviewer arranged a suitable time and place for the questionnaire to be completed so they could be present. Teachers were also present during the administration of the questionnaires in order to deal with issues of discipline. Each participating school received a donation of £100.

Two groups of older respondents were created from those who were at university and those who were not in full-time education. These people were part of an on-line panel who volunteer to participate in a variety of marketing and research surveys so they were effectively self-selecting. The methods for recruiting the panellists included direct e-mails, banner ads and pop-ups.

The questionnaire consisted of a sequence of closed questions from which respondents could pick appropriate answers and tick their choices. It covered more information than merely mobile phone use and referred to computer access as well as gaming machines and satellite or cable televisions. It also included questions referring to all the various uses of mobile phone technology such as cameras, moving video, gaming and recording of notes. There were questions about the economics of phone ownership in terms of who and how much is paid for the technology.

KEY FINDINGS

Many young people owned mobile phones for reasons of personal safety and security. Possession of a mobile phone ensured that parents could contact them quickly.

Unsurprisingly, young women and younger children were more concerned with parental concern and personal safety. 73% of respondents had used phones in emergencies and nearly a quarter had dialled 999.

Young people used their telephones to organise their social lives. A whole range of different rules emerged over the way phones were used in certain situations. Text messaging was most commonly used in seeking information. More complex social negotiations such as maintaining or ending relationships were achieved through a telephone conversation. Females were more likely to use a landline for arranging to meet friends. Females were also more likely to use letters to say thank you and to use e-mail to keep in touch with their parents. Males were happy to use a mobile phone conversation to flirt whereas only 10% of girls were comfortable with this. Females preferred to flirt using text messaging. Serious disagreements were conducted using landline telephones.

New technology brings problems because old norms cannot be applied to entirely new social settings. Younger people were less likely than older people to leave their phones on vibrate or silent. Answering the phone was governed by another set of rules. There were few who felt it a problem to end a face-to-face conversation to answer a mobile. Few young people turned off their phones or screened their calls during the day. Young people turned their phones off at work but pupils in school did not.

There were two basic ways in which the phone reflected personality. One was through the use of accessories such as snap covers. The second involved downloading additional features: 67% had images, nearly 60% had downloaded or bought ringtones and 23% had photo idents. There was a 'naff factor' in how phones could be worn - belt display was not cool. However, the phone was usually placed on a surface despite the danger of theft or loss which showed that display is important.

Londoners appeared to know and use their phones better than young people from the regions and knew nearly all the functions of their phones. Most Londoners used their phones to play games, in contrast to young people from other regions.

The mobile phone has become essential to the lives of young people. Teenage social life is often centred around the peer group and mobile phones allow young people to influence and keep track of each other in more ways than ever before. But it is not only the peer group that is sustained through the mobile phone, there is also an impact on family relationships. Teenagers can be given more freedom to be independent of their parents, whilst at the same time avoid being isolated from them.

EVALUATION

This research is important because it shows a rapid empirical response to a modern phenomenon although at the time of writing it already sounds slightly dated as mobile technology moves so fast.

A large representative sample has been used to draw valid and detailed conclusions about the significance of the mobile phone in modern social life. However, class backgrounds were not recorded and questions were closed. This reduces the opportunities for respondents to engage with the questions and talk about the meanings of mobile phones in their own words. Some of the questions were long and may have tested the literacy of some of the respondents.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This is a key study in terms of issues of changing culture, youth subculture, popular culture and agencies of socialisation. It offers a great deal to debates about agencies of socialisation and the development of conceptions of self and identity. Age identity is a significant element of this research, and it explores patterns of consumption as an element of that identity.

MIGRANTS' LIVES BEYOND THE WORKPLACE:

THE EXPERIENCES OF CENTRAL & EAST EUROPEANS IN THE UK

SARAH SPENCER, MARTIN RUHS, BRIDGET ANDERSON & BEN ROGALY, 2007

CONTEXT **The enlargement of the European Union in 2004 has meant that large numbers of people from the former communist countries such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia are entitled leave their home countries and migrate to work in other member countries.**

However, even before 2004 many migrants had arrived in Britain from those countries. These migrants tended to work in low paid jobs in four main types of work – farming, building and construction, hospitality (hotels and bars) and as au pairs.

The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of Central and Eastern European workers in Britain. The focus of the study was firstly on advice and support such as access to language classes and advice on employment law and secondly on how migrants felt that they were treated by British people. It also looked at the social attitudes of the British to ethnic minorities and migrants.

Significant skill shortages emerged during the early to mid 1990s and in 2002 the government set up a system whereby people with skills in building and other areas were entitled to come to the UK without the offer of a specific job. By 2003 more than 80,000 work permits had been issued to skilled workers. In addition, there were foreign students, au pairs, working holiday-makers and dependents, all in Britain legally. There is of course, no accurate record of the number of people who were in Britain illegally. Most of the known foreign nationals in Britain were working and they accounted for 5.2% of the workforce.

FIND OUT MORE

Spencer, S., Ruhs, M., Anderson, B. and Rogaly, B. (2007) *Migrants' Lives Beyond the Workplace: The Experiences of Central and East Europeans in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The full report can be accessed at: **www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/2045-migrants-experiences-UK.pdf**

There is a summary at: **www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2068.asp**

METHODS

In-depth interviews and diaries produced qualitative data and a survey was conducted to provide quantitative material. Material was collected from employers, host families of au pairs and from migrants themselves. The people who were analysed in the study cannot be said to be representative of all migrants because there was no database from which names could be randomly selected. Instead, certain types of people were selected to ensure that a wide range of migrants were contacted. This material is therefore said to be indicative rather than representative because it highlights potential issues rather than attempting to understand the situation of all migrants.

Structured interviews were conducted in the spring of 2004 to provide data for the survey and then re-interviews took place using an in-depth semi-structured format in the winter of that year. The reason for the two different waves of interviews was that each set of interviews was funded by a different organisation. The interviews focused on Czechs, Slovaks, Lithuanians and Poles because they constituted a major immigrant group. In addition, Ukrainians and Bulgarians were interviewed because they would not have been affected by the expansion of the EU.

Both the structured survey and in-depth interviews were conducted in the home language of the migrants to ensure that there was clear understanding of the questions. The initial survey interviews took one hour, and the in-depth interviews were designed to be tape recorded. Samples were generally large, with 333 people being interviewed in the first wave, 54% of whom were male, though more of the Czechs and Slovaks were female. Most of the respondents were young with an average age of 27. Many had partners and some had dependent children.

In addition, 12 respondents from the sample were asked to complete diaries and finally to write an essay. These respondents were spread through the nationalities.

KEY FINDINGS

Most of the migrants considered their language skills to be adequate or good and they were able to read English. However, they were less confident writing in English.

Most of the migrants were working in London, many in hospitality or construction. They were generally employed in jobs with lower than average pay and worked longer hours for less pay than the average British person. Many of the migrants were far more skilled than their jobs required, but they put up with the pay and conditions so that they could learn or improve their English language in the hopes of a better job in England or in their home countries.

Many of the migrants were working outside the terms of the law to stay in Britain, often working extra hours or in more than one job. This meant that many felt at risk of legal action. They had not received information about their legal rights and were not aware of the protection provided by employment laws. Very few knew how the health care system worked. Many migrants did not know about advice agencies such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau and so did not have access to important information. In most cases they had learned what they needed to know informally from people within their own communities.

Many migrants had not arranged accommodation, reports from agencies for the homeless point out that many people sleeping rough are migrants. However, those who did have accommodation found the conditions to be very poor. Landlords were responsible for overcrowding and for poor maintenance of housing stock. Au pairs often had poor accommodation even when the families in which they were working were very rich. Others were acting as au pairs in families where there was little money so they were sharing with the children that they looked after. Many of the sample had moved homes between their two interviews, often because of police raids or to save money. This all had a negative impact on how well the migrants were able to integrate into their new communities.

Most migrants were not socially integrating with English people for a number of reasons. These included their high levels of education and the fact that they lived in areas predominantly occupied by other migrants. Some good friendships with British people had developed and these were based on mutual support and trust. Many felt that the British would reject friendship although they were usually polite. Au pairs were in a different situation because they actually lived in people's homes but, even so, 20% did not feel welcome. Migrants were shocked at the ignorance of the British about other cultures and surprised at the silly assumptions that were made about their home countries. The general view was that British people were polite but not interested in friendship.

Most migrants intended to return to their home countries. Many had dependents to whom they were sending money. Others had children in the UK and wished to stay for their sake. The longer they stayed in Britain, the more likely they were to want to stay. There was a correlation between how welcome they felt and how willing they were to stay. However, the main reason for people staying in Britain related to the economic situation at home. Most would have preferred to return to their home countries if acceptable and higher-paid work was available.

EVALUATION

This is an important study because there has been very little research on this topic and its longitudinal nature means that changes in attitudes can be tracked. Interesting data is collected from the qualitative research and structured interviews on the responses of the British people to migrant workers and to the process of integration into the British community.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research is relevant to the study of culture and identity because it looks at the changing nature of British culture as a result of the political changes associated with the expansion of the EU. It is concerned with how migrants integrate into British society and the process of learning to fit in with English culture. It examines the role of poverty and consumption and how that enables young migrants to have access to British friendships.

03 POVERTY & WELFARE

POOR TRANSITIONS: SOCIAL EXCLUSION & YOUNG ADULTS

COLIN WEBSTER, DONALD SIMPSON, ROBERT MACDONALD, ANDREA ABBAS, MARK CIESLIK, TRACY SHILDRICK & MARK SIMPSON, 2004

CONTEXT **This research is part of a series of studies (see also Disconnected Youth on pp 34-35) that follow a cohort of socially disadvantaged young people. Each study has a different theme, linked to the idea of exploring underclass theory and concepts of social exclusion.**

The studies are based in the north-east of England, in an area that is unidentified by the study but given the pseudonym of Kelby. It is a small locality, notable for very severe social problems and economic deprivation. The pattern that has emerged from the studies is that young people's lives in this area of poverty tend to be disorganised and unpredictable so that young people find it difficult to get work or sustain ambitions.

The research has followed that distinct part of the life course known as 'youth transition' which is the period between childhood and full adult status. There are three particular elements to youth transition:

- the change from full-time education to work
- the attainment of independence from the family
- the move from the parental home into independent living.

However, in the town of Kelby other elements of youth transition can be identified:

- criminality
- drug use
- use of leisure time.

In the past the movement from childhood to adulthood could be relatively quick but it is now extended as many young people are involved in post-school training and further education. Those who spend the least time in education and training and so make the quickest transitions to adult status are those who are most likely to experience social exclusion and poverty as adults. For example, they attain adult status through teenage pregnancy or criminality. These studies emphasise the multiplicity of problems faced by socially excluded and deprived young people as well as the various processes that contribute to their difficulties.

FIND OUT MORE

Webster, C., Simpson, D., MacDonald, R., Abbas, A., Cieslik, M., Shildrick, T. and Simpson, M. (2004) *Poor Transitions: Social Exclusion and Young Adults.* Bristol: The Policy Press

The full report can be accessed at: **www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1861347340.pdf**

There is a summary at: **www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/d54.asp**

METHODS

The aims of the study are to look at longer-term youth transitions among individuals who were in their twenties but who had grown up in socially excluded families and to investigate their lifestyles, education, families, criminal behaviours and drug use.

The research team attempted to re-interview members of their samples from previous studies who were now aged between 23 and 29 years. Three categories were identified and individuals from each group were then interviewed. These three groups consisted of individuals who were:

- committed to education and training (11 respondents)
- parenting, chiefly young mothers (11 respondents)
- dependent drug users or those who showed signs of long term criminality (12 respondents).

Many members of these sub-samples belonged to more than one category so for example young parents could also be drug users. The idea was to see what had led some young people into lives that offered them few opportunities and a high likelihood of poverty.

There were difficulties finding the samples but eventually 34 in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out. The sample was based on white working-class experience (although one individual was of mixed British/Pakistani origin) and females outnumbered males (18/16).

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research is relevant to any discussion of inequality and life chances because it looks at the notion of cultures of poverty and deprivation. It identifies reasons for differences in life chances and looks at the restricted access that some young people have to opportunities for social mobility. It explains the existence and persistence of poverty in some of the most deprived areas of Britain and suggests that social policy is not effective in dealing with the issues experienced by socially excluded young people.

KEY FINDINGS

Findings are presented for each of the three sub-samples separately, despite their being many shared features.

The economic, training and education sub-sample

Nearly the entire sample of respondents said that they had the desire for a good job even if they were not really in a position to gain or maintain work due to early motherhood or to drug and criminal activity. It might have been expected that those with the highest commitment to work and education would have had the most success in the labour market but this proved to be far from the case.

All those from the three sub-samples who had found work described their jobs as being of poor quality and temporary, and felt exploited by their employers. The work was usually casual and very poorly paid. Despite this, most of the economic and education sub-sample had been very persistent in searching for jobs despite knock-backs. When they talked about enjoying jobs they also noted that the work had been in the kind of occupation that offered no progression or training.

Often the problem was related to poor school performance and although many individuals had done the 'correct' thing by going to the Careers Service and attending youth training schemes, the work offered was of low quality. When rejection letters were received, employers cited lack of work experience and youth. The problems for the young people were compounded by the increasing length of their poor work records so that the longer they had bad work patterns the worse the situation became for them, some had even become depressed as a result. Most work was obtained through friends or social networks. One of the respondents had a degree but was currently pregnant. The prospects for her gaining professional work in her preferred area were limited.

The family sub-sample

This is a quick route to full adult status but carries with it various drawbacks. The sub-sample consisted of 11 women of whom 10 had become pregnant when teenagers. Seven of the sub-sample had more than one child. Decisions to have children had been the result of a long and thoughtful process based on family economics and the partnership situation. Some of this group of women had also experienced abortions.

All of the women took the main responsibility for domestic work and some accepted this while it had led to relationship difficulties for others. Most of the mothers felt that they needed more support so were not able to move away from the family networks that provided cheap and informal childcare. Only three of the mothers were employed, one full time and two part time. Many had been employed for a very short time in casual work. Schemes such as Sure Start are designed to help young mothers but knowledge of these was limited. In addition, lack of childcare meant that women were restricted to nursery opening hours when looking for work. Most though valued parenting more highly than work but, given the nature of the available work, this was not necessarily a rejection of the work ethic.

The 'criminal and/or drug-using' sub-sample

Many of this sub-sample had begun criminal careers early in life. Their education was marked by a history of disruptive behaviour and active attempts to be excluded from school. Their recreation was characterised by heavy use of legal (alcohol) and illegal drugs. This sample was a distinct subculture in many ways because all of the other respondents were very negative about Class A drugs in particular, though some use of cannabis (declining with age) was noted.

These respondents often had experienced difficult backgrounds and some had been rejected by their parents because of their offending and drug abuse. These rejections had only served to push the drug abusers and criminals deeper into their accepting social groups of friends. Many of the sample had entered what they themselves described as a 'vicious circle of heroin use, offending, prison and relapse to heroin use'. The factor that encouraged them to stay off drugs and offending was often a girlfriend or to please a mother. Prison was ineffective and a criminal record created barriers to any form of rehabilitation. Really persistent offenders were often isolated people who saw criminal activity as a means of accessing income, often to fund drug habits.

Overall, the young people's lives were chaotic, often marked by serious personal tragedy or ill-health and very focused on family, friends and the local community.

MONITORING POVERTY & SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE UK 2006

GUY PALMER, TOM MACINNES & PETER KENWAY, 2006

CONTEXT **Between 1979 and 1997 a series of Conservative governments were reluctant to acknowledge that poverty existed in Britain.**

However, when New Labour came to power in 1997 Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, claimed that his government would try to eliminate poverty, especially among children. Each year since then the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has reviewed the extent of poverty and social exclusion in Britain through their *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion* reports. This study is the ninth of the annual reports and is a useful method of evaluating the impact of Blair's policies as it was published in the year of his retirement.

In 1998 11 million households were below average income and 2.5 million children brought up in households where no adult was in paid employment. Four million adults were actively seeking work but had no job. Unemployment rates were very high for the young and suicide rates were especially high for unemployed young men. 1.5 million pensioners survived on benefits and pensions alone, with serious implications for their health and standard of living. Poverty and disadvantage also had a geographical dimension: whole communities could be described as deprived, especially those in areas of former heavy industry.

The New Labour government of 1997 followed on from the previous Conservative governments in following a policy of viewing the issue as one of social exclusion rather than poverty. The idea of social exclusion broadens the idea of deprivation by taking into account people's inability to participate in key areas of society (e.g. social isolation, not registering to vote, unemployment) in addition to lack of material resources.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This report makes an important contribution to debates relating to inequality and deprivation in Britain. The findings show that although progress has been made in combating poverty in Britain since 1997, the New Labour government has failed to meet many of its targets, partly because it did not address issues of low pay or social inequality as such. Dimensions of inequality in Britain are still linked to gender, ethnicity and disability, but the most important inequality remains class. Governments since 1997 have not really tackled the key causes of poverty and inequality so many people's lives at the bottom of the social structure have not improved significantly.

METHODS

This study uses a range of secondary quantitative data mostly in the form of official statistics. The form the study takes is known as a meta-analysis. This means that the research is based on bringing together data from a number of key studies and official data and producing an overview of what it all has to say. The study is also longitudinal as it covers the period of time between 1998 and 2006.

A set of 46 key indicators of poverty and social exclusion was drawn up in 1998. These were used to form a baseline against which movements, patterns and trends could be plotted. The key indicators were sets of social statistics that could be updated and revisited and they included data on home ownership, income, pensions and child poverty. The current list of key indicators has been stretched to 50 as six new indicators were added in 1999. The indicators were chosen to reflect different stages of individuals' lives as people tend to drift in and out of poverty at certain times of their lives.

Data was sourced from official statistics, other government-funded surveys and local authority figures. The report covers the whole of the UK but there are also separate reports for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Not all of the data in this report was drawn from the whole of the UK however, and this is highlighted as a problem in the way that the statistics are gathered.

FIND OUT MORE

Palmer, G., MacInnes, T. and Kenway, P. (2006) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK 2006*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The full report can be accessed at **www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1815-poverty-UK-2006.pdf.**

There is a summary at: **www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/1979.asp**

A supporting website for the project can be found at **www.poverty.org.uk**

KEY FINDINGS

The overall conclusion is that, although progress has been made towards ending poverty (especially among children), many if not most of the government's targets have been missed.

Child poverty
There has been a decrease in child poverty due to changes in the benefit system, but it is far from being eliminated. The key issue is that government policy has encouraged parents back into paid work to support their families but much of the available work is so badly paid that the family remains in poverty. Half of the children in poverty are from families where the adults are actually working. One of the most serious problems is that although there are more parents working, especially lone parents, the absolute number of children in poor households has increased.

Adult poverty
In 1997 the group most likely to experience poverty was the elderly but anti-poverty strategies have meant that pensioners are now better off. However, despite the existence of the minimum wage there has been an increase in adult 'in-work' poverty. People are employed but in part-time work or casual jobs that do not provide an adequate income. Those of working age who do not have jobs are also in poor circumstances. Working-age adults with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed as those in full health. Disabled graduates are more likely to be out of work than those who are not disabled and these figures have actually become marginally worse over the last ten years or so.

Inequality and relative poverty
Despite an overall fall in poverty rates in the UK, inequalities of income are increasing. Rates of pay for very high earners have increased proportionally more quickly than those for less affluent groups. This widening inequality has been largely unchallenged by government and is not a matter for much wider public and media debate either. One of the most serious issues is that of gender inequality. Women are more likely to do part-time work and this is the type of work where low pay is most common.

Health inequalities
Health inequalities remain widespread. For example, patterns of infant death, tooth decay and heart disease relate closely to social class, as do suicides and teenage pregnancies. Health inequalities seem very resistant to change and social policies appear to have had little effect.

Education standards
There have been improvements in the number of children achieving benchmarks such as five A* - C grades at GCSE. However, this overall improvement of standards masks a bigger problem which is that there are still roughly 11% of sixteen year olds who do not achieve five GCSEs at any standard. These young people are at serious risk of adult poverty through low pay and unemployment. Deprivation is at equal levels for both poor white and poor ethnic minority children, so it appears that ethnicity is less of an issue than social class in terms of educational failure.

Social exclusion
More people have material goods such as central heating and more people have ownership of financial services such as bank accounts. According to these measures social inclusion has increased substantially. Nevertheless, people at the lower edges of the income groups still receive little in terms of benefits and support. The responsibility does not simply lie with the government. Unions and employers could do more to ease the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society. Half of all poor households have no contents insurance for their homes and are therefore at serious risk of poverty as a result of fire or crime. Households without cars report serious difficulties accessing shops, doctors, hospitals and post offices. The poor, the elderly and the disabled remain the groups most likely to experience these forms of social exclusion.

EVALUATION

This report draws on a wide range of official statistics which are often, though not always, drawn from the entire population of the UK. This means there are few problems associated with representativeness. The study sets out to explore how successful Labour policies have been in fighting poverty so we get a very detailed picture of patterns and trends in inequality, poverty and social deprivation throughout the UK. A weakness is that the material is taken from official data, so while we learn about income rates we gain little insight into what it means to be poor or the impact of poverty on daily life. In addition, official statistics must always be treated with care, as they are sometimes gathered with political aims in mind.

DISCONNECTED YOUTH?

GROWING UP IN BRITAIN'S POOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

ROBERT MACDONALD & JANE MARSH, 2005

CONTEXT **This research is a contribution to the continuing debate about social exclusion and the underclass, and it is also about changes in the transition from youth to adulthood.**

The kinds of young people from poor neighbourhoods who were the subject of this research would have been seen in the late 1980s and 1990s as potential members of the 'underclass'. This term was popularised by the American New Right sociologist, Charles Murray (1994). Murray argued that the kind of underclass he claimed to have identified in the USA would also develop in Britain, and for the same reasons: poorer people chose anti-social and immoral behaviour because the social welfare and criminal justice systems encouraged them to do so. This underclass would be culturally distinct from other social groups, with different values from mainstream society.

By the late 1990s, and particularly after New Labour came to power in 1997, the term underclass rather dropped out of favour and was replaced by 'social exclusion', which implies a need for social cohesion to ensure that all citizens are integrated.

This research was carried out at a time when several initiatives had been introduced to try to make the transitions from school or non-work to employment easier, with new possibilities in education and training being offered such as the New Deal for Young People and the opening up of further education to 'non-traditional' students. There was continuing concern about the young people who were not taking up these opportunities, who are often referred to as NEETs (not in employment, education or training).

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research demonstrates that Murray's cultural underclass theory does not apply in Britain. In an area where one would have expected an underclass, MacDonald and Marsh found no evidence. Far from finding a set of emerging underclass values rejecting norms about work, marriage and so on, they found that the young people in their study actually possessed strongly conventional values.

The authors are able to show how well-intentioned policies such as the New Deal are likely to have a limited impact as long as only 'poor jobs' are on offer. The respondents were not socially excluded but their inclusion, while necessary for day to day survival strategies, limits the opportunities to move on and out.

METHODS

Macdonald and Marsh chose ethnographic research because qualitative data would make it possible to obtain an insight into the values and outlook of potential underclass members, giving more scope for them to describe their lives and survival strategies in their own words. It would also make it possible to move beyond the representations of Britain's poor neighbourhoods on television and in newspapers which tend to focus on the sensational.

The research was carried out in a town they call 'East Kelby' in Teeside, north-east England. This area underwent de-industrialisation from the 1970s onwards, with the loss of many working-class jobs. There are now high levels of unemployment, poverty and educational underachievement and high mortality rates. This was one of the areas in which Murray (1994) had said that the underclass might be found. If there was no evidence of an underclass in East Kelby, it is unlikely it would be found anywhere else in Britain. In this way the area selected for this particular case study enables wider conclusions to be drawn.

The research was carried out between 1998 and 2000 and contained three elements. 40 interviews were conducted with professionals working with young people or with social exclusion such as probation officers and youth workers. Marsh also carried out participant observation with groups of young people over a year, visiting youth clubs, unwaged groups and Family Centres. She also talked to people on the street and those travelling around East Kelby by bus.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 88 young people aged between 15 and 25. Respondents were asked about their past lives, how they had reached their current situation, their views of their future and of their neighbourhood and so on. Interviews usually lasted at least an hour and were recorded and transcribed. Most took place in people's homes. Second interviews were carried out a year later with about 60% of initial respondents. The researchers lost contact with some people because they had moved, but kept sample attrition low by techniques such as offering a cash prize draw for those interviewed twice. Almost all respondents were white and from working-class backgrounds; they included school pupils, college students, lone parents, employees, unemployed people, young offenders, clients at drug advice centres and youth trainees.

KEY FINDINGS

Murray's cultural underclass theory did not apply in East Kelby. There were some of the warning signs of an emerging underclass (high rates of single parenthood, crime, unemployment and so on) but the values of the young people were mainstream.

They did not reject traditional work and family values. There was even evidence from interviews that those born to poor, unemployed parents would try hard to avoid being in that situation themselves.

The study supports the view that wider changes in the economy have created a new working-class experience of 'poor work', making many dependent on low wages and insecure work supplemented by benefits. The respondents did not feel socially excluded and in many ways were deeply connected to the lives of their neighborhoods, perhaps more so than a suburban middle-class sample would be. This social capital is a vital resource (for example for finding work) but can also be limiting (it is the same 'poor work' that is found). Policy makers are right that jobs are the way to social inclusion, but although most of the young people interviewed had or had had jobs, these had not been stepping stones out of their situation, as intended by policies such as the New Deal.

School

For the minority who did well at school, qualifications did not seem to provide a way out of poverty. After a few years those who had done well could not be distinguished from those who had not.

'Well, Caroline – she's on the dole. She was dead brainy and they thought that she was something, she's just on the dole now…'

Gail, 17, non-employed mother

Work

Work was seen as preferable to unemployment and to training schemes. It offered an income, however small, a sense of achievement and new social contacts. There was even opposition to claiming benefits and concern from young fathers about the potential negative role model they would provide if unemployed and claiming benefits.

'Pete's like that now, you know? He's sort of – he doesn't even like claiming Family Credit because 'it's sponging', he said. I had to fight with him to do that. He's very – because a lot of his family are unemployed and live in council houses, he just didn't wanna be like that.'

Tara, 22, employed mother, about her husband

Family

Although there were many one parent families, the respondents talked about families and relationships in very conventional ways and regarded two parent families as the best way to bring up children.

FIND OUT MORE

MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J. (2005), *Disconnected Youth? Growing up in Britain's Poor Neighbourhoods*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Murray, C. (1994), *Underclass: the Crisis Deepens*, London: Institute of Economic Affairs

EVALUATION

The sample is necessarily small and the research is only about one overwhelmingly white area. Yet one of the most striking aspects of the book is the great variety in the experiences, values and hopes of the young people involved – a warning to beware of easy generalisations. The voices of the young people come through clearly, and the stories they tell show how much more complex lived experience can be than is suggested by many studies that rely on quantitative data.

04 EDUCATION

CHILDREN RESEARCHING LINKS BETWEEN POVERTY & LITERACY

MARY KELLETT & AQSA DAR, 2007

CONTEXT **Despite many decades of adjustments to the education system by governments of all political parties, children from lower social classes and poorer families fail to do as well as those of equal ability from wealthier families. At the same time it is unarguable that the best escape from a disadvantaged background is educational success.**

There is a link between poor childhood literacy and subsequent adult poverty. If children are reluctant to read they are not able to make sense of other lessons effectively. The government has been targeting literacy for over ten years and, whilst official statistics indicate some improvements, the impact of these policies has been limited. The link between literacy and poverty is complex but must be understood if children from disadvantaged families are to have the same access to good jobs and lifestyles as the wealthy.

A major international study of reading in 35 countries (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) reported that the best 10 year old readers in England were world leaders but the weakest fell behind 10 year olds in many poor countries. These weak readers were predominantly from disadvantaged homes. More than a quarter of English 10 year olds never read for fun outside school and other studies have shown that poor children tend to come from homes with fewer than ten books.

FIND OUT MORE

Kellett, M. and Dar, A. (2007) *Children Researching Links Between Poverty and Literacy.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The full report can be accessed at **http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/2140.asp**

The children's research studies can be found at **http://childrens-research-centre.open.ac.uk**

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study **(http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/)**

Twist, L., Sainsbury, M., Woodthorpe, A. and Whetton C. (2003) *Reading All Over the World.* Slough: NFER for the DfES (**www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/63521**)

METHODS

The aims of the study were to understand the effect of poverty on children's literacy. The methods were unusual because some 11 year old children were used as researchers. The adult researchers wanted to respect children's own perspectives and views and to use them as experts in their own experiences. Also, children often obtain better responses from their peer groups than adults. It was hoped that the process of learning research skills would give children the confidence to participate in decision making in other parts of their lives. The most obvious drawback of this approach is that children do not always have the technical skills to undertake sociological research.

The project was undertaken in two anonymous schools with very different catchment areas whose names were changed to preserve their anonymity. 'Riverside Primary' was situated in an affluent town, had good SATS (national tests) results, strong parental involvement and the number of pupils who qualified for free school meals was around the national average (10%). 'Valley Town Primary' was an inner-city school with low SATS results, poor facilities, a large Somali refugee population and a free school meal rate of 72%.

The research team began by setting up an after-school club in each school whose role was to recruit a group of six pupils who would be trained in research by university academics. Children were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and then asked to volunteer. None of the children who participated withdrew, though one did not finish the project.

A programme of training sessions lasting 12 weeks was drawn up. Training was carried out in a child-friendly way with games, mind-mapping, group discussions and role play. They then chose their own topics and were given the choice of working individually, in pairs or in threes. Six projects were completed.

KEY FINDINGS

Research project 1 (Riverside School) investigated how confidence affects literacy using a sample of 80 participants. All the girls and 88% of the boys rated their literacy skills highly. Children viewed quiet reading as indicating confidence. Public reading, such as reading out loud, was a greater challenge to confidence and most children were less confident when writing than when reading.

Research project 2 (Riverside School) aimed to discover children's attitudes to literacy homework and designed a questionnaire for pupils in the top three years of their primary school which 91 pupils responded to. They learned that most children did not like writing but enjoyed quiet reading homework. Most respondents felt homework helped them to learn so it was valued rather than enjoyed. Over 80% of the children could have help from home and more than half agreed that the amount that they were given was fair. The ways in which adults helped were through the provision of a good homework environment and discussion of the homework.

Research project 3 (Valley School) wanted to understand the relationship between television (including DVDs, Sky, computer games and any screen-based activities) and literacy. Questionnaires were completed by 25 Year 6 children and eight were interviewed. Findings showed that children enjoyed television and many watched more than four hours a day, preferring it to reading. 10% thought reading was pointless, though none thought television pointless. Many were going to bed late and were tired in school because of television.

Research project 4 (Valley School) explored the difficulty of literacy homework compared to other subjects. Again, questionnaires and interviews were used. A large proportion of the respondents found homework easy and enjoyed art and maths. Fewer than half had help from their mothers but no fathers helped at all. Help was usually limited to five minutes a night. Often the homework was challenging but the mother did not have time to help. Many children went to homework clubs to get extra support.

Research project 5 (Valley School) was based on distractions and preferred environments for completing homework. Data from 50 children was gathered. In addition, there were two focus groups of four children each. The research discovered that most children went to homework club to get help that was not available at home. Television was a distraction because of the noise and also because, when it was on, students wanted to watch it. Other distractions in the home environment were smoking, swearing, banging and loud music.

Research project 6 (Valley School) Two children wanted to find out more about spelling. They designed an anonymous questionnaire to discover attitudes and ability levels.

Adult analysis of the research projects suggested that children from affluent backgrounds were confident because they had help with homework, conversation with adults, private space in which to work and few distractions. All children needed more private practice in literacy skills and did not enjoy working publicly; wealthy children had more access to the time needed for this. They conclude that homework clubs are essential for poorer children.

EVALUATION

The study is qualitatively strong because children were empowered to conduct their own research. They were able to focus on their own concerns and to obtain information from their peer groups that might not be easily gained by an adult. However, only two schools were chosen for this research and the research skills that can be taught in 12 weeks are limited. The research is valuable nevertheless in understanding how home culture and material poverty can affect children's success in school.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study considers a number of key educational themes such as the different educational achievement of social groups in relation to social class (and also, though more implicitly, in the case of Valley school, ethnicity). There are clear implications for the organisation of teaching and learning in schools. It also considers factors that affect the success of educational policies.

FEAR OF DEBT & HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

CLAIRE CALLENDER & JON JACKSON, 2004

CONTEXT **This research investigates the attitudes of prospective university students in England towards debt and their decisions about whether or not to apply to university.**

Its context is therefore the attempts by the Labour Government elected in 1997 to increase the numbers going to university, with the target of getting 50% of the 18 to 30 age group participating in higher education by 2010.

The proportion of young people from middle-class backgrounds attending university is higher than working-class students, and therefore there are more working-class than middle-class young people who could be recruited into university education to meet the target. However, fewer working-class pupils than middle-class achieve the GCSE grades needed to study for A levels (the most common route to university education).

The cost to students of a university education has been rising. Student grants have been gradually reduced and replaced as the main source of funding for most students by loans which have to be repaid once the recipient is earning a reasonable income. Between 1995/96 and 2002/03 the percentages of students taking loans rose from 59% to 81% and the average size of the loan more than doubled (DfES, 2004).

Although the number of students applying for university continued to rise over this period, as the government used the money saved on financing students to fund expansion, research showed that financial concerns became more important to students and played a key role in decisions about whether or not to apply. Several studies showed that students from poorer families were more likely than those from better-off backgrounds to be deterred from applying by concerns about cost and debts, especially the student loan debt. This research attempts to assess the importance of debt to students in statistical terms.

FIND OUT MORE

The research is part of the ESRC Families and Social Capital Project (**www.lsbu.ac.uk/families**)

Callender, C. and Jackson, J. (2004) *Fear of Debt and Higher Education Participation.* London: South Bank University (**www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/workingpapers/familieswp9.pdf**)

Callender, C. and Wilkinson, D. (2003) *2002/03 Student Income and Expenditure Survey: Students' Income, Expenditure and Debt and Changes Since 1998* Research Report No. 487. DfES: London

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Student Support: Statistics of Student Loans for Higher Education in United Kingdom* 12/2004. DfES: London

Media coverage:
BBC (**http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/education/2547821.stm**)
Universities UK (**www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/mediareleases/show.asp?MR=330**)

METHODS

The research involved a survey of prospective higher education students which took place in 2002 and produced quantitative data. 101 school sixth forms and further education (FE) colleges agreed to take part and 3,582 self-completion questionnaires were sent out. The schools and colleges were a national stratified random sample. Responses were received from 1,954 students in 82 schools and colleges; the response rate for the student questionnaires was 55%.

The self-completion questionnaires were handed out to students in classes by teachers. Three questions were asked to gather information on general level of debt aversion; students were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- Owing money is basically wrong
- There is no excuse for borrowing money
- You should always save up first before buying something

Students were then asked whether they agreed with statements about the costs and benefits of going to university:

- Borrowing money to pay for a university education is a good investment
- Student loans are a good thing because they allow students to enjoy university life
- Students do not worry about their debts while at university because they will get well-paid jobs when they graduate
- It is not worth getting into debt just so you can get a degree

To operationalise social class, the researchers used a variant of the Office for National Statistics' Socio-Economic Classification, but reduced the six levels to three which were lower income, middle class and upper class.

KEY FINDINGS

Callender and Jackson's conclusion is that, 'Debt aversion is a class issue'. Those from the lower-income group were more debt averse (more likely to see debt as negative and to be avoided) than the other two classes.

This was true even holding constant the type of institution they attended (FE or state or independent school), gender, ethnicity and age. The lower-income group was also more likely to see more costs than benefits in going to university.

The researchers then used the data to consider whether debt aversion and social class predicted decisions about applying for university. Attitude towards debt (both to debt in general and debt specific to university study) was found to be important, even after educational achievement (measured by predicted grades) was controlled for. That is, for students with the same levels of achievement, those who were debt averse (who were more likely to be from the lower income group) were less likely to apply for university. This remained true even when general attitude towards university study (how positively it was seen and how much encouragement was received from family and friends) was taken into account. Overall, say Callender and Jackson, the most debt-tolerant individual in the sample was five times more likely than the most debt-averse to apply to university.

Other factors having an effect on going to university for the lower-income group were ethnicity, age, perceptions about future earnings, encouragement from family and friends and knowing what university was like. For the middle-income group the significant factors were similar but included going to a state school and did not include knowing what university was like. Debt aversion may have had a very slight effect on the upper-class group; the other factors were perceptions about future earnings and encouragement from family and friends.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research has important implications for government policy. Debt aversion has the greatest effect on exactly those students whom the government wants to draw into higher education: those from lower-income families taking vocational courses in further education. They form the largest pool from which future university students might be taken; at present only about 45% of young people with level 3 vocational qualifications go on to university by the age of 21 compared with 90% of those taking A levels. The financing of higher education study is now based strongly on students accumulating debt. Yet this system is deterring those students whom the government's policies for widening participation is trying to reach, and so is undermining those policies. For those who do go to university from this group, we know that they are the most likely to rely heavily on student loans and to be deepest in debt when they graduate. There is a contradiction at the heart of the government's higher education policies which reinforces differences in educational achievement between social classes.

EVALUATION

This research is quantitative and positivistic in style. The paper summarised here contains tables of statistical data which can be difficult for non-specialists to interpret. Questions can be raised about some of the ways in which variables were measured. Using different measures, or asking slightly different questions, might have produced different results. For example, for the variable of whether a family member had been to university or not, the question asked was whether the student's mother had been to university. While there are good reasons for this, it does mean, for example, that both someone from a family where no one had been to university and someone whose older brother or sister had been or was a university student would be counted in the same category. But this research is able to put a numerical value on attitude to debt, and show how the system we now have is deterring the very students that the government most wants and needs to attract.

UNIVERSITY'S NOT FOR ME – I'M A NIKE PERSON:

URBAN,WORKING-CLASS YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEGOTIATIONS OF 'STYLE', IDENTITY AND EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

LOUISE ARCHER, SUMI HOLLINGWORTH & ANNA HALSALL, 2007

CONTEXT **A key aim for the New Labour government, first elected in 1997, was to increase the proportion of young people going to university. To achieve that aim more of these students will have to come from working-class backgrounds.**

However, despite a variety of plans and projects, the number of students from working-class homes who end their education as soon as possible remains high. Other studies have looked at the different experiences of the working class and the middle class within universities, suggesting that there are a whole range of personal, social and cultural dimensions to the differences between these two groups.

Recent work on education has been influenced by Bourdieu's notion of habitus. Habitus is a sense of social identity which shapes people's ideas of what is normal for them and others similar to themselves. The idea of habitus can be used to explain the way in which the middle classes dominate social institutions such as education because they belong to a culture that is similar to the dominant groups in society. In effect, they understand and know the rules of the social games that we all participate in and this makes life easier for them. Middle-class students often don't even have to make a decision about going to university; this is because they simply expect to go. Working-class students however, often feel out of place and uncomfortable.

This study is concerned with how working-class ideas and identity may shape young people's life choices. Many of the strategies that they have used successfully to gain status in schools, such as the adoption of consumer lifestyles, exclude them from middle-class norms and values and bring them into conflict with schools and colleges.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study is useful as an exploration of how qualitative research methods can help researchers gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of cultural productions for young people. It can be applied to analyses of differential educational achievement by social class and some of the conclusions could apply to analyses of gender as well. Relationships between schools and pupils are put under the spotlight as we learn about pupil subcultures and the hidden curriculum.

METHODS

This study took place over two years and intended to explore the values and culture of those students who were thought to be at risk of dropping out of full-time education before the age of 16. 53 respondents were chosen from six London schools. All were from working-class backgrounds and were more or less evenly split between boys and girls. In addition, the sample included a variety of ethnic groupings: white UK, white other, black African Caribbean, mixed ethnicity, Asian and Middle Eastern students.

The students were interviewed between one and three times over the course of the study. In addition, eight students completed photographic diaries and discussion groups were held with 36 others from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Interviews were not restricted to the young people: teachers, headteachers, careers advisors, parents and support staff were also interviewed. Interviews and discussions were taped and then transcribed. Parental consent was obtained before young people were allowed to participate and the students chose false names for the study.

EVALUATION

This study is useful because it produces qualitative data on the meaning of style for young people and links this cultural expression to working-class failure to succeed in education. It shows that young people who subscribe to youth culture and working-class styles are limiting their own access to routes for academic success. However, there is more at stake than just style; working class young people are shown as belonging to a culture in which they recognise that educational success is not for them. They hang on to their own culture because it provides status in their own social worlds. Teachers need support in helping students to challenge notions of style. If higher education were opened up to more students from less wealthy backgrounds, then working-class students would feel more comfortable in what is currently a middle-class cultural arena.

KEY FINDINGS

Clothes have a meaning that is far more significant than simply acting as ways of covering and protection from cold, rain or heat. They are important in terms of marking identity.

The display of particular items of dress and jewellery can be a clear indicator of social class in a code that others can read. More importantly notions of taste are used as a social distinction so that the working class are often seen as having 'poor' taste to the point where certain items of clothing associated with working-class youth such as 'hoodies' have become linked with danger, criminality and threat.

The young people in the study recognised this process and actively looked for identities for themselves in what they chose to wear. Young working-class people identified themselves as 'Nike' as opposed to 'Gucci' as a statement of their class identity. This is because certain clothing brands were seen as intrinsically fashionable and cool because they were associated with black masculinity, and therefore offered 'hardness' and 'street cred'.

Young people often invested a huge amount of time and effort into their appearance, with elaborate hairstyles, make-up, coordinated clothes and accessories. Some students spent considerable amounts raised through part-time work, up to £40 a week in one case, on style goods. It is suggested that this is because the young people attended schools and lived in areas with low social status. Many felt themselves to be failures or not as intelligent as their brothers or sisters.

Equally, those who did not subscribe to the ethos of labels made themselves vulnerable to bullying so the pressure on young people to participate in the culture is very strong. They resent the way that they have low status because they do not have access to the highest quality goods, but equally look down on those who cannot access the items that they own.

For many young people, buying into a style caused conflict with their schools who tried to enforce strict dress codes. They therefore set themselves up as rebellious rule-breakers. There was a gendered element to this: boys adopted the hyper-masculine styles of rap stars and girls wore sexually provocative clothing. This was in contrast to middle-class values of conservative clothing. Staff tried to combat street styles because of the consumer culture they represent and the belief that, to fund it, young people were attracted to criminal behaviours.

Pupils wanted to earn good money and rejected education because they were keen to join the job market. Being a student would mean that they would not have the cash to pay for street styles. In addition, there was an underlying feeling for many young people that higher education was for other people. Middle-class students were seen as unstylish and the working-class students felt that they would stand out and not belong.

Middle-class students had a number of ways of expressing their privilege; they certainly enjoyed conspicuous consumption but were able to do this in a number of arenas of cultural life, not just through clothing. In addition, when middle-class people adopted working-class styles and fashions, they could be seen as cool and ironic. A working-class or black person in a hoodie will be seen as 'dangerous' whereas a middle-class person may simply be seen as 'edgy'.

FIND OUT MORE

Archer, L., Hollingworth, S. and Halsall, A. (2007) 'University's not for Me – I'm a Nike Person': Urban, Working-Class Young People's Negotiations of 'Style', Identity and Educational Engagement. *Sociology* vol. 41(2). London: Sage Publications

Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J. (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture.* London: Sage Publications

LADS & LADETTES IN SCHOOL: GENDER & THE FEAR OF FAILURE

CAROLYN JACKSON, 2006

CONTEXT

An issue of significant concern to educationalists in recent years has been the relative failure of boys compared to girls in schools.

One of the most popular theories is that boys have developed a 'laddish culture'. Moreover, it is claimed that some girls are also subscribing to this culture and developing anti-school attitudes. This study aims to examine laddishness and understand boys' motives for subscribing to such cultures. In addition, it is an attempt to explore whether girls really do adopt laddish attitudes and whether these attitudes impact on the work ethic of female students.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study is useful in an analysis of youth culture because it attempts to explain how pupil subcultures develop within schools. It is more important to the study of education though because it looks at how processes within school can affect the academic performance of boys. It shows how the interaction between school policy and the subcultures that develop within school combine to hamper the performance of males. Importantly, it also suggests how class inequalities may impact on school performance.

EVALUATION

The study mixes quantitative and qualitative methods effectively. It is representative in that a range of ethnicities and genders were part of the samples but the results may only reflect a specific northern culture because no schools from other parts of Britain were included. The questionnaire assumes that pupils will understand the same thing by the concept of 'laddishness', and share that understanding with the researchers and other pupils. This may not be the case. Additionally, there can be no certainty that pupils did not exaggerate their laddishness in order to gain status as part of the very process that the book describes.

FIND OUT MORE

Jackson, C. (2006) *Lads and Ladettes in School: Gender and the Fear of Failure.* Maidenhead: Open University Press

There is a review of the book on the Times Educational Supplement website. Go to **www.tes.co.uk** and search 'Reviews'.

Carolyn Jackson's web page is at **www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/jacksoc2**

METHODS

The data was based on two research projects, a pilot project funded by the Nuffield Foundation involving interviews with boys in two schools and a larger project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) where both boys and girls were studied. In addition, the views of teachers were sought in the larger of the two projects. The projects shared the aims of exploring motives for laddish behaviours in schools.

The Nuffield project
Two secondary schools from the same town in the north-west of England were involved. Although both were mixed sex, one was oversubscribed and contained predominantly white students while the other was smaller, drew more students from deprived backgrounds and contained high numbers of students for whom English was a second language. In each school Year 9 pupils completed a questionnaire and 25 boys from each school were interviewed on the basis of their responses to the questionnaire. The semi-structured interviews lasted for 30 minutes and were conducted by a white British woman.

The ESRC project
Six secondary schools in the north of England were selected to ensure a mix of social classes and ethnicities. Again the focus was on year 9 pupils who completed three questionnaires, the first explored their academic goals and self-handicapping behaviours, the second academic performance and perceptions and the third views about laddishness and popularity. Pupils were required to respond to statements on a five point scale according to levels of agreement.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 153 pupils, 75 girls and 78 boys. Interviews were conducted by the author herself, each lasting about

30 minutes. The recordings were transcribed and then analysed with the help of computer packages which identified key themes: academic pressure, academic self-presentation, SATs, lads, 'ladettes'. Some of the key themes were further subdivided into ability, aggression, loudness, language, drinking and dress.

A range of teachers were also interviewed in each school after the respondent had been given a list of probable topics.

KEY FINDINGS

Social motives for laddishness
Laddishness refers to a specific form of masculine behaviour, though some respondents felt that 'lad' was synonymous with being 'normal'. Typically it was seen in terms of popularity, humour, sportiness, hardness, hanging out, the following of dress codes and not being seen to be making an effort at school. Importantly it was something that boys strived for, although being 'lad' should be effortless. Academic work was seen as feminine so lads avoided school work. There was a degree of overlap between what was seen as popular femininity and what was seen as 'ladette' behaviour. Girls felt under pressure to be popular and some even put on a show in order to avoid being seen as a 'swot'. Teachers found the ladettes to be far more troublesome than the lads. Lads may underachieve, but ladettes represented a new and dangerous femininity.

Academic motives for laddishness
Teachers and pupils are under increasing pressure to improve results. Pupils may respond by aiming to demonstrate achievement, or by avoiding demonstrations of their low ability. It was better to be seen as avoiding work than as a failure. Much laddishness could be seen in terms of avoiding revealing weakness. Laddish boys wished to avoid social failure by acting in a laddish way, and avoided academic failure by rejecting school work. They wished to hide work and effort. Girls were rejecting a traditional 'good girl' model which saw their academic success in terms of working hard rather than natural intelligence and instead looked for a feisty, 'sassy' image that did not go well with working hard.

Pressure to succeed
Some schools were using performance goals to encourage school success rather than encouraging students to gain pleasure from learning. Teachers sometimes promoted competition between students and exerted pressure on them. This led to stress and embarrassment. Those who achieved well liked the system, but the weaker students opted out and rejected school. Pressure to do well also came from parents. If parents pressurised, it was for the sake of the students, if schools pressurised, it was for the sake of the school or the concerns of the teachers for their own reputations. Boys felt themselves to be under far more competitive pressure from their friends to do well in tests than girls. Both boys and girls felt it was important to be seen as clever, but to be seen to work hard was 'uncool'.

Uncool to be a 'geek'
Social status was judged in terms of popularity. Popularity for boys was gained through being good at sport and having a girlfriend. However, all students, regardless of ethnicity, gender or social class, felt that it was not cool to work. Few managed to achieve the double goal of being good in tests and also not being seen to work at it. The students who benefited most from the 'uncool to work' ethos were those who feared academic failure the most. Students would engage in self-handicapping behaviours that created barriers to academic success: avoiding deadlines, drug and alcohol use, lack of effort, sleeplessness, spending too much time on other activities.
One trick was to misbehave in class and disrupt lessons. In this way, they did not have to feel stupid in front of their friends, they may even be able to sabotage the lesson for other students and stop them succeeding as well.

Balancing act
Many students managed to succeed through balancing how much work they needed to do to succeed with the behaviour needed to remain popular. Pupils would mess around in school and then catch up at home. They would use strategies to hide their work: sometimes even making excuses to their friends about not being able to go out so they could revise in secret. There was pressure from school for pupils to do work in their own time and pressure from friends to maintain a good social life. There may also be external pressures such as religious, sport or work commitments. Middle-class children, with access to the Internet and private space, were able to work in secret, for example using chatrooms and working simultaneously, whereas working-class children had to meet to maintain social contacts. Wealthy students could maintain a balancing act and appear cool through having access to branded fashion and mobile phones. In addition, physical attractiveness helped some pupils maintain cool whereas it was much harder for others.

RACE, MASCULINITY & SCHOOLING: MUSLIM BOYS AND EDUCATION

LOUISE ARCHER, 2003

CONTEXT **In the 1990s girls were rapidly overtaking boys in terms of educational success. The education of boys became a serious political concern, almost to the point of becoming a moral panic.**

The debate tended to follow one of three lines of thought:

- Boys as victims of the changing social system – this 'boys in crisis' perspective is associated with the work of Connell.
- The feminisation of schools – there is a shortage of male role models and the examination structure favours females (coursework for example).
- Boys rejection of education and schoolwork is due to their mental structure.

Archer suggests that the debate is not as clearcut as the government and the media seem to think. For her, the issue that needs to be addressed is male identity and how schools reproduce masculinity.

Muslim masculinity has been viewed as threatening thanks to media reporting following the incidents of September 11, 2001. Negative views of Muslim masculinity have spread into the professional concerns of teachers and Muslim boys are seen as under-performing. They experience high rates of exclusion and low rates of progression in education after the age of 16.

The study is part of a much larger project exploring identity among Muslim boys and girls in an unidentified north-western town, given the false name of Mill Town in this book. Mill Town is economically poor with high unemployment and deprivation following the decline of the textile industry. The majority population is white but there is a large Asian population made up primarily of people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study shows how identities are constructed in relation to age, ethnicity, gender and nationality in contemporary British society. In addition, it provides insight into differential educational attainment in relation to gender and ethnicity. Methodologically it uses feminist research techniques where the participants are seen as equal partners and have the opportunity to talk freely about their experiences. This represents an interesting approach to the study of masculine identity.

METHODS

The aims of this study were to:

- Consider how Muslim boys constructed religious, racial, ethnic and cultural identities
- Explore how Muslim boys constructed masculine identities
- To reveal the way in which Muslim boys talked about racism
- To consider how the boys thought about education and occupation.

The methods used were influenced by a feminist approach. Students were drawn from one of four mixed-sex schools. Each school had a different proportion of minority ethnic pupils. Only one school had above average GCSE attainment. 31 Muslim boys from year 10 were studied, 19 were Pakistani, eight were Bengali and four were of Pakistani/Kenyan origin. Most were born in Britain and were working class. These boys were interviewed in discussion groups using a semi-structured interview schedule.

There were three interviewers: a white middle-class woman and two females of non-academic Asian British origin. The use of researchers who were different to the boys was a deliberate decision. It was felt that researchers from a similar background may over-identify with the respondents and interpret comments in the light of their own experiences. The use of interviewers that required the boys to explain themselves meant that they would have to clarify their comments.

Two discussion groups took place in each school, one using an Asian British interviewer and one the author. Discussion groups were held in English and lasted about one and a half hours. The discussion group method was seen as appropriate because participants could negotiate a shared meaning and the interviewer could become part of this process. The interviewers set challenges to the boys in order to make them clarify their thinking and explain their ideas fully. In addition, a small photographic exercise – 'A day in my life' - was conducted with two pupils.

KEY FINDINGS

All of the boys saw their ethnic distinctiveness as being less important than their religious identity. Boys did not regard themselves as British, instead they identified with umma (the global community of Muslims) which was seen as more important than other loyalties. Western thinking has sometimes associated this global network with terrorism and fundamentalist Muslim opinion. However, there is an alternative reading that offers a sense of strength in brotherhood that counters white views of Asian maleness as weak and passive.

Males were defensive about their masculinity and were more likely to identify with their religious roots than girls because they felt more threatened. Girls admired boys who had a strict religious commitment, seeing them as mature and responsible. Despite the allegiance that the boys felt to Islam, few were active in terms of religious practices such as praying, fasting and abstaining from tobacco and alcohol. They experienced conflict between the demands of their religion on one hand and the demands of western hegemonic masculinity on the other.

Many Asians identified themselves as 'black'. They were attracted to American street culture and 'gangsta' masculinity. Teachers found this threatening but, to the boys, membership of a gang acted as a form of protection against potential aggression. They valued education but felt that teachers favoured girls. However, rather than copy the girls, they presented themselves to teachers as having low aspirations. They adopted 'laddish' poses which entailed being popular, 'hanging out', playing sport, having the right clothes and not being seen to work. They felt that they had higher intelligence but failed to do well because of 'slacking'. They took this position to challenge stereotypes of Asian boys as effeminate. Some were cushioned by family businesses or the ability to work for cash in hand so did not feel pressure to gain qualifications. Many felt their chances would not be the same as those of a white person anyway, while others saw educational success more positively as a way to challenge racism.

Many of the boys had white girlfriends but still saw their role as patrolling Asian girls and maintaining a watch on their behaviour. Traditional clothing was seen as correct for females but not for boys. The boys challenged one of the Pakistani interviewers for not wearing traditional dress although she wore modest western clothing. However, in reality Muslim girls were as assertive as any other young people and the boys could not control them as they could each other through hitting and violence.

In Muslim families the traditional gender roles of nurturing female and breadwinning male were more common than among white families. Boys felt responsibility to their parents and intended to care for them in old age as part of izzat or family honour. Many rejected arranged marriage but accepted that their family would help choose a partner. Muslim views of the adult male saw him as assuming responsibility,so fathers regulated sons and provided a strong male role model.

The boys felt safer in Asian areas but recognised that racism diminishes if people have contact with each other. Racism was explicit in school but this was a form of bullying that could be fought against. White boys who were friendly in school would often ignore them out of school when with their family. The Asian boys challenged this behaviour but the white boys did not acknowledge it. Teacher racism was evident but subtle and consisted of 'ignoring' or 'talking over'.

FIND OUT MORE

Archer, L. (2003) *Race, Masculinity and Schooling: Muslim Boys and Education.* Maidenhead: Open University Press

There is a review of the book at **www.multiverse.ac.uk**

Connell, R. W. (1995) *Masculinities.* Cambridge: Polity Press

EVALUATION

The sample was relatively small so there are question marks about the extent to which the study can be generalised to other Muslim boys, especially those in other parts of the country. There is considerable discussion of home and domestic life and this allows the reader to see the participants as fully rounded people. There is a depth to this study in that a wide range of aspects of the boys' lives are considered.

An interesting methodological issue is the boys' willingness to discuss racism. They were willing to talk about it with the Asian interviewers but too polite to raise it as an issue with the white interviewer. Archer realised that her own whiteness silenced the boys in some of the discussions.

SCHOOL EXCLUSION & TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD IN AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES

CECILE WRIGHT, PENNY STANDEN, GUS JOHN, GERRY GERMAN & TINA PATEL, 2005

CONTEXT **Concern has been expressed over a number of years about the disproportionate numbers of African Caribbean children who are excluded from schools.**

Official figures suggest that African Caribbean boys are between four and 15 times more likely to be excluded than white boys while African Caribbean girls are four times more likely to be excluded than white girls. The figure could be even more because these official statistics do not take into account unofficial and unrecorded exclusions.

Sociologists and politicians are also aware that educational success is one of the most effective routes for people to become integrated into society. There is a concern that children excluded from school become those who are socially excluded from work and society as adults. This study is concerned with exploring the experiences of excluded young people and of the agencies that deal with them. The intention of the study is to support organisations that are attempting to reduce school exclusions.

FIND OUT MORE

Wright, C., Standen, P., John, G., German, G. and Patel, T. (2005) *School Exclusion and Transition into Adulthood in African-Caribbean Communities.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The full report can be accessed at **www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1859353509.pdf**

A summary is available at **www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0435.asp**

METHODS

The study focuses on the excluded young people, their carers and families. It also studies relevant organisations with the intention of gaining an insight into what they have to say about positive strategies to support excluded young people.

Excluded young people are generally very difficult to study, because they are not easy to locate and often unwilling to participate in research.

Research was carried out in two cities with higher than average numbers of black people: Nottingham and London. African Caribbean students in these areas are particularly likely to be excluded from school and to be unemployed as adults.

The sample consisted of 33 young people, 21 males and 12 females. 20 were from London and 13 from Nottingham. They were contacted by official agencies dealing with exclusions. All were born in Britain, aged between 14 and 19 and had experienced school exclusion. In addition, at least one parent was of African Caribbean descent.

There were four data collection processes: an initial interview, a friendship group interview, a final interview ten months after the first and interviews with family members and carers. Not all of the young people were interviewed three times. All interviews were recorded.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study offers important evidence about the differential educational achievement of minority ethnic groups. It has particular points to make about relationships and processes within school and about teacher/pupil relationships. In addition there are valuable insights into the experience of education for students from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, there are particular issues with regard to values and the approach to the research. We learn much qualitative information about the impact of exclusion on ethnic minorities but there are issues concerning the subjectivity of such accounts when we do not have access to the perspective of the excluding schools.

KEY FINDINGS

Many of the excluded students felt that the school had been unjust in excluding them. They did not agree with the views of their school as to the underlying reason for their exclusion.

Schools said that the pupils had shown challenging behaviour but the students claimed that the schools had been unsupportive of students with difficulties and were excluding pupils who would not achieve good examination grades. They felt labelled and discriminated against and had found it difficult to return to school because they were viewed as trouble makers by both teachers and other students. Exclusions had led to criminal behaviour for some as they had nothing else to do.

One student reported that exclusion had actually led to the break up of his family while many others felt that the trauma of exclusion had created low self esteem. Some had later developed a sense of resistance against the system that had labelled them and felt toughened by the experience. Exclusion was seen as part of the same process of labelling that they experienced from institutions in wider society such as the police. Exclusion also led to poor qualifications and poor employment opportunities, though some students had returned successfully to full-time education. A few of the sample welcomed exclusion because it gave them a break from bullying by their peer group or teachers. Some responded by wanting to prove their teachers to be wrong.

Those who had gone on to further education or who had made a successful move into adult life said that they had done so because they had the support of family, friends and their church. Social workers and black community workers were also positive sources of support and care. Some teachers were also seen as supportive within the excluding schools, but generally their support was not felt to be long lasting and consistent. Social workers and black community workers were singled out for praise by most of the students. Students from wealthier backgrounds received financial and social support, as did those in care, but many others were excluded from professional support networks by poverty.

Black families were very supportive of the education system and viewed education as a tool for fighting the racism they experienced in British society. Often they were surprised at the exclusions because, as far as they were aware, their children had good school records. The exclusion process had left many students disadvantaged, particularly because exclusions had taken place around examination times. This led families to become very disillusioned with the education system. They were supportive of their children and negative about the education system, seeing it as biased in terms of both class and race. Exclusion also had a negative effect on home and family life; parents felt shame in the community and experienced stress. Some had fought hard with the schools over exclusion and had found them to be obstructive and intimidating.

For many of the parents, support consisted of accepting their child's view of the events leading up to the exclusion in preference to the school's version. They believed the teachers to be racist and incapable of controlling their children. In one case there was supporting evidence to suggest that teachers had made an unfair accusation. Families also offered practical support such as helping with work set by the school or going to the library.

Many parents had bad experiences of schooling themselves. In addition, there was an issue with the amount of practical advice about the exclusion and appeals process. This had varied in quality and quantity in each individual case. In one case, a teacher had offered to come to the family home to provide additional tuition; however other schools had failed to provide any work.

EVALUATION

While this study provides a clear picture of the impact of school exclusion on students of African Caribbean descent, we learn little of the causes for exclusion beyond the claims of racism by schools, teachers and other pupils. Clearly, this does not address the full complexity of the situation. However, the value of the study is that we do learn of the detailed and dramatic consequences of school exclusion for the students and their families.

05 HEALTH

HEALTH SURVEY FOR ENGLAND 2005: THE HEALTH OF OLDER PEOPLE

EDITED BY RACHEL CRAIG & JENNIFER MINDELL, 2007

CONTEXT **The health of the population is a matter of some concern for government and politicians. As the cost of health service provision grows, it is important for government agencies to monitor trends in health.**

The reasons for this are not simply clinical but to do with long term planning and provision of services. This has become increasingly important as performance management is now such a major issue for National Health Service Trusts who are accountable to government for the allocation of funds and for the provision of a good service to the public.

The Health Survey takes place annually, focusing on the health of the British people. Each year a demographic group is surveyed for health indicators such as diet, accidents, asthma and cardio-vascular disease. Each survey includes a series of measurements and questions which are standard each year. This provides a baseline as well as information not generally available from other sources.

In 2005, there was a focus demographic group consisting of those over the age of 65. This is a very important demographic in terms of health provision and care. The population of England is ageing, with fewer children being born and extended life expectancy. Clearly, the government and policy makers need a greater understanding of the health issues affecting those approaching old age.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study contributes to our understanding of the unequal distribution of health and illness in England according to social class, age, gender and region. There is significant information of the nature and distribution of mental health among the elderly. In addition, the research methods that are used underline both the strengths and limitations of quantitative data in the study of health.

METHODS

The Health Survey is designed to be nationally representative of people of different ages, genders, locations and socio-economic circumstances. When the surveys began, only those over 16 were included, but over the 15 year life of the survey, other groups have been included such as children and then infants. Those living in institutions do not form part of the survey.

The general sample was gathered by surveying 7,200 addresses in 720 postcode areas. In addition a further 11,520 addresses from the 720 postcodes were screened to identify whether people aged over 65 were resident. This led to structured interviews with 2,673 adults aged over 65.

Respondents were interviewed on core questions such as general health, alcohol use, smoking and consumption of fruit and vegetables. In addition, older people were asked about their use of health, dental and social care services, chronic disease and disabilities. Specially trained nurses then visited households to measure height and weight and to take blood, urine and saliva samples. Respondents were asked permission to send their results to their GPs.

FIND OUT MORE

Craig, R. and Mindell, J. (eds.) (2007) *Health Survey for England 2005, Volumes 1-4: The Health of Older People*. London: The National Centre for Social Research

Craig, R. and Mindell, J. (eds.) (2007) *Health Survey for England 2005, Volumes 1-4: Methodology and Documentation.* London: The National Centre for Social Research

Details of the survey and its results can be found on the Department of Health website at: **www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/PublishedSurvey/HealthSurveyForEngland/index.htm**

National Centre for Social Research (**www.natcen.ac.uk**)

KEY FINDINGS

More than half of the respondents reported themselves as being in good or very good health, though those from the higher income brackets and in the younger age ranges were more likely to report good health.

Older women were more likely than men to have a chronic illness or condition that affected their lives in some way. Over a third of older people, 37% of men and 40% of women, had some degree of disability and the numbers increased with age. Those over 85 were likely to experience more than one disability or perception problem. One of the most common difficulties was walking up 12 stairs without pausing.

On average there was little difference in the amount of fruit and vegetables eaten according to gender, with men eating slightly more than women. However, few older people managed to eat four or more portions. There were clear regional differences in diet, with a very high proportion of men in the north east and the south midlands eating no fruit or vegetables. Those in the wealthier income brackets ate more fresh fruit and vegetables. Anaemia (shortage of iron in the blood) and vitamin D deficiency caused by lack of adequate diet or lack of sunshine were more common among those in the lower income groups.

A quarter of women over 65 but only 14% of men had walking problems but only 14% of men. Older people were more likely to have walking problems with over a third of men and half of women affected. Balance problems began earlier for women than for men and more women than men therefore had problems with balance. Again, difficulty with walking and balance was more common for those in the lowest income groups.

One of the largest causes of mortality among the elderly is falling. It can cause disability and long term health problems. Many older people have osteoporosis resulting in fragile bones that fracture easily. Over a quarter of people had fallen in the last 12 months, with women more vulnerable than men. Women were also more likely to need medical attention if they fell.

Heart disease (CVD) is a major killer in England although the death rates are falling. It is common in those over 65, with over a third of older people affected. Older men were more likely than women to report CVD. The incidence of CVD among women increased with age so that at 85 the differences between men and women were relatively small.

Women are more likely to be morbidly obese than men. Obesity can result in chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis and raised blood pressure. This then predisposes people to strokes and heart attacks. High blood pressure is also associated with high intake of salt and is more common among poorer income groups.

Men were more likely than women to have poor social capital in the sense of friends, family and social networks. Women were also more likely to belong to clubs and social associations. Poor health was linked to poor social capital with those who experienced bad health also those who saw fewest people and who went out least often. In addition, smoking had a significant negative impact on health.

Nearly a quarter of older people had visited a doctor in the previous two weeks. Those who considered their health to be poor or who had disabling conditions were most likely to attend their GP. Men were less likely than women to go to a doctor but more likely to have attended a hospital outpatient appointment. Those who were in good health were far more likely to visit a dentist than those who were ill.

Depression is a common illness among the elderly and, as it is undiagnosed and untreated in many cases, the survey included some diagnostic questions. Women were more likely to experience symptoms than men although among men, those most likely to experience depression were in the lower income groups.

EVALUATION

This is an enormously important piece of quantitative research. It documents patterns and trends in the health of older people and underlines both gender and income differences in their experiences. This is an important baseline survey in that future research can be compared with the data from this survey. If there is a weakness, it is that there is little explanation of why the patterns of health it identifies occur among older people.

WRITING ABOUT HEALTH & SICKNESS

HELEN BUSBY

CONTEXT **During the 1930s and 1940s the Mass Observation organisation collected a vast array of information about the daily lives of ordinary people.**

Volunteers were used to collect data using methods such as diaries and observation. There has been massive interest in the data gathered and it has formed the basis of books and plays. A new project was initiated in 1981 consisting of a collection of writing from volunteers recruited through the media. This study is based on responses to an invitation for people to write about 'Staying Well and Everyday Life'.

Sociology has contributed much to our understanding of the nature and meaning of health and sickness. Much of the research has been based on interviews with people regarding their daily experience of health or illness and looking at the ways in which sickness is often socially defined. This approach has led to an understanding of notions of the 'body' which are significant in the sociology of identity. The use of writing and diaries is less common but can be useful in showing the meanings that people give to ill health. Feelings about ill health are often strong in a society that values self-reliance and individual control. People invest identity and status in their work and illness may interfere with their ability to earn a living.

EVALUATION

This study is important both for its methods and for the insights that we gain into attitudes towards the sick role. We gain an understanding of the importance of work in people's lives and their sense of a moral duty to be healthy. This leads to interesting observations on how people deal with their own ill-health.

FIND OUT MORE

Busby, H. (2000) 'Writing about Health and Sickness: An Analysis of Contemporary Autobiographical Writing from the British Mass-Observation Archive' in *Sociological Research Online* vol. 5 (2) at **www.socresonline.org.uk/5/2/busby.html**

Mass Observation (**www.massobs.org.uk**)

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This material is interesting for the methodological issues that it raises about the use of written materials in the study of health. It describes ways in which people create a notion of health and disregard illness in order to work, even if this actually has an impact on their subsequent health. It shows that many people view their own health as a project over which they have conscious control. It may be used to account for the unequal distribution of health and illness and shows the role of mental attitudes in the experience of physical illness.

METHODS

In the original Mass Observation organisation, volunteers were required to write about themselves, their families and their communities. The value and the quality of the data mean that it has effectively become a national treasure. In 1981 a new project was begun based on similar principles. Even so, there has always been a degree of tension in the data in that much of the material is unstructured and yet the information requires some degree of order if conclusions are to be drawn that have any scientific credibility. The earliest writers were told to write about their own experiences and some of the material gathered was clearly personal whereas others chose to focus on detailing the lives of those around them.

The new project required the volunteer writers to respond to themes and directives which were sent out several times a year. By the mid 1980s there were approximately 1,400 volunteers although currently there are about half that number. The writing takes various forms: letters, questionnaires, diaries, autobiography and accounts of interviews. The sample of writers is weighted towards older people and women and tends to have a middle class bias.

The material produced has been heavily used by writers on women's studies and on education, but less so by researchers on health issues, despite it being an obviously valuable resource. There remain issues of reliability as well, the writing is personal, there are gaps in narrative and evidence is selective and interpreted by the original writer as well as the researcher. Frequently there is an element of 'taken for granted' knowledge that is not necessarily shared by both the writer and the reader. There may also be some questions about the motivations of those who write: do they share some common personality trait that is not present in others?

This paper is concerned with responses to a directive issued in 1998 called 'Staying Well and Everyday Life'. The detailed directive was:

'This section is about what you need to stay well, and what you think undermines your own health or other peoples. We are especially interested to hear about your recent experience over, say, the last year or so.'

Other prompts asked about relationships, environments, aspects of daily life and rest time as well as taking time off work. There were 249 responses, but for various reasons, only the writing of 13 men and 26 women was actually used in the research. The commonest occupations were teaching and nursing; most of the women worked part-time and combined work with caring.

KEY FINDINGS

Most of the respondents wrote in terms of 'keeping going' rather than responding to symptoms and, because the directive was issued in winter, the symptoms were often those of colds and flu. Commitments to work were not as strong as commitments to caring in terms of keeping going and often the symptoms were seen as related to exhaustion or to sickness which travels through communities. Most people viewed health as something which must be worked at and symptoms as something to be ignored or worked through, although older people were more likely to view good health as a matter of luck. Women tended to avoid being sick whereas men would be more likely to work at busy times and then consider taking sick leave almost as time in-hand when work was less busy. Sick leave was often taken in response to a boring or disliked job although many people had issues with the cost of time off and those who worked freelance would not allow themselves to be sick if they then lost pay.

Individual case studies reveal common themes in the writing.

- 'Mary', an ex-librarian in her forties working in a clerical occupation described feeling unwell when indoors in certain environments. However, she attempted to ignore feelings of ill-health because it interfered with her enjoyment of life. She had previously experienced a reorganisation at work and had resigned rather than experience the stress it brought on.
- 'Vera', who was in her fifties explained about how hard it was to write about the topic and that she had destroyed previous attempts. Stress brought about by caring for relatives had left her with migraines and panic attacks. She did not take time off work but also described how she felt pressured by lack of time and by stress brought on by tiredness. Her professional work was not therefore a cause of ill-health, it was her family life that caused her difficulties.
- 'Andrea', who lived in London, complained about pollution and a poor work environment. However, she had built a healthy lifestyle around yoga, exercising, walking and evening classes. Health, for her was a conscious and positive choice. Her health can be attributed to a sense of control over her life and circumstances.
- 'Sarah' was rarely well, though not actually unwell either – she had a back problem, indigestion and poor sleeping patterns. She was freelance and therefore had to work through her pain. She considered herself lucky to work from home, but the researchers point out that there is a relationship between her disability and the fact that she was casually employed and had to struggle to maintain an income.
- 'Rob' was a carer for his disabled wife. His poor working conditions as an HGV driver and lack of leisure time had led to poor health. He had worked through illnesses when younger, but this attitude had impacted on his health as an older man.
- 'Frederick', a wealthy retired banker, had excellent health and ascribed this to his willpower and competitive streak which led him to participate in dangerous sports and activities. An accident as a younger man had encouraged him to enjoy life to the full.

The common thread in these accounts is a sense that one could stay well through the exercise of self control. People were more likely to seek medical help if their symptoms interfered with their ability to work. They would disguise symptoms if they were not able to take time off. In addition, some illness is 'shadow illness' in the sense that people are unwell but do not have clearly identifiable and understood symptoms that could enable them to take time off work or to gain support from a doctor. People felt a strong moral duty not to be ill.

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CRYSTAL & SPIRITUAL HEALERS

STUART MCCLEAN, 2006

CONTEXT **McClean became interested in rocks as a child, when his interest was in their appearance. Later, when crystals became fashionable as a New Age healing process among the middle classes in the 1990s, McClean became part of a social network that participated in spiritual healing using crystals.**

As he progressed through university, he began to appreciate that what many people considered a foolish activity represented a significant element of Western culture. Alternative medicines are available on every high street today and people can choose from a range of treatments. Nevertheless, this area of life is little studied despite the fact that it may mark a real shift in thinking, beliefs and behaviour.

Challenges to traditional scientific thinking have become widespread in recent years in all areas of cultural life. Orthodox medicine which explores the symptoms of illness as though they were somehow distinct from the person who experiences them, has left many people feeling uncomfortable with doctors and scientific approaches to ill health. It is only in Western cultures that scientific medicine dominates health discourses so thoroughly. Partly this is because of the power of doctors and the control of health care through hospitals. Knowledge is controlled and limited to scientists but at the same time people's trust in experts is decreasing.

Complementary medicine can be seen as a challenge to the power of doctors and as a method of allowing people greater control over their own health. When they attend alternative health centres, those who may be otherwise underprivileged are seen as individuals who can take some control of their own bodies.

FIND OUT MORE

McClean, S. (2006) *An Ethnography of Crystal Healers: Marginal Medicine and Mainstream Concerns.* New York: Edwin Mellen Press

For more information about complementary and alternative therapies, go to NHS Direct (**www.nhsdirectory.org/default.aspx?page=Therapies&t=y**)

METHODS

McClean chose to use ethnographic methods to study a healing centre in the North of England, an area of high unemployment and deprivation. He was accepted as a healing trainee and also as a patient, although people were aware of his status as an academic researcher. He became fully incorporated into the life of the centre over the period of a year and attended a range of courses, healings and training sessions. Although he lived a short train journey away he became familiar enough at the centre to sleep over. In effect he became what is known as a 'complete participant' in the life of the centre and his report relies on memory and subsequent recording of events.

Ethnography sometimes requires the observer to fully participate in people's lives and this can lead to over-identification. The geographical distance between the centre, his home and his work as an insurance clerk meant that he had to spend time stepping between identities. The centre provided a boundary for his work and he was therefore able to separate his work from his life. Nevertheless he found that eventually he began to live the life of the healer and had to consciously reflect and return to his primary role as a researcher.

Much of the writing in this book is autobiographical and is told as a series of stories and relationships. This offers significant depth of analysis of individual events and conversations. There are detailed accounts of healing sessions, exploring the techniques that are used as well as the personalities and styles created by the healers in their healing rituals. The focus is on the personality and personal histories of the healers at the 'Virtual Energy Healing Centre' (VEHC).

KEY FINDINGS

Despite the fact that the term 'alternative' is used to describe non-traditional biomedical practices, many practitioners do not see them themselves as alternative but as complementary to dominant medical practices.

This means that they do not oppose traditional scientific medicine but aim to loosely cooperate with it. Healers and patients who use complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) are largely tolerant of a range of different styles and practices of healing.

The choice of CAM often highlights weaknesses in the current biomedical practice. Healers take time with patients and allow them a sense of control over their own conditions. Frequently patients share their insight and understanding with their complementary practitioners so that healers learn from the contact.

Crystal therapy and the VEHC

Many CAM therapies are based on a body of knowledge. This may not take the form of scientific evidence but the knowledge is organised and has a formal structure. Crystal therapy is a product of the relationship between the healer and the participant in the healing. Nevertheless, there are certificated courses with minimum standards and syllabi for practitioners so they can train others in crystal healing techniques. McClean was a trainee on one of these courses.

For the founder and owner of the VEHC, it is a thriving business employing both her and her daughter. It is run on professional lines and uses conventional business practice. There is a degree of tension in this practice however, on one hand the spirituality of healing is emphasised but on the other conventional fees are charged.

CAM and gender

There is a gender dimension as the study notes that a degree of tension exists in the relationships between many of the female healers and their partners. It is argued that women are attracted to CAM because they are disempowered in other elements of their lives. For example, one of the male healers was reluctant to use crystals in his healing practice partly because he saw it as feminine.

Postmodernism and healing

Healing is a personalised activity. Each healer has his or her own style and practices and these practices are meaningful in terms of their personality and beliefs. There is an element of performance in healing and also creativity in that intuitive knowledge is emphasised.

According to postmodernist theory, the individual can exercise choice through what is consumed or bought and many writers suggest that people are therefore forced to be individualistic because of the changes that are taking place in society. The healers at the VEHC are individualistic in their approaches to healing, but only after they have discussed their plans with their patients and with the other healers and have received permission to continue what they are doing.

EVALUATION

The focus in this study is very much on the healers rather than those who are making use of their services. The discussion is of their relationships, their healing practices and their personal biographies. The healers take their practice extremely seriously and it is described in detail. This is done in an uncritical fashion and the nature of their belief and practice is investigated in terms of their individual biographies. As the sample is small, it is difficult to generalise from this study to explain the popularity of CAM in wider society.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study represents an important contribution to debates about the nature of postmodern society. It investigates whether CAM has arisen because of the failure of biomedical knowledge or because of deeper shifts in the nature of belief. Some therapies have gained the acceptance of doctors and biomedical science yet others remain very much on the fringes of acceptability. Despite the criticism of CAM by many doctors it is popular with users. However, because this study concerns the practitioners and not the users of complementary medicines, it focuses on the nature of the knowledge systems open to Western society rather than on the nature of the choices open to the consumers of medical care.

SOCIOECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AT DIFFERENT LIFE STAGES AND ADULT SMOKING

CHRISTINE POWER, HILARY GRAHAM & ORLY MANOR, 2005

CONTEXT **There is a huge amount of evidence to link smoking and ill health among adults: cancers, disabling strokes and heart disease are all linked to the use of tobacco.**

From a sociological point of view there is a worrying link between cigarette smoking and social class: it is estimated that more than half of the differences in deaths between the poor and the wealthy is due to the fact that smoking is associated with the poorest sectors in society.

Wealthy smokers are far more likely to give up smoking than the poor. Only a third of those who ever smoked from the higher socio-economic groups still smoke. However, among the unskilled, of all those who took up the habit at least two thirds still smoke. It is the persistent smokers who are most likely to suffer illness or death as a result of their choice to smoke.

This is not just an issue of class; there are differences in gender and these are linked to wealth too. Among men, the persistence of smoking is often more related to their current jobs than with to their father's social class or their childhood social position. Among women, current smoking behaviour is more likely to be linked to childhood social class.

There are problems in the data however: research evidence about smoking is often linked to current status as a smoker, not to the habits of a lifetime. The evidence suggests that nicotine dependence develops very early in a person's smoking career and it is this addiction that keeps people smoking well into adulthood. The higher the number of cigarettes smoked, the less chance there is of a person stopping smoking.

FIND OUT MORE

Power, C., Graham, G. and Manor, O. (2005) *Socio-economic Circumstances at Different Life Stages and Adult Smoking.* ESRC Research Grant R000239579

This research has been published in a number of forms. The full report and various summaries and articles can be viewed using the ESRC's 'Society Today' website at: **www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/ViewAwardPage.aspx?AwardId=1778**

METHODS

The study was based on the huge amount of data collected from the National Child Development Study which has gathered information on some 17,000 people born during a single week of March 1958. These people were all born in the UK and are now around 50 years old. Data has been collected from them at ages 7, 11, 16, 23, 33 and 41, making this one of the largest and longest longitudinal studies conducted in the UK. Mothers were interviewed when their children were born but after that postal questionnaires were used. Members of the sample were interviewed themselves when they were 33 and 41. At the most recent interviews, 11,373 subjects reported information about smoking.

The aims were to find the link between social class and smoking behaviour from the age of 16 to 41, and to link this to information about the development of smoking careers. Supplementary aims were to discover the link between the very young commencement of smoking and the continuation of smoking and to establish whether there is a link between early and lone parenthood and smoking.

This data used in this study has been subjected to extensive statistical analysis. However, even with a study as detailed as this, there were still issues of sampling, with some respondents unwilling to participate or not contacted. It is suggested that the most deprived social groups are the people who are most likely to be missing from the sample.

Smokers were defined as those who smoked one or more cigarettes a week at 16 years, and one or more cigarettes a day over the age of 21. Smokers were categorised in three groups: current smokers, ever-smokers (i.e. those who may once have smoked but who do not currently smoke) and never-smokers. There were also persistent smokers who had smoked throughout adult life. Smokers were identified by the number of cigarettes smoked each day. In addition, a variety of measures were used to indicate social class such as their father's and their own occupation. Additional data used in the analyses included the age at which they had their first child and, for women, whether they had been lone parents.

KEY FINDINGS

Half of the sample had smoked regularly at some time in their lives. About 40% had smoked as young adults aged 23 and this age group was the most likely to smoke.

The figure fell to 25% of adults by the age of 41. About 20% had smoked consistently throughout their adult lives and most of these people had started smoking regularly by the time they were 16. Boys were more likely to smoke than girls as teenagers and they smoked more cigarettes as well. However, smoking was evenly distributed between the genders at 41. Very few people had taken up smoking over the age of 23. Manual workers were more likely to start smoking and they started to smoke at an earlier age.

Many people had given up smoking. Individuals from the higher social classes were more likely to both take up and quit smoking in every age group. This has considerable implications for health inequalities among the social classes.

There was a link between the numbers of cigarettes smoked per day at each age and the possibility of giving up smoking. Heavier smokers at 16 were likely to still be smoking at 41 and males smoking more than 60 a week at 16 were more than twice as likely to be smoking at 41 as those who smoked less. For heavy smoking 16 year old women, the chances of still smoking at 41 were three times as great. The evidence is clear: early and heavy smokers are very unlikely to quit.

There is also a link between childhood poverty and smoking patterns. Working-class women were much less likely to give up smoking than any other social group. This link was strengthened by early and heavy smoking. Other risk factors for heavy adult smoking included lack of educational qualifications and, for women, motherhood before the age of 23 and lone motherhood before the age of 33. Current social position also had an effect on smoking behaviour, so those who remained in low social classes were likely to remain smokers.

Other interesting patterns included adolescent smokers being less likely to be upwardly socially mobile and more likely to go down the social classes than non-smokers. Persistent smoking was not associated with parental smoking behaviour but it was associated with poor educational performance. Those who gained good educational qualifications were far more likely to quit than those with few.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

The importance of this report to an understanding of debates about the unequal distribution of health and illness by social class and gender will make it important for a long time. It also has significance for an understanding of both the usefulness and the limitations of statistical research in the understanding of risk behaviours such as smoking.

EVALUATION

This is an enormously important piece of research because it offers a reason for the persistence of class based differences in morbidity and mortality rates. It has important limitations though because it does not explain why people choose to smoke or the meaning people give to the activity. Also, despite its longitudinal nature and illustrations of patterns over time, it still remains only a snapshot of a generation, a significant point bearing in mind that patterns of smoking are different today among young people than they were in the early 1970s.

06 RELIGION & BELIEFS

UK CHRISTIAN HANDBOOK: RELIGIOUS TRENDS 6 2006/07

EDITED BY PETER BRIERLEY, 2007

CONTEXT **Christian Research is an organisation which exists to provide helpful information to church leaders.**

Its approach is summarised as 'working with information: turning the tide'. It therefore starts from the assumption that the decline of Christianity in the UK is a bad thing. The purpose of the census carried out here is to track the extent of the decline and to determine which forms of Christianity and in which areas are in decline and which are holding their own or even growing. The research was partly funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Counting attendance at church services is a long established measure of religious practices but one that has been subject to a number of criticisms relating to when the count is done (some Sundays have higher attendance than others) and how (ministers do not have time to carry out accurate counts, and counting cars in the car park excludes pedestrians and doesn't tell us how many people were in each car). Nevertheless it is accepted that church attendance has been falling for many years.

The research here attempts a survey of all churches in England (not the United Kingdom, despite the title), and also to count churchgoers by age, gender and ethnic group. It is possible to track changes over time because the census has been carried out on previous occasions using the same questions.

FIND OUT MORE

Brierley, P. (ed.) (2007) *UK Christian Handbook: Religious Trends 6 2006-7*. Swindon: Christian Research

Christian Research (**www.christian-research.org.uk**)

UK Christian Handbook (**www.ukchristianhandbook.org.uk**)

The Kendal Project (**www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/ieppp/kendal/**)

Heelas, P. and Woodhead, L. (2005) T*he Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell

METHODS

The handbook is a compendium of data produced by the fourth English church census, although some types of data included in earlier editions of the handbook are absent pending further analysis of the data.

The census was carried out on 8th May 2005. All 37,501 churches in England were contacted in writing and responses, either mailed or online, were received from just over half (50.02%). The response rate was higher for the larger denominations such as the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church but much lower for Pentecostal and other churches, which are less likely to have paid leaders. The handbook claims that the response rate is above normal research expectations and good enough for findings to be considered reliable. Estimates were made for churches that did not respond, based partly on the assumption that their returns would be like those of similar churches, and partly on responses to earlier surveys.

The two page census form is reproduced in the handbook. It contains questions on attendance at services, the age, gender and ethnic group of those attending, attendance at worship at other times of the week, Alpha courses, support for charities and involvement in local communities.

For the purpose of the census, 'church' was defined as, 'a body of people meeting on a Sunday in the same premises primarily for public worship at regular intervals'. This definition allows for the inclusion of, for example, chapels in hospitals and in the armed forces. In addition, groups meeting on Saturdays such as Seventh Day Adventists were also included, as were groups meeting at least monthly. The day of the census was the 60th anniversary of VE Day, which may have increased attendance when churches held special services. Some churches included all who attended, others left out of the census return those who were not regular attendees whilst others took the census on a different Sunday which would be more 'normal'.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall these findings confirm what Paul Heelas, who led the Kendal Project, describes as 'the sense of remorseless and inevitable decline' of churchgoing.

The handbook contains a huge amount of information, a lot of it related to churches by county, and only a selection of findings is given here.

The percentage of the population attending church on the census Sunday was 6.3%. The changes over time are dramatically illustrated by coloured maps. A map of England in 1979 is dominated by purple to indicate 11% or higher Sunday church attendance, and orange for 9 to 11%, with no areas below 7%. By 2005 both purple and orange have disappeared completely, with only a handful of counties with higher than 7% attendance.

40% of churches and 57% of churchgoers were in suburban areas or towns, for city centres and estates the figures were 19% and 24% respectively and for rural area 41% and 19%. Evangelical churches and the Catholic church had a stronger presence in urban areas than other denominations. Evangelical churches were strongest in the south and south-east, with Catholicism strong in the north-west and south-east.

While churchgoing overall was in decline, about a third of churches had grown since 1998. These churches tended to have higher than average proportions of young worshippers; this may be because growing churches are more likely to be able to offer facilities and activities more suitable for families and children. Older people tend to attend smaller churches. Churches based on forms of Christianity which emphasised the holy spirit and which were small and focused on individuals were more likely to be growing than those that emphasised the general good of humanity while underplaying transformative religious experiences.

About one in eight ministers were female but the proportion of churchgoers who were female was just under 60%. 27% of churchgoers claimed to read the bible at least once a week other than at services.

EVALUATION

Perhaps inevitably in a large scale survey, this research has some shortcomings. The day chosen was not a normal Sunday, but one which would have higher than normal attendance (though the researchers claim that 'there is no reason to think that the church attendance that Sunday was abnormal', suggesting that some regular churchgoers might have attended the Cenotaph instead and thus been omitted). Churches recognised this problem but addressed it in different ways so that the standardisation vital to the reliability of this type of research (all respondents answering the same questions in the same way) was lost.

A further set of problems relates to the publication of findings about churchgoers based on estimates by ministers. The figures for age, gender and ethnicity are taken from the section of the census form which is introduced with, 'We appreciate that it may be difficult to give an accurate figure... but it would be a great help if you would estimate the answers as best you can.' The figures for bible reading can be little better than guesswork by ministers unless they actually carried out a survey of their congregation first. Despite these problems, the large scale nature of the survey makes it likely that the overall picture suggested by analysis of the census data is broadly accurate.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research contributes statistical evidence to the debates about secularisation and the decline of church membership and attendance in England. It confirms the long-term decline of Christianity, with only small evangelical churches seemingly able to withstand the overall trend. The subtitle of the publication, 'Pulling out of the nosedive', seems on the basis of the findings here, to need at least a question mark. What this means for secularisation depends on the linked debates about believing without belonging and the rise of spirituality and New Age Movements.

RELIGION IN ENGLAND & WALES: FINDINGS FROM THE 2001 HOME OFFICE CITIZENSHIP SURVEY

MARIA O'BEIRNE, 2004

CONTEXT **Much discussion within the sociology of religion has concerned secularisation: what the term means and whether or not it is taking place.**

A range of indicators such as a decline in church attendance seem to suggest that religion is becoming less important. Most of the indicators however can be disputed, for example church attendance can be measured in different ways that give different results.

Furthermore, some religions, especially those associated with Britain's minority ethnic groups, show no signs of decline and are even thriving. Membership of a religion can provide an important source of reassurance as well as material support from other members of the group during difficult periods such as migration to a new country. In Britain, Asian and African-Caribbean immigrants have used their religions as centres of their communities. Secularisation theorists would argue however, that over time, as the immigrant communities adapt and become integrated, religion may lose this role (for example, Bruce 1996).

The 2001 Census asked a question about religion for the first time. In the same year the new Home Office Citizenship Survey described here collected data on religious affiliation. One of the project's aims was to research religious discrimination. This term is often used loosely, but in practice can include actions such as religious jokes, compulsory religious services and failure to provide alternatives. The collection of this data was part of the process by which the government approached the issue of whether and how to strengthen the law for protecting religious rights and acting against religious discrimination.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research contributes to the debates about secularisation by showing the continuing importance of religion in life in Britain and especially its importance for minority ethnic groups. The minority religions and their followers become the focus of almost all of the commentary, this is made possible by the booster sample. Religion and ethnicity are shown to be very closely connected, so much so say the authors, that they need to be considered together rather than separately for policy and research work. At the same time there is no easy correspondence between ethnicity and religion - not all Christians are white and not all Muslims are Asian.

METHODS

O'Beirne's analysis is based on data taken from the Home Office Citizenship Survey which gathers information on other topics as well as religion. This was carried out for the first time in 2001 (the survey from which the data here is taken) and is planned to take place every two years. The survey covers five main areas: family policy, active community, racial prejudice, social capital and rights and responsibilities. Its purpose is to provide the government with data which can be used to inform decision making about these policy areas and to measure performance in relation to its targets. The survey involves about 10,000 respondents in its core sample and an additional 5000 for a booster sample to ensure adequate numbers from minority ethnic groups.

The response rate in 2001 was 68%. Households in the sample were contacted initially be letter, on Home Office headed paper, with an information leaflet and contact details. The respondents, one adult selected randomly from households in the survey, were interviewed in their homes between March and September 2001 by about 600 fully trained interviewers from market research companies. The interviews used Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and lasted just under an hour on average. Interpreters could be used if necessary, usually they were a relative of the respondent.

As well as the main sample, the survey used a minority ethnic booster sample of 5,460 people. Taken together with the main sample, the survey included 6,019 respondents from minority ethnic groups. This made it the largest survey of its kind involving minority ethnic groups. Ethnicity was operationalised by using five main categories (white, mixed, Asian, black and other) with sub-categories.

The question used to establish religious affiliation was simply, 'What is your religion?' To assess the importance of religion for self-identity, respondents were asked, 'Suppose you were describing yourself, which of the things on this card would say something important about you?' Respondents were shown a card with 15 items and asked to pick those they thought important.

The data collected included responses to open-ended questions, which had to be coded for analysis. The findings are presented as a set of tables with explanatory commentary.

KEY FINDINGS

Almost 80% of respondents stated that they had a religious affiliation. 74% described themselves as Christian and 2% each as Muslim and Hindu. These were the largest faith communities. Religious affiliation was higher for women and for middle-aged and older people, especially Christians and Jews. The age profiles of the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faith communities were younger. Religious affiliation was higher for Asian and Black people than for those who were white or mixed race and also higher for those born outside the United Kingdom than for those born within it. Respondents with a religious affiliation often lived in areas with low to moderate levels of deprivation except for Muslims who were much more likely to live in areas of deprivation in cities.

99% of those with no religious affiliation were white. Most Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs described themselves as Asian. The majority of Jewish and Buddhist respondents were also white. 96% of Christians were born in the United Kingdom. 43% of Muslims were born in the Indian sub-continent and 31% in the UK; Hindus reported a wider range of origins, reflecting patterns of migration.

Only 20% of respondents said that their religious beliefs were an important part of their identity. Higher levels were recorded for family, work, age/life stage, interests, level of education, nationality, gender and level of income. Religion scored more highly than social class, family's country of origin, ethnic background, skin colour, disability and sexuality. What being affiliated to a faith community meant to people varied. Members of religions other than Christianity tended to say that their beliefs were more important to their sense of identity than white Christians. 17% of white respondents said that religion was important to them compared to 44% of black and 61% of Asian respondents. Religion was tenth in the list of 'things that would say something important about you' for white respondents, third for black respondents and second (after family, which was at the top for all groups) for Asian respondents.

Most respondents said that the government and employers were doing the right amount to protect religious rights and to respect religious customs. More young and female Muslims and Sikhs, but still a minority, thought that the government was not doing enough.

EVALUATION

The relationship between religion and ethnicity is a very strong one for some groups, but it is difficult in research like this to bring out the effects each has on behaviour and attitudes. The research was unable to consider references to branches of religions or to sects and cults (although the numbers for these would have been small). Thus the faith community categories used, perhaps inevitably, conceal what might be very important differences. In a similar way, the categories used for ethnic group membership can obscure other important differences, not least differences within the large undifferentiated 'white' category. Problems such as these are to some extent inevitable in large-scale survey research.

Despite these problems, the research makes a strong contribution towards our understanding of the continuing importance of religion for some groups in Britain today.

FIND OUT MORE

O'Beirne, M. (2004) *Religion in England and Wales: Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*. Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate

The Citizenship Survey website is at: **www.communities.gov.uk/archived/general-content/communities/citizenshipsurvey/**

Bruce, S. (1996) *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

RELIGION IN BRITAIN:

NEITHER BELIEVING NOR BELONGING

DAVID VOAS & ALASDAIR CROCKETT, 2005

CONTEXT **This paper is a contribution to the long running debate on secularisation. Its title refers to the phrase 'believing without belonging' used by Grace Davie. Davie (1994) argued that in Britain and much of Europe many people still have religious beliefs but no longer express these through church membership or attendance.**

Thus the commonly accepted indicators of religion such as the numbers attending a church service on Sundays show a steady decline, but this is not necessarily evidence of secularisation. Other research shows that many people still claim to believe in God or in some supernatural power. Davie argues that people still have beliefs but no longer belong to or attend churches. People express their beliefs through private worship although some events (such as the death of Princess Diana) make these private beliefs publicly visible.

There are three main ways in which religious decline (or lack of it) can be measured.

1. **Religious affiliation:** whether people belong (or say they belong) to a religious organisation such as a church.
2. **Religious attendance:** whether people attend church services or other communal religious gatherings.
3. **Religious belief:** whether people believe in a God or supernatural being. There is considerable disagreement about what actually constitutes religious belief and about how questions about belief should be worded. Asking whether people believe in a higher force for example will get many more positive responses than asking whether they believe in God.

Voas and Crockett argue that 'believing without belonging' has become a 'slogan' (which they refer to as BWB) and that it is used by many people with less care and evidence than Davie. They say there are two versions of BWB.

1. The strong version claims that people continue to believe in God, apart from a small number of atheists, and that the number has not gone down in recent years. People take churches for granted; they need them only occasionally so attendance has fallen
2. The weak version depends on counting as belief even expressions of interest in the meaning of life or the future of the planet. This inflates the figures for religious belief by redefining religious belief. In this form BWB may be just a transitional phase as we move towards a secular society.

Believing without belonging has also been associated with the view that there has been a much wider move away from associational activities: that is people no longer join and become active in organisations in the way that they once did and that this can be seen in the decline of membership (and particularly active membership) of trade unions, political parties and other organisations.

METHODS

Voas and Crockett's argument is based not on primary data they have collected themselves but on an analysis of publicly available secondary data. These data were taken from two sources: the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and the British Social Attitudes (BSA) surveys. The BHPS is a longitudinal panel study, running since 1991 and involving about 5500 households. It is carried out by a team of researchers at the University of Essex and has produced a wealth of data about, for example, families and employment in Britain. The BHPS has included three questions on religion, although it has not used them every year. Voas and Crockett were, however, able to compare wave 1 (1991-2) results with wave 9 (1999-2000) results.

The three questions were:

- Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? (If yes, which?)
- How often, if at all, do you attend religious services or meetings?
- How much difference would you say religious beliefs make to your life? Would you say they make a little difference, some difference, a great difference, no difference?

The BSA surveys have always included questions about religious affiliation and attendance, but not belief, providing Voas and Crockett with data over a much longer time period than the BHPS.

Voas and Crockett's analysis led them to conclusions which raised questions about religious socialisation within families. They were able to use BHPS data to investigate these questions, for example about the impact of parents' affiliation, practice and belief on their children's religiosity as young adults, whether it makes a difference whether the parents have the same religion and so on.

KEY FINDINGS

Voas and Crockett found that religious belief is declining at the same rate as religious affiliation and attendance so the 'strong version' of BWB is wrong.

Moreover, levels of belief are lower than those for belonging; fewer people claim a religious belief than say they have a religious affiliation. Some people belong without believing.

This decline is related to generation. Older people are more religious than younger people but this is a result of generation, not age. The young adults of 1983 had not become more religious by 2003 when they reached middle age. The same applied to almost all other age groups

The generational decline in religiosity has been continuous; it did not suddenly begin in the 1960s as part of a break from earlier stricter values. Those born in the 1930s were less religious than those born in the 1920s, and so on. This fits with figures on churchgoing, which suggest a long decline from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

Voas and Crockett suggest that this continuous decline in religiosity is explained by the declining effectiveness of religious socialisation within the family. Religious parents have experienced only limited success in passing on religious beliefs to their children, while non-religious parents almost always have non-religious children.

Voas and Crockett found that if neither parent attends church at least once a month, the chances of their children attending as young adults are negligible. Where both parents attend at least monthly there is a 46% chance that their children will as young adults. This falls to 23% when only one parent attends at least monthly. Similar figures were found for identification with a religion. The overwhelming majority of children whose parents said they had no religion said the same.

If the 'believing without belonging' argument is correct there would still be a high level of belief among young adults. In fact the conclusions for belief are very similar: two non-religious parents almost invariably pass on their lack of belief while about half of those with two religious parents have a belief, and one parent does half as well as two together.

Young women are slightly less likely than young men to say that religious belief makes no difference to their lives, are more likely to attend church and are slightly more likely than young men to join a different religious group to that of their parents.

FIND OUT MORE

Voas, D. and Crockett, A. (2005), 'Religion in Britain: Neither Believing or Belonging' in *Sociology* vol. 39 (1), London: Sage Publications

Davie, G. (1994), *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*. Oxford, Blackwell

EVALUATION

The secondary sources used by Voas and Crockett are inevitably imperfect (for example, the BSA not including questions about belief), although the large size of the samples ought to ensure representativeness. Voas and Crockett's analysis provides clear evidence of a steady decline in belief, undermining the strong version of 'believing without belonging'.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

These findings are a very important contribution to the debate on secularisation in Britain today. Voas and Crockett's analysis indicates that the strong version of believing without belonging is wrong. The weak version is less clear and harder to refute, relying as it does on questionable extensions of what can be counted as religious. This research provides powerful evidence that belief, as well as attendance and membership, is in long-term decline. By suggesting socialisation within the family and generational difference as key factors it also points the way for further research.

BELIEVING IN BELONGING

ABBY DAY, 2007

CONTEXT **The 2001 Census, the first to ask a question about religion, found that 71.6% of respondents described themselves as Christian.**

This was a surprisingly high figure bearing in mind that much recent research (e.g. Bruce 1995) has suggested that both religious practice and religious belief are declining. For example only about 7% of the population goes to church on a typical Sunday. It was expected that the Census findings would show more people describing themselves as not having a religious belief, but this was not the case. Although British people seem to be becoming less religious in their behaviour, they are still willing to identify themselves as having religious affiliation.

The Census finding seems to provide support for the argument of Davie (1994) and others that, rather then simply declining, religion is changing. People still believe in God and in Christian ideals but do not belong or go to a church; instead they express their religion at home, in private if at all. This would explain the falls in church membership and attendance, and in traditional religious rites such as baptism and weddings. It also fits with the wider decline of organisations in society which has affected pressure groups, trade unions and many societies and other organisations which encourage active membership.

Day's research is an attempt to explore what people really mean when they say they are Christian or that they are religious. She is interested in whether the Census findings should make us rethink the arguments about secularisation and about believing without belonging.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

The theory of believing without belonging is now at the centre of debates about secularisation in Britain. Day's contribution here is to look more closely at what is meant by 'believing', and to provide evidence that the levels of religious belief shown in surveys such as the Census are misleading because what appear to be religious labels such as 'Christian' may have limited religious content. Her findings contradict the 'believing without belonging' theory, and are more in line with the arguments of Bruce and Voas and Crockett that secularisation is occurring (see pp66-67).

FIND OUT MORE

Day, A. (2007) 'Believing in Belonging: Religion Returns to Sociology Mainstream.' *Network*, British Sociological Association, Summer 2007

Day, A. (2007) 'A Sociology of Belief' in *Sociology Review*, vol.16 (4). Deddington: Philip Allan

Davie, G. (1994) *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*. Oxford: Blackwell

METHODS

Day argues that much earlier research on religious belief has produced questionable results for two reasons. Firstly, the wording of questions; for example, a question such as 'do you believe in God?' uses religious terms and channels people into answering using those terms. To overcome this, Day did not ask 'religious' questions. The second problem is the nature of the sample; non-religious people tend to opt out of research on religion so samples contain unrepresentatively high proportions of religious people, overestimating the extent of religiosity. Day introduced her research to respondents as being about values and beliefs in general, not specifically about religion. She avoided using words like 'gods', 'religion' and 'spirituality' in her questions. She also used snowball sampling, asking chosen 'gatekeepers' to introduce her to other people, hoping in this way to avoid self-selection by people with religious beliefs. In these ways she hoped to make her sample more representative of the wider population.

Day's research involved people in Yorkshire, exploring why they affiliated with Christianity while not apparently holding Christian beliefs. She carried out qualitative research with more than 200 people aged between 14 and 83, divided evenly by gender and from across the range of socio-economic groups. The research included 68 semi-structured interviews which were recorded and transcribed. The questions asked about people's beliefs, for example, about how life began and how it might end, what, if anything life meant to them, what frightened or delighted them and the sources of those emotions or beliefs.

The first question was, 'What do you believe in?' Day says that this deliberately allowed respondents to decide what 'believe' meant to them. When, as many did, they asked her what it meant she said she didn't know. Day argues that this helped make the interview more of a conversation between equals, and allowed respondents to choose to talk about what was important to them.

KEY FINDINGS

Day's main finding was that people 'believe in belonging'. She arrived at this conclusion form the way that people talked about their beliefs, about what was right and wrong, and about 'treating people right'.

People were happiest when they were with people they loved and most frightened when they thought about the death of someone they loved (not their own death). The most important things to them were their relationships with others and these shaped their beliefs. The main reasons people had for describing themselves as 'Christian' were not religious, but rather a way of claiming an ethnic, national or family identity. What they were mostly saying, she says, is that they are 'White English'.

Most people believed in belonging to other people like themselves. They tended to identify some people as 'us' and others as 'them'. The 'others' tended to fall into three categories:

- Ethnic others: respondents were careful to stress that they were not 'racist' but talked about other 'races' and religions as threateningly different.
- Young others: older people talked about young people as disrespectful, rude and dangerous (to older people).
- Bad mothers: women who were seen as rejecting the traditional motherhood role were seen as 'others' by both men and women.

This tendency to make some people 'others' was found throughout the over 18 age groups, but not the 14-18 year olds. They tended to be strongly condemning of racism and were not critical of their own lone mothers, rather the absent fathers.

Very few people mentioned God, Christianity or religion. Day asked how they had answered the Census question and 37 of the 68 interviewees had said 'Christian'. 18 of these were what Day calls 'adherent Christians': they believed in God and in heaven and attended church. The remaining nineteen were Christian for non-religious reasons:

- Natal Christians saw themselves as Christians because they were baptised, and so saw themselves as part of a Christian family and place of birth.
- Ethnic Christians saw Christianity in terms of Englishness and therefore, as a way of identifying with an ethnic group.
- Aspirational Christians saw Christianity as being about being good or respectable.

Another group of respondents had said in the Census that they had no religion, and saw power, agency and authority as human and secular. Day says they tended to be women who had been disappointed by a husband or lover, although there were some men. Both sexes had a pessimistic view of fate deciding their lives.

Overall the findings point to the vagueness of terms like 'religion' and to how a careful approach which focuses on beliefs without assuming they are religious can reveal that an apparent identification with a religion can really be a non-religious marker of identity. Day quotes a 14 year old to illustrate the ambiguity and apparent contradiction:

AD: What do you believe in?
Jordan: Nowt.
AD: Sorry?
Jordan: I don't believe in owt. I don't believe in any religions.
AD: You don't believe in any religions?
Jordan: No. I'm Christian, but I don't believe in owt.

EVALUATION

Day's qualitative research shows up some of the inadequacies of large-scale surveys that produce quantitative data. The apparent high levels of religious affiliation found in surveys are shown to be more about a sense of belonging to a community than about actual belief. The strengths of Day's research are her sampling, designed to avoid the common flaw of self-selected respondents being more religious than other people, and her avoidance of specifically religious questions, enabling her to see answers in the wider context of more general beliefs and values.

'LOVED THE WEDDING, INVITE ME TO THE MARRIAGE': THE SECULARISATION OF WEDDINGS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

JOHN WALLISS, 2002

CONTEXT **The title of this article was taken from a large poster on the notice board outside a church near the author's home. The word 'God' was added to denote the supposed source of the message to passers-by.**

Walliss notes that this poster can be understood either as pointing out that many couples marry in a church but then have no further involvement with the church, or as putting forward the view that Christianity ought to be part of a couple's lives throughout the marriage.

The poster thus directs attention to phenomena linked to the process of secularisation. Church weddings are in decline: in 2002, of a total of 85,870 marriages only 33.8% involved a religious ceremony. This represented a fall of 16% over ten years, with a particularly sharp fall after the 1994 Marriage Act which greatly increased the number and variety of places in which civil (non-religious) weddings could take place. After 1994, there was a rapid growth in the number of premises in which weddings could be held and these now include hotels, stately homes and sports and leisure clubs.

Those who argue that secularisation is at an advanced stage such as Bruce (2001) would see this as evidence of the decline of Christianity as a cultural and institutional force. Alternatively, the fact that as many as a third of marriages are religious could be taken as evidence of a continuing level of belief despite the fall in church attendances and in other measures of religious observance - many people who do not go to church still choose religious weddings. This supports the 'believing without belonging' argument in suggesting that significant numbers still hold private religious beliefs which prompt them to use a religious context for ceremonies such as weddings. The decline in church weddings also points to the declining part played by religious institutions in everyday life, with roles increasingly taken over by secular agencies.

FIND OUT MORE

Walliss, J. (2002) 'Loved The Wedding, Invite Me To The Marriage': The Secularisation Of Weddings In Contemporary Britain. *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 7 (4) **www.socresonline.org.uk/7/4/walliss.html**

Bruce, S. (2001), 'Christianity' in Britain R.I.P. in *Sociology of Religion* vol. 62 (2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Day, A. (2007), A Sociology of Belief in *Sociology Review*, vol. 16 (4)

Day, A. (2007) 'A Sociology of Belief' in *Sociology Review* vol. 16 (4). Deddington: Philip Allan

www.statistics.co.uk (search for 'marriages')

METHODS

Walliss's research is an attempt to find out why seemingly secular couples marrying for the first time often choose a religious wedding ceremony rather than any of the other widely available non-religious options. He describes this as the 'personal dimension' of the secularisation of weddings. He chose to carry out informal interviews, producing qualitative data, allowing his respondents to express themselves in their own way rather than answering questions with pre-set categories as answers.

Walliss carried out interviews with 25 couples, 15 of whom had either had a church wedding in the previous ten years or were planning to do so, and ten of whom had had a civil ceremony in the same period. Of the latter group, half their ceremonies took place in registry offices and half in approved premises. Some of the sample were contacted via personal links and snowballing and others via an e-mail mailing list. Nearly all were between their mid-twenties and mid-thirties and were getting married for the first time. They were all, with one exception, white, English and Christian in the sense of having been brought up in a mainly Christian culture. Walliss interviewed most of the couples together face-to-face but comments that the men said very little and allowed their wives to answer most of the questions. Some respondents were interviewed by telephone; most of these were wives or wives to be. Walliss also interviewed face-to-face two registrars, six managers of approved premises and four members of the clergy.

KEY FINDINGS

Walliss found that religious beliefs played only a small role in the choice of wedding location. Three other considerations were more significant.

1. **'The traditional thing to do':** the idea that a church is the only kind of place fitting for a wedding.

'I think it's every woman's right to get married in a church… it's like your day to be a princess, isn't it? I know it sounds daft. You're on show for that one day and hopefully you do it just once in a lifetime so you should make it count I think.'

2. **The influence of parents** or others, especially when paying for the wedding.

'… to please my parents more than anything else. There would have been pressure. They would have disapproved if I'd just gone and got married in a registry office.'

Wallis notes that some parents took over the organisation of the wedding completely, and that this could also apply to non-religious weddings.

3. **Aesthetic considerations.** These were linked to the idea of tradition and a feeling that the ceremony should take place in a traditional-looking setting. One clergyman commented on the way in which some couples 'parachuted in' to his small, traditional-looking village church and then would not be seen again:

'… some people in the church that I'm responsible for… think that people are using the church because I have a very beautiful church with stained glass windows, very, very beautiful and the right size for weddings … and some people in my congregation think they're only using the church for their own purpose…'

Respondents often said that weddings in registry offices and other places did not feel 'right'. This could however apply to modern churches too:

'I mean there's a church around here and it's built like a pyramid, you know, a very modern thing, and I couldn't imagine getting married in something like that.'

Among respondents who chose a civil wedding, a common idea was that it was hypocritical for non-religious people to marry in a church.

Those who chose approved premises cited reasons such as the ability to control the wedding, for example in deciding how the room was decorated, and in choosing music ('our song' rather than hymns). Yet even here, there was a role for tradition:

'If you can imagine the church wedding but without the religious element, that's what I got… I still got to walk up the aisle with my dad and I still had bridesmaids… but the religious aspects were taken out because they didn't actually mean a great deal to us.'

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research contributes to the debates on secularisation and on religiosity in Britain today. It identifies a continuing desire for traditions associated with religion, even among people who would not see themselves as religious, and in this way suggests a survival and continuing role for religion, at least for ceremonies associated with rites of passage. Despite the supposed greater choices as traditions break down in a postmodern world, the respondents here desire tradition. On the other hand, the attraction of church weddings seems more related to the idea of what is 'traditional' and 'right' rather than any religious content. As Walliss puts it, 'God may… not even be invited to the church itself, never mind the marriage.' This links to Day's later research (see pp?????), which promotes the idea of 'believing in belonging'.

EVALUATION

This research is based on a very small sample selected in such a way that no claims can be made about representativeness nor generalisations made to larger populations Nevertheless, the great virtue of this type of research is that it allows respondents to speak for themselves and thus provides valuable insights that could form the basis of further research. It suggests that the importance of religion in people's lives is changing in ways that are not fully captured in either the secularisation or believing without belonging arguments.

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON BELIEVING AND BELONGING

GREG SMITH, 2005

CONTEXT **The assumption that children's development is shaped by their environment was common until the 1980s.**

More recently it has been recognised that children are social actors playing an active part in their socialisation, not merely passive absorbers of their social environment. Within sociology this led to research on ways in which children interact, negotiate and participate in social life just as adults do, constructing and reconstructing their social environment. The research discussed here investigates how children understand and experience a range of issues in their lives. In the case of religion the focus in the past was on 'religious socialisation', how children were socialised into a religion by their family and religious institutions. This research shows how children have to negotiate often conflicting messages and demands from family, school and peers.

Although the book makes use of a variation on Grace Davie's idea of 'believing without belonging' in its title (Davie, 1994), her argument that belonging is in decline while believing is not, does not form part of the book's focus. Rather, the research attempts to investigate the complex interactions between believing and belonging that go on children's lives.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

With a high proportion of non-Christian respondents involved, these findings have significance for the secularisation debate, showing the importance of religion in the lives of these children. The research is broadly within the sociology of religion but will be of some interest to those studying identity and ethnicity, particularly in its attempts to understand the interconnections between Muslim religious identities and ethnic or descent-based identities.

FIND OUT MORE

Smith, G. (2005) *Children's Perspectives on Believing and Belonging*. London: National Children's Bureau/Joseph Rowntree Foundation

A summary of the findings is available at:
www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0375.asp

Some of the drawings and diaries produced for this project by the children are available at:
http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/friendsfoodfaith/fffindex.htm

Davie, G. (1994), *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*. Oxford: Blackwell

METHODS

The research uses interviews with school children to ask about the role religion plays in their lives, how they view their own and other children's religion and how religion contributes to the shaping of their identities and social and friendship networks.

Just over 100 children from three schools in multi-ethnic inner city areas in the north of England and London were interviewed. The children were aged 9 to 11, in their last two years at primary school, and came from a wide range of religious backgrounds. All three schools were situated in areas of poverty and deprivation. One school was run by the local authority without attachment to a religious institution, one was voluntary aided Church of England and one voluntary aided Roman Catholic. The samples were inevitably small and could not be representative. However, the fact that all three schools had children from a range of religious and ethnic backgrounds and that the children had relatively high awareness of social and religious differences meant that the researchers could explore a range of issues. The research was introduced to the children as being about 'friends, food and faith'.

The research team was diverse in gender, ethnic and religious background, and discussed this with the children when it was raised. Informed consent was obtained from parents and from the children, who were also reassured repeatedly about anonymity and confidentiality. The respondents were rewarded with a 'thank you' letter, a small party meal and a gift for those who also completed the diary.

The interviews mainly involved pairs of children, with the pairings usually chosen by the children so that most pairs were of the same sex and religion. The interviews were carried out in quiet places and were recorded and transcribed for analysis using a data analysis package. The questions followed a schedule but wherever possible were free flowing with the children able to talk about the topics that interested them. The interviews were supported by other classroom-based data gathering methods, including drawing and keeping diaries.

KEY FINDINGS

Each religious group contained children with different levels and patterns of both personal commitment to, and social observance of, their faith.

Their patterns of observance were not based on a straightforward affiliation or label but rather emerged from complex patterns of identity and belonging which also often involved kinship, ethnicity, gender and age. For example, a girl who described herself as Hindu said:

'I don't go to Hindu classes, just like once a week I go to a Gurdwara. And I have been to church with my auntie… sometimes I go to the temple and Gurdwara with my other auntie.'

Most children were able to identify with a particular religion. About 40% of the children in the survey were Muslims and they were the most likely to introduce themselves in religious terms or to start talking about religion. Religious observance tended to be highest among Muslim children and lowest among white children.

Children felt that primary schools played a role in bringing together children from different religions and many appreciated the opportunity to mix with children from other backgrounds. However some felt that their schools sometimes reinforced informal religious segregation and could deal better with conflicts arising between groups. Acts of worship in schools, school lunches and singing were all potential areas of conflict. Some Muslim children, who felt that they should not sing because it was against Islam and that they certainly should not sing Christian songs, faced particular difficulties. Some had been given permission by mosque teachers to mouth the words, others risked punishment:

'Once there was this teacher and I was not singing because it was this Christian song… I told her I didn't want to sing it, and she asked me to sing it… I said I don't want to sing because I'm not a Christian… so she put me in detention.'

Religion did not seem to be as important as gender and age in the formation of friendship groups - religious differences were not a barrier to friendship. However, such friendships and social contacts did not always extend into the out-of-school contexts of home and neighbourhood because of other demands and pressures. Muslim children typically spent 15 to 20 hours a week in religious instruction outside school and about an hour a day on prayer preparation and ritual. Even for the most observant children of other religions, weekly attendance at a religious class and some public or family worship was the norm.

EVALUATION

This is an example of policy-oriented research, paying very little attention to sociological theory or research, for example, Davie's work is used for little more than to provide a title. In the introduction the report briefly mentions earlier research on children, religion and ethnicity but without drawing on or even describing the findings.

The position of the schools and the respondents in areas of diversity and deprivation means that the results have to be taken as valid only for the children involved and for those living in very similar circumstances. The quotations from the transcripts allow children to express themselves in their own words. The findings begin to examine the relevance of religion to these children, although there is a strong overlap with ethnic differences. However, it seems likely that similar research in schools in other areas with lesser diversity and difference might have concluded that religion was of negligible importance to most children.

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES

PAUL WELLER, ALICE FELDMAN & KINGSLEY PURDAM, 2001

CONTEXT **This is thought to be the first large-scale survey about religious discrimination in England and Wales. The earlier focus of research on discrimination had been gender and racial discrimination.**

Racial and religious discrimination overlap because religious, ethnic and cultural identities overlap. Religion and ethnicity are both difficult to define and any separation of them is inevitably artificial. The experiences of Muslims in Britain for example, have tended to be seen as racial rather than religious discrimination. This is because in practice it is very difficult to determine the motive for a discriminatory act, and the victim's experience of it may be the same whatever the motive. As one respondent in this project put it:

'You are instantly more vulnerable if you wear traditional dress, whether you wear it for religious or cultural reasons.' (Muslim interviewee)

Under the Race Relations Act, Jews and Sikhs were recognised as ethnic groups and therefore given legal protection. However, Christians, Muslims and other groups were not categorised as distinct ethnic groups and so did not have this protection, although the Human Rights Act and European laws did allow people with grievances to bring cases. After the research described here produced evidence of the scale of religious discrimination, pressure for change grew. The Labour Government is, at the time of writing, committed to a single equality bill to apply to discrimination on grounds of gender, 'race', age and disability. In addition the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 made threatening behaviour based on religious hatred illegal.

Discrimination was defined for the purpose of research as any unfair treatment, whether by individuals or organisations.

FIND OUT MORE

Weller, P., Feldman, A. and Purdam, K. (2001) R*eligious Discrimination in England and Wales*. Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate

The report can be found at: **www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors220.pdf**

METHODS

The research involved two main methods, a national postal survey of religious organisations and interviews in four local areas.

To obtain a sample of religious organisations, the research team faced the problem of the absence of a sampling frame: there is no single definitive index. The main sources used were online databases and published lists such as the UK Christian Handbook. The final sampling frame contained about 45,000 Christian and 4,800 non-Christian organisations. A proportional sample would have been overwhelmingly made up of Christian organisations, so the researchers used all known national organisations and at least 50 local organisations within each religious tradition (Christian denominations were treated as separate). They were not able to achieve this aim always; for example they could only find 15 Zoroastrian organisations.

The survey combined the kinds of questions previously used in research on racial discrimination and religious belief. Most questions were closed but some open-ended questions were used so that respondents could report their own experiences. The survey was piloted with 125 organisations.

1,830 questionnaires were sent out, 628 were returned and 77 organisations declined to take part. The disappointing response rate, well short of the target 60%, occurred despite reminders, encouragement and an extended deadline. However, response rates for particular religions did not seem to be related to the level of discrimination reported by those who did reply.

156 interviews were carried out involving 318 people in four cities: Leicester, the London Borough of Newham, Blackburn and Cardiff. Interviews took place with leaders and representatives of organisations, with advice and community organisations and 'biographical' Interviews took place with the leaders and representatives of religious and community organisations and with 'ordinary individuals' who claimed to have experienced religious discrimination. The aim of the interviews was to try to capture more of what discrimination might really mean than would be gathered from the mainly quantitative data. It was also thought that the responses from organisations would be from particularly active individuals and that the interviews might capture the experiences of others.

Some people did not want to discuss what was clearly a highly sensitive area. The research team also encountered concerns that the research might have an ulterior motive and that the findings might be used against the respondents. There was also resentment against research in general: community groups felt that they were being asked to give more and more time to helping researchers without receiving individual feedback and without seeing any improvement in their communities. The researchers attempted to at least partly redress these concerns by sending a copy of the report to all respondents.

EVALUATION

The researchers say that a survey of individuals would have been preferable (individuals were put in the position of trying to reflect in their answers the collective experiences of their membership) but this was not practical and a representative sample could not have been obtained. The survey, understandably but unfortunately, produced a low response rate which raises doubts over its claims about the experiences of particular groups. Organisations worried about discrimination may have been more likely to respond so that scaling up the findings would exaggerate concerns about discrimination. While the survey findings may not achieve statistical reliability, they do give a reasonable impression of the experiences of the different religious traditions.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research contributed evidence to debates about policy, providing information on the extent and nature of religious discrimination and helping clarify whether legislation against religious discrimination was needed. Concerns about discrimination against Muslims grew later in the context of terrorist attacks and the responses to them, but the research here includes evidence of discrimination against Christian and other groups, and this issue later raised intense public debate, for example about the wearing of crucifixes at work.

KEY FINDINGS

There was widespread concern about ignorance and indifference towards religion across all faith groups. The researchers point out that these are not in themselves discrimination, but can lead in organisations to a situation in which discrimination is likely. In interviews, respondents said that they often felt awkward or under pressure to conform and that people seemed to base their views of their religion on pre-conceived ideas and stereotypes. Organisations representing Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus were concerned about hostility and violence, and also about discrimination within organisations. Christian organisations were more concerned with unfairness arising from individual attitudes and behaviour. Those belonging to religions with very small memberships reported feeling unrecognised and excluded even by organisations that were trying to include and involve the larger minority religions.

There was a mixed response to questions about whether or not religious discrimination was becoming more or less frequent over the preceding five years. Muslims were the most likely to say the situation was getting worse, while Buddhists and Baha'i felt things had improved.

Muslims reported a consistently higher level of unfair treatment than other groups, both in terms of the reporting of unfair treatment and in its frequency. Most aspects of education, employment, housing, law and order and local government services were reported as areas of unfair treatment. Hindu and Sikh organisations also reported these concerns at a slightly lower level. Christians tended to report only 'occasional' unfair treatment. Pagans and other members of New Religious Movements complained of open hostility and of being labelled by the media as 'child abusers' and 'cults'.

The media were reported as the most frequent source of unfair treatment, especially the attitudes and behaviour of journalists and presenters.

Religions with large numbers of visible minorities such as Muslims felt there was a high degree of overlap between religious and racial discrimination and they often referred to racism and racial discrimination in the interviews. Black-led Christian organisations were more likely to say their members experienced unfair treatment than Christians in general. However, white people of British descent also claimed unfair treatment; this may be related to the influence of beliefs on their behaviour or to attempts to convert others.

07 MASS MEDIA

REPORTING ISLAM: MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF BRITISH MUSLIMS

ELIZABETH POOLE, 2002

CONTEXT **Poole says in the preface that this book was due to go to press in September 2001. It is not however a book that has been overtaken by events; rather, it sheds further light on how we reached the present state of public understanding about Islam.**

Muslims have lived in Britain for at least 300 years, but the second half of the twentieth century saw a significant growth in numbers. The main period of immigration was the 1950s and 1960s. Immigration was slowed and then halted by a series of acts of parliament in the 1960s and 1970s. Many British Muslims are now British-born. There are also around 5000 converts to Islam. Amongst Muslims in Britain today there are more young and fewer old people than in the general population. Statistics show Muslims are disadvantaged compared to other groups on a wide range of indices (for example, unemployment, underachievement at school, risk of victimisation).

In 'Orientalism' (1978), Edward Said shows how Western writers have constructed an ideology of Eastern cultures as alien and to be defined in terms of opposition to Western culture and values. This idea can be reworked to account for later developments. For example, a study of representations of Islam by the Commission on British Muslims (1997) drew attention to the portrayal of Islam in an undifferentiated way, ignoring differences within Islam and changes over time.

FIND OUT MORE

Poole, E. (2002) *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*. London: IB Tauris

Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997), *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all*. London: Runnymede Trust (**www.runnymedetrust.org/projects/commissionOnBritishMuslims**)

Hall, S. (1992) The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power, in Hall, S. and Gieben, B. (eds), *Formations of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity and Buckingham: Open University Press

Said, E. (1978), *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage

METHODS

Poole investigated the representation of British Muslims using three methods.

1. Quantitative analysis
Poole carried out a statistical content analysis of coverage of all stories related to Islam in two newspapers between January 1994 and December1996. She chose The Guardian and The Times and their Sunday equivalents, The Observer and The Sunday Times, for their different political standpoints, while expecting some similarities because of their shared status as 'quality' newspapers.

2. Discourse analysis
To complement her quantitative analysis, Poole carried out a qualitative analysis studying, for example, word choice, image choice and sentence structure. This analysis involved, as well as The Times and The Guardian, two tabloids, The Daily Mail and The Sun. Poole chose stories that were prominent and were developed over a period of time, on the grounds that these were most likely to influence public understandings of Islam and Muslims.

3. Focus group interviews
The aim of these was to see how far the focus groups shared the newspapers' discourse (way of thinking) that Poole describes and so understand how audiences construct meaning. The four focus groups were selected by purposive sampling and comprised people with similar social characteristics and from the same or similar social networks so that participants would feel comfortable disclosing opinions. The groups consisted of 16 to 18 year olds from in and around Leicester, in the East Midlands, an area which has a history of good relations between ethnic communities. The two Muslim groups were single sex because the girls requested this to comply with cultural norms. The members of these groups were from economically disadvantaged city areas but were well-educated. The other two groups were non-Muslims, one with frequent contact with Muslims and the other with little or no contact. Each group was given four newspaper articles, each of which had been considered in the analytical research. They were asked to write their reactions individually and then discuss in their focus group.

KEY FINDINGS

Quantitative analysis
Poole found that although there were significant differences between The Guardian and The Times, the two papers tended to cover the same limited range of issues. Muslims were not treated as part of British society; they rarely appeared in 'normal' news stories. Coverage was limited to events which fitted assumptions about Muslim identities and affairs. In reporting marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims (such as Jemima Goldsmith to Imran Khan) articles emphasized cultural differences and suggested such relationships could not last. Reports about the election of a Muslim MP, Mohammed Sarwar, focused on allegations of vote-rigging.

British Muslims' beliefs and practices were made to seem strange. The ties which British Muslims have with other countries were emphasized to make them appear 'foreign', with loyalties elsewhere, and so potentially threatening.

There were differences of emphasis and opinion within this dominant representation, and it is even contradicted at times (for example, by a minority of articles in The Guardian). Poole argues however that what counts is the overall picture.

Discourse analysis
Poole's qualitative analysis supports the data from the quantitative analysis. The coverage was negative overall, but not uniformly so. Muslims were reported either as passive or as acting negatively, as creating problems for the majority population, as disloyal and subversive if they asked for equal treatment and as acting on irrational beliefs and relying on customs and ritual.

Focus group interviews
Some of the articles clearly carried a dominant or preferred reading which readers were intended to take from them. Poole found that Muslim participants offered alternative readings, often oppositional, while the non-contact group accepted the preferred reading. The contact group tended to be more negative about Islam than the non-contact group. They had greater knowledge, being aware of some of the stories and issues, but interpreted these using liberal ideas of fairness and equality, which led to concerns about restrictions in Islam on individual freedoms and negative perceptions of 'backward' customs. Some participants who had greater knowledge were able to reject the negative representations.

EVALUATION

The research does not cover all of the media - it only looks at newspaper coverage of British Muslims and does not consider representations in the broadcast media. A further problem involves the use of focus groups. These are always artificial groups, put together for the purposes of the research, and in this case excluding other age groups. In focus group settings, too, individuals may keep quiet about views they think others may not agree with.

Poole's research is timely though in its focus: it looks at how understanding of Islam was being influenced by the media in the period immediately before the events of 11th September 2001. The discourses she describes would later be developed to present the idea of British Muslims as a threat to the majority even more strongly.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research shows how Islam is represented in very limited ways, with stories selected to fit news agendas and reported in ways that confirm existing ways of thinking. Islam is demonized, presented as a threat to 'us'. 'The West' and 'Islam' are defined as opposites, propagating the idea of confrontation. Events are interpreted to fit the majority view. This is not a settled and fixed situation, however; Poole shows how the discourses change with events and how counter discourses occasionally feature.

Poole also shows how media reporting influences perceptions. Although people's most immediate source of knowledge derives from direct experience of their environment, the focus group interviews showed that even non-Muslims in a multicultural environment lacked the knowledge to develop ideas counter to those in the media.

Poole's research offers a way of beginning to understand how those representations shape our understanding, and how they can be challenged.

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF LEADING JOURNALISTS

THE SUTTON TRUST, 2006

CONTEXT **Marxist and other radical writers have often claimed that the media convey a dominant ideology, a 'world view' which is taken for granted by most of the population.**

While any media text can usually be interpreted in a range of ways, there is usually an intended or preferred meaning - the message that the producers of the text intend audiences to accept. In this way the media can shape their audience's understanding, contributing, according to Marxists, to the hegemony of one world view.

So how might this occur? One argument is that most people in decision-making positions in the mass media share a similar view of the world which leads them to agree on what is news and on how stories should be reported. The media elite share that world view, it is claimed, because they share similar backgrounds: white, male, middle class and middle aged. The news media therefore tend to reflect the views and assumptions associated with these social characteristics.

This argument is sometimes seen as relevant only to an earlier period but no longer applies because people from a wider range of backgrounds are reaching positions of power within the media. By the early 21st century, we would expect meritocracy rather than privilege to decide who becomes a leading editor or journalist.

This research sets out to address the importance of educational background for success in the news media. If in earlier generations many top journalists had been to private school and to Oxbridge, how much has changed? How easy or difficult is it for someone with a state school education, or someone who has not attended a top university, to reach the top in the media?

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research shows how little has changed at the highest levels in the news media. To a remarkable degree those at the top share similar educational backgrounds and the chances for those from less privileged backgrounds seem to be declining as financial pressures worsen for those beginning their careers. This raises questions about what the news media present as news (are they preoccupied with the issues that concern the social elite that the top journalists belong to?) and about whether the interests of other groups in society can be adequately represented.

For the sociology of education, this research shows that under the tripartite system grammar schools did, for a minority, provide upward social mobility into an elite. Comprehensive schools have been less able to do this.

METHODS

As their starting point, the researchers determined who were the 100 leading journalists working in news and current affairs. They did this by consulting senior figures in the media industry.
The journalists on their list fell into four categories:

- newspaper editors
- newspaper columnists
- broadcast presenters
- broadcast editors.

These four groups together shape the news stories presented to the public through newspapers, radio and television - they are the gatekeepers for the news media.

The researchers then drew up a list for 1986 in order to track changes over time. As far as possible the 1986 list comprised the people in the same or equivalent roles to those in 2006, but with some changes to reflect the changing nature of news media (for example, Sky TV's senior journalists appear in the 2006 list but not the1986 version). On both lists, the organisation with the most journalists is the BBC, which despite falling shares of viewers and listeners remains the dominant force in news.

Information on the journalists' backgrounds was gathered by a variety of means: contacting the journalists directly, using official sources such as 'Who's Who' and profiles on websites and publications. The schools attended were classified as comprehensive, grammar or private at the time the journalist joined the school. The universities attended were classified into Oxbridge, the Sutton Trust top 13 (those consistently ranked high in the average of major league tables) and other universities.

The researchers also attempted a broader survey into the educational backgrounds of a much wider range of journalists, to see whether the pattern at the top of the profession was constant throughout and especially for those entering journalism now. However, the response of those approached was unhelpful. Information on the educational background of journalists was requested from the BBC under the Freedom of Information laws but the BBC said that it would be too time consuming and costly to produce. Editors in other news organisations said that such information was not collected.

Finally the researchers attempted a survey on recruitment procedures, asking a wide range of people including editors, producers, course directors, students and trainees how recruitment was carried out.

KEY FINDINGS

The key finding was that the majority of Britain's leading journalists were educated in private schools.

Private schools contain just 7% of the school population at the moment, but 54% of journalists had attended private school. This percentage has risen from 49% 20 years ago.

The percentage of journalists educated in comprehensive schools is now 14%, having risen from 6% in 1986. The percentage educated in grammar schools has fallen, reflecting the phasing out of grammar schools. However, this fall is greater than the rise in the percentage from comprehensive schools. It seems that whereas grammar schools had provided a launch pad to a career in journalism for many of those at the top in 1986, comprehensive schools are less able to do this and it is those attending private schools who benefit.

45% of journalists had attended Oxford or Cambridge University; this figure is down from 52% in 1986. The figure of 45% represents 56% of journalist with a university education. 37% of journalists with a university education had attended Oxford University and 72% had attended one of the top 13 universities. The proportion of women among the leading journalists has risen from 10% in 1986 to 18% by 2006.

The separate survey showed that new recruits to the national news media are even more likely now to come from privileged backgrounds than those from previous generations. This is because:

- they are more likely to be able to cope with low pay when entering the profession
- they are more likely to be able to afford the high cost of living in London
- they are more likely to be able to afford the increasing costs of postgraduate courses
- The recruitment process is competitive but informal and favours those with family or personal connections within the media
- Privately educated students are perceived to show stronger skills and ambition at an earlier age.

Overall it is very difficult for those whose backgrounds are outside those of the media and social elite to reach the top in journalism and it is becoming harder even to enter journalism at the lowest levels.

EVALUATION

The selection of the lists of 100 top journalists is inevitably arbitrary – who should be on the list and who should be left out? A list of the most powerful figures in the media would have included owners and directors but this survey chose to focus on those shaping news media content more directly and in doing so provides powerful evidence of the importance of education background. This does not in itself prove any influence on the shaping of news media content and journalists themselves will claim to be guided only by their audience's interests and values.

FIND OUT MORE

The Sutton Trust (2006) *The Educational Background of Leading Journalists.* **www.suttontrust.com/reports/Journalists-backgrounds-final-report.pdf**

The Sutton Trust (**www.suttontrust.com**)

MEDIA IMAGE, COMMUNITY IMPACT

THE INFORMATION CENTRE ABOUT ASYLUM AND REFUGEES IN THE UK (ICAR), 2004

CONTEXT **This research investigates press reporting of asylum seekers and refugees and its influence on beliefs, behaviour and the number of incidents of racial attacks and harassment.**

Statham (2002) has argued that press coverage of race issues is now more balanced than it was in the 1970s and 1980s when several studies found striking examples of biased reporting. These studies saw the media as inherently racist, conveying the dominant ideology and in effect creating a 'false consciousness' in which the white working class blamed 'immigrants' for social and economic problems. Statham argued that today even the right wing press recognises the rights and contributions of the black and Asian communities in Britain. However, reporting of asylum is an exception; asylum seekers and refugees are now the 'out-group' against whom 'we' (the settled communities, including black and Asian communities) are now defined.

The reporting of asylum issues in the British media has been criticised as hysterical, damaging and creating a hostile climate. The criticism is directed particularly at newspapers and especially at the right wing mid-market (Daily Mail and Daily Express) and red top (The Sun and Daily Star) tabloids.

Asylum is a major concern for the Greater London Authority (GLA), which commissioned this research, because of the potential impact on community cohesion if the public views asylum seekers and refugees negatively. Since 1997 there have been new laws to combat discrimination and new policies to reduce exclusion, to integrate refugees and to promote community cohesion, all of these could be damaged by biased reporting in the press.

The GLA wanted to investigate whether negative media coverage led to racist attitudes and crimes against refugees and asylum seeker communities and to fear of crime amongst the communities themselves.

FIND OUT MORE

The study can be accessed from the website of The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK at **www.icar.org.uk**.

Statham, P. (2002), *United Kingdom, Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media – an overview of research and some examples of good practice in the EU member states, 1995-2000*, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (**www.eumc.europa.eu**).

METHODS

The research tested the hypothesis that:

Inaccurate and unbalanced media images of refugees and asylum seekers cause misinformed and hostile views among members of the public and by doing so create tension within the communities of London boroughs which makes racial attacks on refugees and asylum seekers more likely

To investigate the hypothesis, the research team used a variety of methods, primarily content analysis and interviews.

Content analysis was carried out on a selection of national daily and Sunday newspapers, London newspapers and weekly newspapers aimed at minority ethnic readerships (The Voice and Asian Voice) and local papers in August and September 2003. The researchers studied the content of articles, assessing them for accuracy and balance when they had sufficient information.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to analyse audience reception of media messages about asylum seekers and refugees. The individual interviews involved key representatives of organisations concerned with refugees and asylum seekers such as the police, local authorities and refugee community organisations.

Focus group interviews were carried out with one adult group and one youth group who were predominantly white British and one adult and one youth group from black and minority community groups. The groups were asked to discuss their responses to headlines and stories, their previous exposure to the media and community relations; they also completed a questionnaire.

Racist incidents were monitored to assess the extent of victimisation. Nine refugee community organisations completed forms recording incidents.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall, the research tended to confirm the hypothesis but the report stresses that this is a preliminary study and that further research is needed.

The study of newspaper headlines found that in reporting issues involving asylum and refugees, the newspapers concentrated on health, crime, policy failures and concern about numbers. There were 137 articles, with a peak of 56 articles in one week, in the national and London papers.

The most common words in headlines were 'arrested', 'jailed' and 'guilty' (14 times). 'Bogus', 'false', 'illegal', 'failed' and 'rejected' appeared five times in headlines and 123 times in the text of articles. Words or topics appearing more than twenty times over the three weeks included 'scrounger, sponger, fraudster, robbing the system'; 'burden/strain on resources', 'illegal working, cheap labour, cash in hand, black economy', 'criminal, arrested, jailed, guilty', 'mob, horde, riot, rampage, disorder' and 'a threat, a worry, to be feared (terror but not terrorism)'.

The language used about figures was general and sensationalised: 'thousands and thousands', 'massive', 'soaring' and so on. Sources were often not given or were vague (e.g. 'official statistics say…'). The most common source of statistics acknowledged was the Home Office, but the next most common was the anti-immigration pressure group Migration Watch.

There were 84 photographs, three cartoons and eleven other visual images and graphics. Of these 37 were asylum seekers and refugees, alone or in groups. Fifteen of these represented them as criminals (often in police 'mug-shots') while nine were seen as positive. Cartoons and graphics were often very negative, for example, there was a map imitating that used in the old TV comedy 'Dad's Army', implying that Britain was under attack from migrants.

Taken together, the headlines, articles and images showed a lack of balance, with little reporting of 'good news' about refugees and asylum seekers. The phrases and words used were likely to prompt readers towards a negative reaction and many could be said to be emotive and even fear-inducing.

In the interviews, community leaders said that media reporting strengthened the prejudices of those already involved in racial harassment and influenced young people because, although they were less likely to read newspapers, the misinformation reached them through those who did.

In the focus groups, all read newspapers regularly but three quarters said that they were not satisfied that the information on asylum seekers was accurate, balanced and trustworthy. They relied highly on the media for information but also gained information from word of mouth and other sources, which acted as filters on media reporting. There was some evidence of misinformed opinions in all the groups other than the adult black and minority ethnic group, which may have been influenced by the media.

There were 14 incidents reported in the monitoring: seven involved physical attack and two involved attacks on homes. Most of the perpetrators were described as white or

English and under 25. Victims reported profound distress. The research could not establish whether or how these incidents were linked to media reporting.

EVALUATION

This was a small scale and perhaps over-ambitious study, given the very difficult area it tries to investigate. It suggests, however, that attempts to strengthen community cohesion and to reduce the harassment and worse that asylum seekers and refugees face seem to be continually undermined by the emotive, sensationalised reporting of the British press. This research sheds light on the impact of this at community level.

A serious limitation of the research was that the content analysis only covered newspapers. It would have been interesting to see whether TV and radio news was similarly biased, and whether it was seen by audiences as more authoritative.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

The connections, if any, between media content and audience attitudes and behaviour are highly contested. While unable to provide definitive answers, this research does show that the connections between media reporting of refugees and asylum seekers and public perceptions is at least worth further investigation. It also contributes to the debate about bias and ideology in the media, providing further strong evidence of the negative tone of most reporting on these issues.

BAD NEWS FROM ISRAEL

GREG PHILO AND MIKE BERRY AND THE GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MEDIA GROUP, 2004

CONTEXT **The early work of the Glasgow Media Group, such as *Bad News* (1976) and *More Bad News* (1980), analysed television news reporting using content analysis.**

This new book, 'Bad News from Israel', continues this approach through analysis of television news reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but combines it with study of audience reception of this news and investigation of some of the contexts of the production of news. The Glasgow Media Group now analyse production, content and reception together; they refer to these three linked aspects of the media as the circuit of communication.

Television news reporting is seen as more neutral than press reporting. Audiences trust television news more because they know that British newspapers have party political preferences, sometimes openly try to influence readers and are owned by large corporations. Broadcast news, especially BBC and ITN, continue to have a reputation for balanced and impartial reporting. This research investigates how balanced and impartial television news reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been, and also attempts to gauge how the reporting has shaped the ways people make sense of that conflict. The researchers were also interested in finding out whether watching the news helped audiences understand what was happening and why.

EVALUATION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is highly controversial and this analysis will be rejected as biased by those who are committed to alternative interpretations. Although there is inevitably some personal judgment involved in thematic analysis, the research is thorough and goes beyond the earlier research of the Glasgow Media Group in not only analysing media content but also showing how ignorance is perpetuated.

FIND OUT MORE

Philo, G., Berry, M. and the Glasgow University Media Group (2004) *Bad News from Israel.* London: Pluto Press

The Glasgow Media Group (**www.glasgowmediagroup.org**)

University of Glasgow Media Group (1976) *Bad News*. London: Routledge

University of Glasgow Media Group (1980) *More Bad News*. London: Routledge

METHODS

To study the content of BBC and ITV news the Group used a form of content analysis called thematic analysis. This aims to uncover key themes in the reporting and to show how these key themes then influence the reporting and development of the stories. Thematic analysis can show which views are given dominance even where a range of views are covered.

The researchers analysed 189 news bulletins from three periods between 2000 and 2002. These periods cover important events such as the beginning of the second Palestinian intifada or uprising in September 2000 and the Israeli attack on the Jenin refugee camp in April 2002. The researchers considered images as well as words, and how images were given meaning by the words that accompanied them.

The reception of news was studied using an audience sample of over 800 people and involved focus groups, individual interviews and questionnaires. Focus group interviews were carried out with 14 groups involving 100 people. The groups were based on age, gender and occupation and were as far as possible 'normally occurring' groups, that is, people who would meet and speak to each other in the normal course of their lives. Part of the focus group activity was to write news reports based on photographs taken from television news coverage. The advantage of focus groups for this kind of research is that they can reproduce the kinds of situations in which people might normally discuss television.

Questions were asked about a range of international issues in addition to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This made it possible to see if there were differences in knowledge between people in the three countries.

The individual interviews involved a large number of media practitioners and journalists, including well known figures such as Brian Hanrahan and George Alagiah, who commented on their experiences. Some also sat in on focus group interviews and took an active part in discussions.

KEY FINDINGS

Content analysis

Television news reporting of the conflict was not balanced and impartial. Israeli views were more likely to be endorsed and given prominence and status, while Palestinian and Arab views were more likely to be downgraded or to be ignored. The Palestinian view that the conflict is a war of national liberation against an occupying force was almost completely absent, while the Israeli view, that the violence is caused by 'terrorists', was often uncritically accepted. These findings are illustrated with detailed references to interviews, news headlines, the ways in which events were presented and the language used.

Israeli interviewees were given twice as much time to speak, measured by lines of text, as Palestinians. Moreover, Israelis were more likely to be interviewed in 'calm and relaxed' settings.

Fewer Israelis were killed during the period of the analysis but there was a disproportionate emphasis on them. There was also a difference in the language used, with words such as 'murder', 'atrocity' and 'slaughter' being used by journalists to report Israeli deaths but not Palestinian deaths. Some Palestinian deaths were reported with sympathy, such as that of twelve year old Mohammed al-Durrah, who was shot while his father tried to shield him. Reporters did say that he had been shot by Israeli soldiers but repeated Israeli claims that he was caught in crossfire rather than the Palestinian view that he was deliberately targeted.

Audience studies

Audiences do not have the level of understanding which news reporting assumes. The news offered some brief explanations but concentrated on the day's events and did not provide deeper background knowledge. Most participants had little knowledge of the history and origins of the conflict and so misunderstood some of the reporting.

Among the focus groups, middle-aged males and professional groups had the best information about the conflict, based on books, quality newspapers and their education rather than on watching the news. Many respondents wanted to know more and felt they would be more interested if they were better informed.

The international comparison of young people's knowledge revealed a high level of ignorance, both of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and of other international issues but the Germans were by far the best informed. The researchers suggest this may be because history and political studies are taught to all students in Germany.

Interviews

Interviews with reporters and other media practitioners found that:

- Television news reporters have to produce very short reports (three minutes or less) so that opportunities to explain background issues are very limited
- The Israelis are much better organised in publicity and media relations than the Palestinians, and so are able to ensure that the media have access to their preferred interpretations more effectively.
- Because reporting from the Middle East is so dangerous, journalists found it easier to accept what they were told by the Israelis rather than investigate what was really happening themselves.
- The government of Israel and pro-Israeli groups are very effective in lobbying the media, often accusing news organisations and journalists of being pro-Palestinian or anti-Semitic.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research produced strong evidence that the news is 'bad': biased and leaving the audience ignorant of why events have happened. The bias was clearly in favour of Israeli interpretations and against Palestinian interpretations, with journalists aware of some of the pressures but not always able to avoid them. The findings challenge recent assumptions that audience preferences dictate media output.

The international survey of young people's knowledge about international affairs showed that relying on television news is not enough. The British education system is less effective than the German system in equipping its young citizens to understand the context of current issues. This finding is relevant to debates about the purpose of education and about citizenship education.

08 POWER & POLITICS

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS & HOUSE OF LORDS

THE SUTTON TRUST, 2005

CONTEXT **Elite theories argue that power in any society is concentrated in the hands of a minority or elite. Mills (1956) argued that decisions in the USA were taken by a power elite comprising of political, military and economic elites.**

In modern British society these elites and others certainly exist but it is not clear to what extent they are closed or open: are new members of elites drawn from the same social groups as existing members? Various studies in Britain have suggested that private schools and the top universities act as recruiting grounds for elite positions such as top civil servants, judges, military leaders and company directors.

This study is part of a series by the Sutton Trust analysing the educational backgrounds of those in positions of power and influence in British society – of members of the elites. A previous study had looked at the educational backgrounds of top lawyers and a study completed after this one looked at top journalists in print and broadcast media (see pp 80-81). The aims are to find out what opportunities exist for young people today to enter elite professions and to consider whether the higher levels of British society have become more open and meritocratic.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

These findings are relevant to the analysis of power in Britain because they show that the educational backgrounds of members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords do not reflect the wider society. Private schools and the top universities, especially Oxbridge, are disproportionately represented. This supports elite and Marxist analyses of power which argue that those with power are recruited from a very narrow section of society. A ruling elite is able to transfer its power to the next generation through mechanisms such as ensuring a privileged education for their children. The findings here suggest that mobility upwards into this elite is still very limited with few MPs and even fewer peers educated in the state sector and especially in comprehensive schools.

METHODS

To carry out the analysis, the researchers obtained information about the education of all members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. There were a few individuals for whom information could not be obtained and also a number who had been educated in other countries. In all information was collected about the schools of 587 of the 641 MPs (91%) and the university data for 625 (97%). For the House of Lords, school data was found for 631 of the 723 peers (87%) and university data for 656 (91%). Sources of information included 'Who's Who', government and party websites and online reference libraries such as 'KnowUK'.

The researchers also wanted to look at changes in the educational backgrounds of politicians over the last fifty years and so used data from the British General Election Studies which are produced after each election. For both aspects of the research therefore, the main method used was analysis of secondary data. The absence of some of the relevant data, in this case the educational backgrounds of some MPs and peers, is a common problem with secondary data. However, it can be assumed that the data were valid and reliable as they were based on information that can be checked.

FIND OUT MORE

The Sutton Trust (2005) *The Educational Background of Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords*
www.suttontrust.com/reports/PoliticiansBackgrounds_09-Dec-05.pdf

A range of reports relating to opportunities and inequality in British society are available at the website of The Sutton Trust (**www.suttontrust.com**)

Butler, D. and Kavanagh, D., *The British General Election of 1951, 1955… 2005*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

Mills, C. W. (1956) *The Power Elite*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

KEY FINDINGS

About one third of current MPs attended a private school, although private schools educate only 7% of the population. 72% of MPs attended university, with 43% attending one of the leading 13 universities and 27% attending Oxford or Cambridge.

Less than half of MPs had attended a comprehensive school (42%) and 25% had attended grammar schools. There were fewer younger MPs who had been to grammar schools because of the phasing out of these schools as the comprehensive system expanded. Only 20% of Conservative MPs attended a comprehensive school, although such schools now educate 88% of secondary schoolchildren. 13 of 15 Old Etonians (past students of Eton) are Conservatives, with one each in the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, and eight of these 13 held offices within the Conservative Party.

Conservative MPs were more likely to have attended private schools (59%) while Labour MPs were the least likely to have done so (18%). Conservatives were also more likely to have been to a leading university. 164 MPs from the three main parties had been to Oxbridge and 100 (61% of these) to Oxford.

MPs who held office in their parties were more likely than non-office holders to have attended private school or to have attended Oxbridge. The figures were most noticeable for the Labour Party (25% of members of the government had been to private school but only 16% of backbenchers).

Since 1940 all but three Prime Ministers (Callaghan, Churchill and Major) had been to university and all of these went to Oxford.

Members of the House of Lords were twice as likely as MPs to have been educated at private schools (62% had attended a private school). Of the remaining hereditary lords, 98% had been to private schools; for appointed peers the figure was 56%. 79% of Conservative peers and 34% of Labour peers had attended private school. Of those educated in the state sector, more than half had been to a grammar school. Lords were as likely as MPs to have been to university but rather more had been to one of the leading universities.

Over the past fifty years, the study found that the proportion of MPs who had been privately educated had fallen, although not dramatically. For the Conservative Party, the fall was from a high of 81% in 1966 to 60% by 2005. The proportion of privately educated Labour MPs has always been much lower but had fallen from 22% in 1955 to 18% in 2005. The percentage of MPs educated at university had risen over the fifty years for all main parties; for example, the percentage of university educated Labour MPs rose from 40% in 1951 to 64% in 2005.

EVALUATION

Despite not being able to obtain information on all MPs and peers, the data is sufficiently complete to give a clear view of the educational background of MPs and peers. It is undeniable that a private education and attendance at a top university, preferably Oxford or Cambridge, provides the clearest route to success as a politician. The domination of the Conservative Party by those from private schools, especially Eton, is striking.

These findings might not be a cause for concern if there were a meritocracy with access to the top universities open to all on merit, but previous research by the Sutton Trust has shown that here too the odds are stacked against those from non-privileged backgrounds.

However, establishing the common educational backgrounds of so many politicians does not prove that they share common interests or that they act as a united, self-interested power elite.

GENDER & THE VOTE IN BRITAIN: BEYOND THE GENDER GAP?

ROSIE CAMPBELL, 2006

CONTEXT **Campbell's book addresses the question of differences between the sexes in political attitudes and voting behaviour in British general elections.**

She uses two types of research – analysis of secondary data from the British Election Surveys (BES) for the 1992, 1997 and 2001 general elections, and focus group interviews immediately before the 2005 General Election (the BES data for 2005 was not available at the time of publication in 2006). She investigated what she calls the unchallenged assumptions about women and politics, for example the idea that women tend to be more conservative than men in their attitudes and voting behaviour.

Campbell was interested in whether the movement of women out of housework and into higher education and employment over the last 25 years or so had changed the relationship between gender and politics. Despite the changes however, traditional gender roles are still significant because many men continue to take the main responsibility for earning money while women remain the main carers for children and other dependents.

Norris (1999) has argued that there is a gender-generation gap emerging in Britain; older women are more likely to vote Conservative than older men while young women are more likely to vote Labour than young men. Older research suggested women were more conservative than men but, if Norris is right, in the future more women than men will have left-leaning political attitudes. The difference is not evident in comparisons between men and women of all ages, only when generations are considered separately. Norris, with Inglehart (2000), has extended this theory to suggest that there is now a global generation gap developing.

The political context for the focus group research was the 2005 General Election. The Labour Party, led for the third general election by Tony Blair, retained power with a comfortable but reduced majority. During the campaign more attention was paid to women voters and to the parties' attempts to reach them (to 'woo' them in media language) than there had ever been before at an election. The media speculated that women were becoming less likely to vote for Tony Blair because they did not trust him as much as in previous elections. The research allows Campbell to look for evidence of the gender gap, and to assess how women responded to attempts to 'woo' them.

METHODS

Campbell chose qualitative methods to try to answer the question of whether men and women think about politics in different ways. The research method was focus group interviews.

The research involved six focus groups, three of men and three of women. For each sex there was one group of people over 40, one of people under 40 and one of mixed ages. Age groups were included so that Norris's claim that there is a gender-generation gap could be tested. Respondents were recruited by email and by flyers. They all completed a questionnaire about their personal details such as ethnic background, education and occupation. A small fee was paid to encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds to apply. Although those taking part did not form a representative sample of the British population, Campbell claims that broadly similar groups of men and women took part in the research, making comparison possible.

The focus group interviews were held in Colchester, Essex and in London during the week before the 2005 General Election. The same questions were asked in the same order so as to make any comparison fairer. One part of the interview involved giving out photographs of the leaders of the three main parties and asking respondents to write down the words that came to mind.

EVALUATION

Campbell's research moves the debate about women and politics forward, demonstrating that old assumptions about attitudes and voting no longer apply. She shows that the relationship between gender and political behaviour is complex and that different sub-groups within the genders (for example, age groups) need to be considered along with the specifics of a particular situation such as the policies put forward by the parties.

Although the focus group interviews yield interesting qualitative data, they reflect conversations among the participants rather than necessarily their thoughts, with the make up of the groups perhaps exaggerating the differences between them.

KEY FINDINGS

Campbell's overall conclusion, drawing on the secondary data from the BES as well as the focus group interviews, is that gender interacts with other factors in politics and voting and its importance in any particular election will depend on the specific context.

Women's political attitudes and voting behaviour are different to men's, but the differences are complex. For example, one effect of gender on political attitudes may be that more women than men prioritise spending on health and education, but this will only translate into voting behaviour if there are clear differences between the parties on health and education policies. The differences between men and women are easier to see if the genders are further broken down, into different age groups for example. In particular, Campbell did find evidence to support Norris's gender gap theory.

In the focus group interviews, men and women did talk about politics in very different ways. Men tended to talk in terms of individuals as rational, autonomous social actors while women were more interested in social relationships; for example, women tended to evaluate the effectiveness of policies in terms of the effects on people they knew or cared for whereas men's evaluations were more abstract. When asked to say how they first became aware of politics, men tended to refer to themselves ('I have been interested in politics ever since I can remember') whereas women were more likely to refer to their family ('I suppose I really became aware when my parents - or my mother actually - was on the local Labour Party's campaign and I got roped in…'). These differences even showed in discussions on the environment, when women expressed concerns through family relationships:

'This is the sort of thing that really alarms me. We're heading for sort of… perhaps not in my generation but I've got grandchildren. And I think about them.'

There were also differences between age groups. Younger women were more likely than other voters to prioritise education, older women more likely to prioritise health. Men in general placed more emphasis on the economy and on Europe than women. Younger women, women working in the public sector and middle-income mothers were all likely to be Labour voters.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

Is gender an important variable in political behaviour? Campbell's research follows the main parties in recognising that the votes of particular groups of women cannot be taken for granted even when, nationally and globally, women seem to be adopting more liberal and left wing attitudes. The huge changes in the lives of women in Britain, away from being housewives and towards a much greater concern with educational achievement and careers, has led to the recognition of the importance of gender in politics.

FIND OUT MORE

Campbell, R. (2006) *Gender and the Vote in Britain: Beyond the Gender Gap.* Colchester: ECPR

Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2000), 'The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women and Men's Voting Behaviour in Global Perspective', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 21 (4)

Norris. P. (1999) 'Gender: a Gender-Generation Gap?' in Evans, G. and Norris, P. (eds.), *Critical Elections: British Parties and Voters in Long-Term Perspective*. London: Sage

The European Consortium for Political Research (**www.ecprnet.org**)

MY VOICE, MY VOTE, MY COMMUNITY

HELEN HASTE, 2005

CONTEXT **In the 2005 General Election only 37% of the youngest people eligible to vote - those aged 18 to 24 - actually voted.**

In fact voter turnout has been falling for some years and the trend has been particularly marked amongst young people, so much so that concern has been expressed about how apathetic young people seem to be about party politics and elections. Similar patterns of voting decline have also been noted in other European democracies.

However, young people appear less apathetic if politics is defined in a broader way. They often have strong and thoughtful opinions on current issues of public debate and many are actively involved in local community and school or college affairs. They are concerned about social problems but do not see these problems as necessarily political.

Citizenship education became part of the National Curriculum in Britain in 2002, rather later than in other countries. Both voting and the broad range of community and political activities that young people are involved in are aspects of citizenship and can be taken as measures of active citizenship. This research attempts to find out both about current levels of civic activity amongst young people, and to identify what actions they expect to take in the future, and to relate these to their values, identities and experiences.

EVALUATION

As a broad survey of young people's involvement in social and political affairs this research provides much interesting information and points to how citizenship education could be used to increase involvement and decrease apathy. Questions could be asked however, about just how far the net has been cast to include actions that can be counted as civic involvement and about the profiles, which need to be taken as guides to understanding rather than as fixed types.

FIND OUT MORE

Haste, H. (2005) *My Voice, My Vote, My Community: A Study of Young People's Civic Action and Inaction.* Report no. 4, Nestle Social Research Programme in collaboration with the ESRC. The study can be downloaded from **www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle/my-voice-my-vote.pdf**

A press release is available at **www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle/pr04.htm**

Nestle Social Research Programme (**www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle**)

METHODS

The method used was a survey based on self-completion questionnaires. The sample consisted of 1,136 children and young adults between the ages of 11 and 21 with booster samples to ensure adequate representation of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those identified as particularly likely or unlikely to be involved in civic action. 30 schools and colleges were selected by random sampling which was stratified to ensure that different types of schools were included, with schools in the sample reflecting the national picture by region, type of school and single-sex or co-educational status. Schools near the bottom and top of the league tables for GCSE results were included.

Interviewers from the market research organization MORI visited the schools and selected samples of pupils using systematic sampling within randomly selected year groups. The interviewers explained the research to pupils in the sample, reassured them about confidentiality, helped them complete the questionnaire by clarifying questions and collected in the completed questionnaires. A teacher was present while the questionnaires were completed. Participating schools and colleges received a £100 donation.

The sample in schools and colleges was supplemented by some university students and some young people not in education. These were reached in two ways: a self-completion online survey was carried out via email with 180 respondents with an incentive of a £1 gift for taking part. A further 185 were reached via a postal self-completion questionnaire.

KEY FINDINGS

Fewer than half of the young people said they would be 'very likely' to vote in the next general election if they were old enough to vote, and nearly a quarter said they would be 'very unlikely' to vote or that they didn't know. Around a quarter would definitely vote.

Respondents were more positive about long term voting with 72% saying they were 'very' or 'fairly' likely to vote in a future general election, 69% in a local election and 48% in a European election.

The young people were involved in many community activities. In the two years before the survey, 64% had given to the tsunami appeal, 46% had raised money for charity through sponsorship and 30% had given unpaid time to help people in need. Many had also made their voices heard: 35% had signed a petition, 23% had refused to buy certain products and 7% had demonstrated against the Iraq War.

A clear majoritiy of young people expressed concern about social issues and wanted to influence the government. They thought it was important to, for example, help people in the community and protect human rights and the environment.

Those who had taken part in civic activities and expected to do so in the future had been more affected by events reported in the news than those who had not taken part. Females were more affected than males, and the survey concluded that the traditional pattern of lower female involvement in social and political activity was being reversed.

Haste identified six broad profiles for young people's engagement with political activity. The first three were associated with a strong likelihood of voting, the others less so:

1. **The political activist:** involved in community activities, voting, making their voice heard and joining a party; valuing political discussion and following the news. They were more likely to be female and vote Labour or Liberal Democrat.
2. **The community helper:** similar to the political activist in motives and values but more focused on helping others in the community. They were more likely to be female and to support the Liberal Democrats.
3. **Concerned about social control:** likely to vote but not to be active in the community or concerned about equal rights issues. They wanted more punishment for offenders and controls on immigration and were more likely to be male and a Conservative supporter.
4. **Contentedly inactive:** low voting intention and little community involvement. They trusted the government, were not upset by events in the news and were more likely to be male and to be in schools lower in the educational league tables.
5. **Diffident green:** relatively low in voting intention but concerned about animal experiments and the environment. This is a position associated with low self-esteem and a desire for wealth and fame.
6. **Own-group identified:** Strong affiliation to a national or religious identity. They were less concerned than the other profiles with voting, making their voice heard or community involvement. This type was associated with younger people at schools which were low in the league tables.

Overall, between a quarter and a half of young people were active in a variety of ways and could be said to have the qualities of a 'good citizen'. They may not have seen what they did as political, but they were active. There were also around a quarter of young people who were inactive and uninvolved. Haste argues that while some degree of lack of interest may be inevitable and is in any case not fixed (a particular event might make these inactive young people active), many of these young people are in schools that are not creating a climate of cooperation, trust and individual thinking, and are not part of communities where there are close ties.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research addresses the question of how concerned we should be by the apparent apathy of young people, especially when it comes to voting and traditional party politics. It suggests that we need to see voting and party politics as aspects of a broader picture of civic action and community involvement, and that many people are very much involved in civic action in ways that have not always been recognised.

The link between the type of school and the level of involvement has important implications for citizenship in schools, because it suggests that the climate and ethos of a school really makes a difference. Citizenship education needs to take a broad view of political participation.

09 CRIME & DEVIANCE

THE BRITISH CRIME SURVEY: CRIME IN ENGLAND & WALES 2006/2007

EDITED BY SIAN NICHOLAS, CHRIS KERSHAW & ALISON WALKER, 2007

CONTEXT **The results of the British Crime Survey (BCS) are published with the official crime statistics collected by police forces. By presenting the two sets of results together it is hoped that a fuller picture of crime can be obtained than from one set of results alone.**

The BCS is an example of a victimisation study – a survey which asks about the public's experiences as victims of crime. The BCS, first carried out in 1982 and now annually, involves asking respondents about all the crimes they have experienced, whether or not these have been reported to the police.

The police figures have been subject to a number of criticisms. For example, it has been pointed out that they are not a count of the total number of crimes but only of the total recorded by the police. There will be crimes which are not reported to the police and others which are reported but not recorded. There are therefore, an unknown number of unrecorded crimes, sometimes referred to as 'the dark figure' of crime. It is also the case that police figures are shaped by police decisions, policies and recording procedures and are therefore prone to manipulation.

The BCS can give a better picture of the true extent of crime because it includes crimes not reported to the police; it reveals some of the 'dark figure'. It is also helpful in providing information about the extent of crimes such as domestic violence, stalking and sexual victimisation, which are probably the least reported but which have serious effects upon their victims. Because it is longitudinal and asks the same questions (to a different sample) each 'sweep', the BCS is also useful in tracking changes. It is also not affected by changes in police recording practices in the way police-recorded figures are.

FIND OUT MORE

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0607.html

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html

Jansson, K. (2006) *British Crime Survey – Measuring Crime for 25 Years.* A Home Office booklet about the history of the BCS – available at **www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/bcs25.pdf**

Smith, A. (2006), *Crime Statistics: An Independent Review*, carried out for the Secretary of State for the Home Department, available at: **www.homeoffice,gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/crime-statistics-independent-review-06/pdf**

METHODS

The main method used for the BCS is a questionnaire administered by face-to-face interviews. The sample is designed to be representative of households in England and Wales living in private residential accommodation and of people aged 16 and over living in such households. Thus amongst those excluded from the BCS are students in halls of residence, prisoners, those in residential care, members of the armed forces and children.

The sampling frame for the BCS is the Small Users Postcode Address File, stratified by police force area. The sampling frame is stratified to obtain at least 650 interviews in each police force area. Within each randomly selected household one adult aged 16 or over is selected for interview. The sampling therefore involves a multi-stage stratified random sample.

47,203 interviews were carried out between April 2006 and March 2007 in the respondent's home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). This means that each interviewer carried a laptop to record responses. The average length of interview was around 45 minutes, those with victims took longer.

The BCS also uses a 'booster' sample to ensure that non-white minority ethnic groups are fully represented. This is because the numbers of members of minority groups in the main sample might not be high enough to draw conclusions about their experiences as victims of crime. One method of boosting the sample was to ask respondents if either of the households living next door to them belonged to a minority ethnic group. If the answer was yes, the researchers tried to get an interview with a member of that household.

The wordings of the questions are kept very similar from one 'sweep' to the next. The interview begins with questions relating to respondents' local area such as length of residence, their views of the main problems in their locality, how safe they feel, and how often they go out. This main questionnaire is followed by the screener questionnaire in which respondents are asked whether they recall crimes or incidents in the preceding twelve months. The screener questions deliberately avoid using terms such as 'burglary', 'robbery', or 'assault', which have a precise definition that respondents might not be aware of. Further information on all incidents is then recorded on a victim form.

KEY FINDINGS

The study found no significant change in crime for the second year running. This finding was broadly supported by the police figures which showed a 2% decrease in crime. The risk of becoming a victim of crime was 24%, up 1% from the previous year. The total amount of crime, and the risk of being a victim of crime, have both fallen considerably since peaks in 1995.

The number of violent crimes, for which the BCS is regarded as more reliable than police statistics, was also stable, and down 41% from its peak in 1995. The risk of being a victim of a violent crime was 3.6%, with young men aged 18 to 24 being most at risk. Property crime had also fallen considerably (by more than 50%) from its peak in the mid 1990s.

Despite this, relatively high proportions of people continue to believe that crime has risen both nationally (65% thought this) and in their local area (41%). The proportions of people worried about crime had not changed significantly, and worry about burglary, car crime and violent crime has fallen since 1998.

The BCS can also be used to compare geographical areas. The risk of being a victim of crime is lower in rural areas, for example 2% of people in rural areas had been a victim of one or more violent crimes compared to 4% in urban areas. People living in deprived areas were also more likely to be victims of crime.

EVALUATION

The BCS makes a very valuable contribution towards our understanding of the extent of crime and the experience of victims. Its usefulness as a way of tracking changes over time increased when it became a continuous survey in 2001. It is based on a large sample but it is not comprehensive and cannot measure accurately all types of crime. Notable examples would be so-called 'victimless' crimes including illegal drug use and corporate and white-collar crime as well as crimes such as sexual assaults and domestic violence that victims may not want to discuss.

An independent review of national crime statistics was carried out in 2006. It recommended extending the coverage of the BCS to, for example, those under 16, those living in group residence and commercial victims of crime. The introduction of Audio CASI, in which respondents listen to recorded questions and record answers on a laptop, is also being considered.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

The BCS is important for several areas of concern to sociologists of crime. It helps answer the questions, 'How much crime is there and how large is the 'dark figure'? It also contributes to our understanding of victimisation: who are victims of crime, what crimes are they victims of and does people's concern about victimisation match the likelihood of their actually becoming a victim?

THE OFFENDING, CRIME AND JUSTICE SURVEY (OCJS)

CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH AND THE BRITISH MARKET RESEARCH BUREAU (BMRB), 2005

CONTEXT **How much crime is there and who commits it? Official police statistics can only tell part of the story because they only include crimes that have been reported to, and recorded by, the police.**

This leaves a 'dark figure' of unknown crimes which the police have not recorded. The alternatives to official police and court statistics include victimisation and self-report studies. The validity of self-report studies is always questionable: asking someone what crimes they have committed has been seen as unlikely to produce truthful responses. Self-report studies have often been used with those who have little choice about participation, for example prisoners or children in school.

In terms of their findings, self-report studies have tended to show that the gap between male and female offenders is narrower than official statistics indicate. However, it is uncertain whether such research can produce a more accurate picture of offending than official police figures. The Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS) revives self-report studies, using new technologies to try to improve validity.

Statistics show that most offences are committed by young people. The OCJS used a sample across the age range 10 to 65 to determine how much crime was committed by respondents of different ages, but focused closely on young people.

FIND OUT MORE

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/offending_survey.html

The National Centre for Social Research (**www.natcen.ac.uk**)

British Market Research Bureau (**www.bmrb.co.uk**)

METHODS

This national longitudinal survey was first carried out in 2003 with follow up surveys in each of the next three years. The study involved a panel of 5,000 young people and covered some of the same ground as the British Crime Survey (see pp96-97), asking about victimisation, but it also aimed to find out what crimes had been committed.

The 2003 survey used a sample of 10,079 people aged 10 to 65 living in private households in England and Wales. The number of young people (aged 10 to 25) was boosted to just under half the sample and there was also a booster sample for minority ethnic groups. This was to ensure that there were sufficient young people and people from minorities in the sample to enable conclusions to be drawn. The response rate was 74%.

The survey used three kinds of computer-assisted interviewing:

Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI): the interviewer reads the questions from a laptop and enters the respondents' answers. This was used to obtain information about the respondent, their household and neighbourhood, their attitudes towards the criminal justice system and any experiences of victimisation.

Computer-assisted self interviewing (CASI): the respondent reads the questions themselves from a laptop and enters their own answers without assistance from the interviewer. This was used for questions about crimes and anti-social acts committed by respondents such as drug and alcohol use and for those concerning contact with the criminal justice system.

Audio computer assisted self-interviewing (A-CASI): like CASI, but the respondent can listen to the questions on headphones. This allows respondents with reading difficulties to take part without interviewer involvement. This survey is thought to be the first use of A-CASI in a large-scale European survey.

Self-report studies are often assumed to provide data lacking in validity because respondents may conceal the extent of their deviant actions. They may not trust the interviewer and the stated purpose of the survey, believing that the admission of crime will lead to arrest or other punishment. The feasibility study for this research found that the use of CASI and A-CASI made it more likely that valid responses could be obtained. 97% of respondents in the feasibility study said they had answered honestly. This was because they felt more confident about confidentiality. The feasibility survey also revealed that many respondents had literacy difficulties but did not admit to these; A-CASI was therefore used for the most sensitive sections because it could be used with ease by all respondents. Questions had to be very carefully designed to ensure they could be understood by respondents as young as ten.

EVALUATION

Self-report studies are by their nature questionable: there are strong reasons why respondents might conceal the nature and extent of their offences. This project goes some way towards dealing with these problems, with A-CASI providing some assurance about confidentiality and anonymity. However, it remains likely that not all responses were truthful; we have only the word of respondents that they were telling the truth. The research is able to identify the factors associated with victimisation and offending, but cannot show the nature of this relationship. What is more, children under 10 remain excluded from this study and from most other research on crime.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research contributes some answers to questions about the extent of crime, those responsible for crime and their victims. It confirms that most offences are committed by teenage boys and young men. Perhaps its most valuable finding is the confirmation that many offenders are also victims. It also gives some information about how likely children are to be victims of crime, an area not covered by much official data.

KEY FINDINGS

About 10% of the general population had offended in the last year. The most common types of offence were assault (5%) and non-vehicle related thefts (5%). Robbery and burglary were very rare. Males were almost twice as likely as females to have committed an offence in the last year (13% to 7%) but there was no significant difference in the types of offences committed.

25% of offenders (about 2% of the whole sample) were frequent offenders who had offended six or more times in the last year. 40% of offenders had committed a serious offence, the most common being assault with injury. Frequent offenders accounted for 82% of crime. 38% of frequent and serious offenders had been arrested.

The findings about age confirm the patterns found in official statistics. The peak ages for offending are the teenage years: around 40% of 14-17 year old males had committed an offence in the last year. This was also the peak age for female offending although only around 20% of girls of this age had committed an offence.

The factors associated with offending and anti-social behaviour among 10 to 25 year olds were as follows: having delinquent friends, being male, being a victim of violence, using drugs in the last year and possessing certain personality traits. In addition poor parenting quality was a factor for 10 to 16 year olds, and being frequently drunk for 15 to 17 year olds.

The OCJS also covers victimisation, focusing on personal crimes such as theft from the person, robbery, other theft of personal property and assault. It gathered data for children, unlike the British Crime Survey which uses a sample of adults only. The OCJS found that overall levels of victimisation were similar for children (aged 10 to 15) as for young adults (16 to 23), and that these were far higher than for older adults. 35% of children had been victims of a crime, 32% of young adults and 14% of older adults. The factors associated with victimisation among children included: being male, using drugs, drinking, having delinquent friends, living in areas with high levels of disorder, experiencing poor parenting and being in trouble at school or truanting.

The survey found clear links between victimisation and offending. Many offenders were also victims of personal crime. 35% of children had been a victim of crime but 56% of those who had offended were also victims.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF VIOLENCE IN STREET CRIME

TREVOR BENNETT, FIONA BROOKMAN & RICHARD WRIGHT, 2006

CONTEXT **Several recent reports have indicated that, although overall crime rates have fallen in the United Kingdom, violent street offences are increasing. It has also been suggested that the nature of street violence is changing.**

For example, a National Crime Intelligence Service report identifies a growing use of weapons and guns in street crime and more use of guns to enforce drug debts and to punish 'disrespect' (NCIS 2002). It has also been reported that armed robberies are now more likely to be spontaneous and desperate, that the offender is more likely to have taken drugs, to be seeking excitement and to resort to gratuitous violence (Matthews 2002).

This research, by a team from the University of Glamorgan, attempts to find out more about street violence today and focuses on the offender's perspective. The researchers are especially interested in violence for 'social' reasons (for example, to enhance reputation and status, or for money to purchase status objects such as designer clothing) and 'gratuitous' violence where the offender may say that the offences were committed for fun or excitement.

Many explanations of this type of crime are psychological rather than sociological, based on frustration and aggression or on social learning theory. Sociological theories of crime find it hard to account for gratuitous violence in particular. Rational choice theory, which assumes that people make rational decisions about whether or not to commit an offence given the risks and possible benefits, cannot explain apparently irrational acts or spontaneous offences involving little or no gain. Alternative views such as Katz (1988) draw attention to the excitement of committing crime, suggesting that emotions and cultural values rather than rational choice might be a more useful way of understanding motives. The new and growing field of cultural criminology, within which this research fits, looks at how street culture might provide meanings to the offenders for their actions, holding back or inducing and justifying violence.

FIND OUT MORE

Full text at: **www.crimereduction.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet007.htm**

Katz, J. (1988) *Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attraction in Doing Evil.* New York: Basic Books

Matthews, R. (2002) *Armed Robbery*. Cullompton: Willan

National Crime Intelligence Service (NCIS) (2002), *UK Threat Assessment 2002: The Threat from Serious and Organised Crime.* London: NCIS

The Serious Organised Crime Agency (**www.soca.gov.uk**), (previously The National Crime Intelligence Service)

METHODS

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 120 offenders (89 male and 31 female) who had been convicted of violent offences and were serving sentences in prisons or in young offenders' institutions. The majority were aged 26 or over and were white (10% described themselves as black, 12% as mixed race and one as Asian). Some of the offences the research was most concerned with were: carjacking, violent street robbery, snatch thefts, aggravated burglaries and violent offences related to gangs and especially to rivalry between gangs.

Six prisons and institutions were chosen using purposive sampling to provide a range of ages, genders and ethnicities. Within these institutions the researchers used databases and other records to locate offenders serving sentences for crimes that seemed to involve street violence such as 'robbery', 'grievous bodily harm' (GBH), actual bodily harm' (ABH) and offences involving firearms. In some institutions posters were put up informing inmates about the research and asking for volunteers who met the selection criteria.

The interviews had to be carried out in prisons and institutions. The interview schedule covered four main areas:

- the offender's personal and criminal justice history
- recent street robberies
- other forms of street violence
- the offender's lifestyle before imprisonment.

Each interview lasted about one hour and was recorded and then transcribed.

Ethical issues are important when respondents are imprisoned offenders being asked about their offences. The respondents gave informed consent for their participation in the project after being informed about the research in both verbal and written form. The data were kept confidential and anonymous. Each respondent was asked at the start of the interview to choose a false name which was then used throughout the research. In the published work none of the data can be traced back to particular individuals nor do quotations from interviews contain information that could lead to the respondent's identification. Interviewers were also trained to ensure that the rights of respondents were not infringed, that they were not harmed in any way (including emotionally) and that they could withdraw from the research at any stage.

KEY FINDINGS

The mean number of times that respondents had been arrested was 45, with a third estimating that they had been arrested 50 times or more. The mean number of convictions was 23, with a quarter saying they had been convicted of 30 or more offences.

92% had used illegal drugs. More than half had used heroin or crack cocaine at some time and for most that included the period of offending before their imprisonment.

About a quarter said that they were members of gangs or were involved with gangs. A further 11% reported involvement in criminal groups but did not describe them as gangs.

More than a quarter said that they had carried a firearm of some sort, including air guns and replica guns. A further 35% had carried another weapon such as a knife. 37% said they had never carried a weapon on the street or used a weapon as part of an offence.

Motives for street robberies were as follows:

- **Good times/partying** – the need for 'fast cash', especially for drugs: '*I went back to my house to let things cool down before I went back to the pub. Partied the money away and then the next day I got arrested.*'
- **Keeping up appearances (having 'flash cash')** – the proceeds of robbery used to purchase non-essential, status-enhancing items such as cars, clothing and jewellery.
- **Excitement** – robbery gives a 'buzz'. This is often related to overpowering a victim and feeling dominant, but some offenders said they preferred victims to fight back because it became more of a challenge.
- **Anger or a desire to fight.**
- **Informal justice** – righting a perceived wrong, for example taking back money that was thought to belong to the offender.

A drugs connection was present in 60% of all robberies. There were four kinds of drug-related motive for robberies:

- to fund dependent drug use
- to pay for recreational drugs: *'I was walking down the street and I saw this boy and girl walking along like. I grabbed her handbag and grabbed his phone off him and run off. I was desperate for crack.'*
- being under the influence of drugs (which reduces the ability to make rational choices)
- informal justice.

EVALUATION

The sample is a substantial one for in-depth interviewing, large enough for common themes to clearly emerge. By listening to offenders and letting them tell their stories in their own words, this research provides valuable insight into the meanings offenders give to their actions. The references to the 'buzz' of robbery and violence and to the importance of drugs helps us understand why some of these offences are committed.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research contributes to debates about the motives for certain types of crime and why a growing number of offenders seem prepared to use violence in street crime. It supports the arguments of cultural criminologists about the importance of cultural factors associated with life on the street. The rational choice model of cost-reward calculations does not seem to apply to crimes such as these.

TO SERVE & PROTECT?

THE EXPERIENCES OF POLICING IN THE COMMUNITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BLACK & OTHER ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS

DOUGLAS SHARP & SUSIE ATHERTON, 2007

CONTEXT **Evidence over many years has indicated that members of minority ethnic groups, especially young people, are not treated by the police in the same way as the rest of the population.**

For example, almost half of all street searches are of minority ethnic groups yet they make up only around 10% of the population. Black and other minority groups also have less confidence in the police and are sometimes reluctant to report their victimisation to the police. Policing remains a mainly white male occupation and sociologists such as Reiner (2000) have found that racial prejudice is sometimes part of 'cop culture'. To be able to do their work effectively, the police need to have the confidence of all sections of the population and failure to engage effectively with minority ethnic groups has been a problem for many years.

Following the Macpherson Report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, institutional racism within the police was widely acknowledged. This resulted in renewed efforts to increase the confidence of minorities in the police. Targets were set for the recruitment of police officers from minority ethnic groups with the aim of making the police more representative of the communities they serve, but these targets have not yet been met. The 'Reassurance Policing' agenda introduced further attempts to win back public confidence. Community policing initiatives included increased police consultation with communities and greater opportunities for the police to improve public confidence and cooperation. This research examines whether these initiatives have had any success in improving the police's relations with young people from minority ethnic groups.

FIND OUT MORE

Sharp, D. and Atherton, S. (2007) 'To Serve and Protect? The Experiences of Policing in the Community of Young People from Black and Other Ethnic Minority Groups.' *British Journal of Criminology* vol. 47 (5) pages 746-763

Macpherson, Sir W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.* London: HMSO available at **www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm**

Reiner, R. (2000) *The Politics of the Police 3rd edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

METHODS

The main method used was semi-structured interviews. The interviews needed some degree of structure so that the same areas were always covered but were flexible so that additional questions could be asked to explore relevant issues that emerged during the interview. The qualitative approach allowed respondents to describe in their own words their encounters with the police and their attitudes towards them.

The sample was gained initially by contacts with local youth groups and organisations, and then through snowballing, when initial contacts were asked to suggest further participants. Snowballing was important because it involved participants themselves explaining the research and its purpose to others; it would have been very difficult to have found enough young people willing to cooperate without this approach.

47 young people between the ages of 15 and 18 took part in the research, 38 male and nine female. All the females and most of the males described themselves as black and were from African-Caribbean or mixed race backgrounds. 13 males were from South Asian backgrounds. Most lived in ethnically diverse and predominantly working-class areas of Birmingham but five were from middle-class areas of the West Midlands and two were from London. All the interviews took place in Birmingham.

40 of the respondents had a history of disrupted education, with only eight having or aspiring to four GCSEs at grade C or above. 19 had at some time been excluded from school and just over half had a caution or a criminal conviction. None were in stable relationships.

The researchers had planned to record and transcribe individual interviews but the respondents did not all agree to this. Some one to one interviews were carried out using hand-written notes and some took the form of recorded group discussions. The findings protect the respondents' confidentiality and anonymity, noting only their sex and age.

KEY FINDINGS

The main finding of the research was that the respondents' attitudes to the police were characterised by hostility and absence of trust, and that these attitudes were expressed in all interactions with the police.

The conclusion is that there is still much to be done by the police to improve relations with black and other ethnic minority communities.

The researchers comment that there is little in their findings that will give comfort to the police, and that what the respondents have to say makes depressing reading. The relationship between police and young people from ethnic minorities involves conflict, hostility and confrontation. Young people believe that the police routinely discriminate against people on the basis of racial stereotypes and prejudice. This partly comes from the shared understandings within the community they have grown up in, but is reinforced by their own experiences of the police. They simply do not see the police as willing to deal with their problems.

'They don't take us seriously. If we report racist things they never do anything so why should we help them? I have done some small things and all they want to do is keep on my back.' (Male aged 18)

The respondents believed they were targeted for stopping and searching without reasonable suspicion. Although the police are required to give anyone searched a form setting out the reason for the search, there was evidence that this was not always the case:

'When they finish they sometimes don't give you the yellow paper so they keep on your back. If they don't give you the paper you got no evidence so you keep getting stopped and you can't say harassment. You need the evidence and they don't give it.' (Male aged 17)

Being stopped and searched frequently meant that respondents felt they knew what the police were really like better than other sections of the community. The respondents did not report crimes, instead attempting to sort out difficulties themselves. The slow progress made by the police towards being more representative of the communities did not seem to have made any improvement. There was even a feeling that officers from minority ethnic groups were worse:

'The black police are the worst, they just disrespect you and act hard in front of the other (white) police.' (Male aged 16)

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

Are minority ethnic groups treated equally in the criminal justice system? This study shows a pattern consistent with earlier research: the effects of police actions are to confirm the beliefs of young people that they are treated unfairly, labelled on the basis of stereotypes and ignored if as victims they report crime. The study also shows that changes in police recruitment, training and procedures have had limited success, if any, in improving the confidence of young people from minority ethnic groups in the police.

EVALUATION

This research does not claim to be representative of the experiences of all young people from minority ethnic groups as it is based mainly on one area and uses a sample that was to some extent self-selected. Some at least of the respondents would have been young people who felt particularly strongly about policing. Nevertheless there is strong evidence here that little has changed for the better after the Macpherson Report and the various initiatives to try to create greater confidence in the police.

BADFELLAS: CRIME, TRADITION AND NEW MASCULINITIES

SIMON WINLOW, 2001

CONTEXT **This research follows in the tradition of the Chicago School of ethnographic research in which the researcher joins in with the activities of a deviant group and tries to present an insider's account of the group, its activities and its view of the world.**

Like the Chicago School's research of the 1930s, it is also about a period of rapid social change. Winlow's aim was to see how changes in society such as de-industrialization and globalization had affected masculinity and the role of violence and crime in working-class culture in the north-east of England.

In the 1980s and 1990s in north-east England the loss of traditional working-class male jobs forced men to find other ways of proving their manhood. At the same time there were changes in crime including the growth of new kinds of entrepreneurial crime: illegal methods of making money to substitute for the wages of traditional male work. The main motivation for crime and violence changed from gaining respect and reputation to financial rewards. Winlow's research sees bouncers as representing a new form of masculinity, one closely linked to violence, as Winlow puts it, 'a career in being physically intimidating'. There were many new clubs opening in this period and Winlow used his background and local knowledge to gain access to the growing night-time economy and its links with violence and crime.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research shows that urban violence today is a complex phenomenon. The criminals Winlow describes are attracted by violence and the threat of violence, and use it both for economic gain and to express their masculinity in the context of a deviant enterprise culture that grew up in the ruins of the industrial economy of the north-east. It contributes greatly to our understanding of how masculinity, crime and violence have changed.

METHODS

Winlow used ethnographic research methods, primarily participant observation. He worked as a bouncer in clubs and pubs over four and a half years. His research role was covert so his true purpose remained unknown to the great majority of those with whom he had contact. He was able to observe the links between bouncers, violence and crimes such as cigarette smuggling and protection rackets. Winlow says that he was sometimes observer more than participant, sometimes participant more than observer, and sometimes both equally. This reflects the reality of much ethnographic research, where exact roles are unclear. The nature of covert research means that the researcher sometimes has to maintain cover at the expense of gathering data in the interests of continuing the project.

Winlow grew up in Sunderland and even before starting the research had an insider's understanding of the social settings he would be experiencing. As a working-class young man from the same area, and with the right build, he was able to work alongside bouncers without arousing much suspicion. This is not research that could have been undertaken by anyone older or from a middle-class background, thus discounting the majority of sociologists!

It was very important that Winlow's cover was not blown. This meant that he had to fully engage in the violent subculture he was studying and he faced moral dilemmas as a result. For example, when a couple of his 'mates' seemed to be about to kick someone to death, he intervened by saying, 'He's had enough'. On this occasion his integration with the other bouncers was tested when he was asked whether he had enjoyed the events. Winlow says:

'The Monday following this incident, I was in the more comfortable confines of Durham University. I spoke to my academic supervisor and we agreed it was time for me to start negotiating my withdrawal from the field.'

He also succeeded, though with difficulty, in avoiding being pulled into any substantial involvement in the protection rackets which were a source of further income for some bouncers. He was able, however, to go on visits to the protected pubs and restaurants, and to see something of the relationship and understandings between the criminals and those who had to pay for their protection. He comments:

'The possibility of arrest sometimes did rear its head, and claiming participant observer's rights would no doubt have earned me no more than a laugh from the arresting officers.'

While the dramatic and violent events stand out in Winlow's book, there were not many of these. Much of the time he had little to do as the presence of bouncers was enough to prevent trouble. But he says that there was always a feeling, with so many drunken young people around, that violence was never far away.

The periods of inactivity gave him the chance to talk to his fellow bouncers and develop the kind of empathy that allowed insights into how they felt about their work and about themselves as men. This shows how ethnography involves a range of methods – in this case Winlow was using unstructured taped interviews as well as participant observation.

FIND OUT MORE

Winlow, S. (2001), *Badfellas: Crime, Tradition and New Masculinities,* Oxford: Berg

Review in The Independent at
http://arts.independent.co.uk/books/reviews/article227653.ece

KEY FINDINGS

Winlow is particularly interested in crime and violence but stresses that not all bouncers are involved in the kinds of activities he describes.

He shows how, for working-class young men with powerful builds and a willingness to use violence, the development of bouncing provides not only an income but also opportunities to make more money from entrepreneurial crime. This represented a significant change from the recent past. Winlow draws a pen portrait of a 'hard man' from an earlier generation, Tommy, to illustrate the changes. Men like Tommy often did not know other 'hard men' from outside their neighbourhoods. However, Sunderland has now become an area capable of producing criminals involved in, for example, importing large quantities of illegal drugs from Spain or Holland, money laundering, protection rackets and even negotiating with Colombian cartels.

Winlow's account of this deviant enterprise culture is based on vivid descriptions of what he saw and experienced. The bouncers described in the book express their male identity through their physical strength and power, sometimes using violence to prove their reputations. In a city where the traditional male ways of earning a living have been lost, they draw on their masculinity to build social networks based on a range of illegal activities that ultimately depend on their willingness to be violent.

EVALUATION

Ethnographic research such as this offers insights into a very specific area and cultural setting, in this case the night time economy of Sunderland at a particular moment in its history. The extent to which the findings can be generalised to other areas is unclear. However, it is a convincing and, when Winlow is describing events and people, a gripping read. The book's greatest strength is its first hand accounts of a world not often open to view, with the sociological insights that would not be present in, say, a gangster's memoirs.

VIOLENT NIGHT:

URBAN LEISURE & CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

SIMON WINLOW & STEVE HALL, 2006

CONTEXT **This study developed from the earlier work of both researchers on working-class masculinities and the night-time economy.**

Winlow's previous book, Badfellas (2001), for example (see pp 104-105), had explored the ways in which bouncers were involved in violence and other deviant behaviour. Both researchers have a background in criminology although their interests have led them to a concern with how the industrial working class, fragmented by the end of heavy industry and the shift to a consumer economy, has changed. They are interested in the extent to which traditional class divisions are still important, and with the way young people whose parents and grandparents lived predictable lives based on class and occupational solidarities are adapting to the changed nature of society. Jobs are now no longer permanent or for life, and for men the role of traditional breadwinner has become difficult or impossible.

Winlow and Hall see the changed nature of British society as a direct result of neo-liberal or New Right policies adopted in the 1980s. The advocates of these changes saw them as liberating individuals to fulfil themselves through consumption and lifestyle choice.

The authors reject this view, as well as the earlier Marxist-influenced accounts of violent behaviour which romanticised them as expressions of resistance and rebellion against the dehumanising effects of capitalism. Winlow and Hall set out to understand young working-class people's lives in work, in relationships and, especially in cities at night, in a culture of drink and violence.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

Is Britain becoming more violent? The answer from this research is yes, the rise of consumerism and individualism has created a night-time culture in our cities in which violence is widespread. The night-time economy is attractive to the young, promising (falsely) some liberation and sensation to compensate for the drudgery of work, but the drink and the amorality create the conditions for violence. This is linked to the end of the collective identities and solidarities that used to provide stability in working-class life.

METHODS

The researchers used an ethnographic approach involving mainly unstructured and semi-structured interviews and observation. Over a period of a year they interviewed and observed about 40 young people (most between18 and 25) in the north east of England. These young people worked in insecure casual jobs and frequented the pubs and clubs of the night-time economy. They were all from what the researchers call the 'dispersed former working class'. Initial contacts were made using personal connections, for example with those involved in earlier research. These gatekeepers then enabled access to wider friendship groups. Other interviewees were recruited whenever opportunities arose in the course of observation.

The interviews were open and non-directive, encouraging the young people to talk as naturally as possible about their everyday lives with minimal prompting. Interviews were carried out in a wide range of settings including respondents' flats or their parents' homes, pubs, cafes and even in a car. To provide context for the interview data the researchers include information drawn from observation.

Winlow and Hall were aware that, because of their earlier research, they were approaching this project with strong ideas about the subject matter. They wanted to avoid the research situation in which the researcher gathers data that supports their hypothesis, dismissing other data as not relevant, so proving they were right all along. Thus the respondents in this project were given as much freedom as possible, with few questions and prompting.

EVALUATION

This project can be seen as a stage in Winlow and Hall's development of a theoretical account of the response of working-class young people to the changing nature of the capitalist economy. It builds on their earlier work, and points to further research (for example, on the experiences of young people who, unlike those in this study, are excluded from employment).

They are well aware that they could fall into the trap of leading the respondents to give the kinds of answers they are looking for, which would support their preferred theories. In the field this was tackled through non-directive interviewing, but there remains the problem of the selection from many transcribed interviews of data for the book. Nevertheless, the ethnographic method provides a vivid and sometimes shocking account of city nightlife, dominated by drunkenness and violence, and suggests how precarious life has become for many after the certainties of industrial capitalism.

FIND OUT MORE

Winlow, S. (2001), *Badfellas: Crime, Tradition and New Masculinities.* Oxford: Berg

Winlow, S. and Hall, S. (2006), *Violent Night: Urban Leisure and Contemporary Culture.* Oxford: Berg

KEY FINDINGS

The findings lead the researchers to reject both of the dominant ways of describing young people's lives in the inner city.

There was no resistance against oppression as might have been expected from neo-Marxist accounts, nor any sense of choice, liberation and personal fulfilment through consumption as might have been expected from neo-liberal or New Right accounts. Instead the findings focus on anxiety, competitive individualism and the prevalence of violence.

Industrial capitalism had provided clear roles in life for previous generations but these have ended. The respondents saw work in terms of instrumentality: they worked in jobs they hated for the money. Sometimes they might socialise with work colleagues but the kind of work they were in - temporary and isolating - could not provide the strong collective identity and social life that previous generations had enjoyed. In relationships too the respondents adopted instrumental attitudes related to personal ambitions.

The main leisure activity was drinking alcohol with friends in the many city centre bars and pubs. Drunkenness allowed normal rules and expectations to be flouted in a situation where there was little policing. Violence seemed to be accepted as inevitable because of the high alcohol consumption. It did not put young people off going out, rather providing an 'edge' that was part of the attraction of night life:

It can just happen, out of nothing. Someone comes up and bang! That's it!

Violence provided an exciting spectacle and a story to tell; the respondents were at the same time appalled and unable to look away:

It was just amazing, claret (blood) everywhere, you could hear it (a nose) break.

Some older respondents had reached the point where they could see through the empty promises of the expensive drunken night out and 'the ethic of compulsory enjoyment.'

Winlow and Hall quote extensively from the accounts of both victims and perpetrators of violence to give a flavour of the type of experience often encountered by the young people who took part in the night-time economy:

Eric was having a go about football or something and there's four of us and two of them… Eric just loses his loaf and starts getting into him. It was nasty because it was like we were all boiling. This one lad puts up a bit of a fight but the other one was just getting kicked to pieces. Eric's like properly kicking this lad in the head… I was a bit worried because we've just left them in the road and legged it, and so you're thinking, the next day, he's dead, isn't he?

AN INVESTIGATION INTO CYBERBULLYING ITS FORMS, AWARENESS & IMPACT, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE & GENDER IN CYBERBULLYING

PETER SMITH, JESS MAHDAVI, MANUEL CARVALHO & NEIL TIPPETT, 2006

CONTEXT **Recent child suicides attributed to the bullying behaviours of others have forced adults to address the issue of bullying seriously. Children's charities and other concerned bodies have conducted research into the incidence of bullying and have generally found that many school children are experiencing bullying and that the phenomenon is on the rise.**

Schools have always been associated with bullying behaviours, so much so that at one time it could be seen as normal and even treated as a joke. In fact the teasing of a fat child was the subject of a very popular 1950s television comedy series called Billy Bunter. Now social attitudes have changed and bullying is seen as harmful and not to be tolerated. Clips of bullying behaviours posted on YouTube are greeted with alarm and outrage.

Bullying itself can be defined as abusive behaviour carried out repeatedly by an individual or a group.

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of electronic devices to intimidate or upset. The authors of this study identify seven different types of cyberbullying. These are bullying using:

- Text messaging
- Picture/video clips (usually using mobile phone cameras)
- Phone calls (via mobile phone)
- Emails
- Chat-rooms
- Instant messaging
- Social networking websites.

In the USA a survey of 1,500 students from grades 4-8 (ages 9-13) claimed that 42% of children had been bullied whilst online (I-SAFE, 2004). However, in Britain results from previous studies have shown much lower levels of cyberbullying. This may be because young British children have less access to technology rather than the result of any significant cultural differences.

FIND OUT MORE

Cyberbullying – A Report to the Anti-Bullying Alliance by the Unit for School and Family Studies, Goldsmiths College, University of London. Full text at **www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RBX03-06.pdf**

I-Safe America (**www.isafe.org**)

METHODS

One aim of this study was to discover if there were gender and age related patterns to cyberbullying behaviour. Previous studies have mostly been limited to mobile phones, text messaging and email so little is known about the trends, patterns and incidence of cyberbullying using the wider definition used in this study.

A questionnaire was designed, consisting of some multiple choice and some open questions. The questions asked respondents to report on their own experience and on the experiences of others. It also included an element of self report so students were able to admit to their own bullying behaviours.

The research team obtained a list of mixed-sex secondary schools in the London area. Schools were telephoned and asked if they wished to participate. Twenty schools were recruited in this way and each asked to nominate a teacher to be responsible for administering the questionnaire. The team sent eight questionnaires to the named teacher in each of the twenty schools. The teachers were asked to give the questions to one randomly sampled girl and boy in each age group between years 7 and 11. In the end year 11 students were excluded due to the summer timing of the study.

The questionnaires were sent to the schools with a detailed covering letter explaining the procedures to be followed. The relevant teacher was asked to read out the instructions. Ethical procedures were followed in that students were told that they had the right to withdraw from the study and that their responses were anonymous. Only 14 of the schools returned the questionnaires and even then some did not manage to return complete sets of eight.

KEY FINDINGS

Just under half of all pupils reported experiencing some bullying over the previous two months although only 20% reported cyberbullying.

This figure appears low but that overlooks that fact that some students reported a large number of incidents of cyberbullying, implying that this form of bullying is already significant. Cyberbullying mostly occurred outside school, possibly due to the monitoring of school computer networks. The main media for cyberbullying were phone calls, texts and emails. Chat room bullying was less common in school, but very common outside. The self-report study showed that phone call bullying was the most common technique used.

There were few age patterns obvious in the results, but gender was an issue as girls reported more incidents than boys, both as victims and bullies. This is not consistent with the findings of other studies which have shown boys to be more involved in bullying. The students showed different awareness levels of types of cyberbullying. They seemed most aware of picture/video clip bullying. Very few were aware of chat room bullying.

Some forms of cyberbullying were seen as having a far more hurtful effect than 'traditional' bullying. Video clip and phone bullying were seen as most hurtful. Those responsible were generally seen as one or two students, usually from the same year group in school. Most cyberbullying lasted only a week or two, but phone call bullying had a much longer time span. A third of the victims of cyberbullying failed to report what was happening, a finding consistent with research on all forms of bullying.

Students felt that schools could do little about the bullying – bullying that takes place outside school was seen as beyond their control and most pupils would continue to carry phones even if they were banned.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

The key importance of this study is that it addresses recent technological changes that have had a major impact on social interaction between young people and addresses a range of activities that can cause considerable damage to their victims. The findings are particularly interesting in relation to deviance as they reveal that those responsible for cyberbullying (as well as its victims) are predominantly females.

EVALUATION

The researchers had little previous work to build on and have provided a range of primarily statistical data that can be used to provide a baseline figure against which to measure trends and patterns in future years and to prompt more detailed research. However, the validity of data gained from self-report studies such as this is always questionable. Moreover, the non-response rate was high, especially bearing in mind that schools that had already agreed to participate. In addition, the selection of students to participate was made by teachers and this process could have led to further bias.

10 STRATIFICATION & DIFFERENTIATION

A CHILD'S EYE VIEW OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

LIZ SUTTON, NEIL SMITH, CHRIS DEARDEN & SUE MIDDLETON, 2007

CONTEXT **In recent years it has been argued that class differences are less important than in the past. This is because the traditional occupations that fostered a strong working-class identity have been lost and identities have become individualistic rather than collective and based on factors other than socio-economic difference.**

In 1999, then Prime Minister Tony Blair claimed that the middle class was growing rapidly, with many working-class people upwardly mobile in an increasingly meritocratic society.

However, there is also evidence for a growing social divide between a relatively affluent majority and an excluded minority. Blair's governments emphasised social exclusion as a problem, with poverty, unemployment and poor services concentrated in particular parts of inner cities and on housing estates. One version of this argument that social polarization is growing sees the excluded minority as constituting an 'underclass', characterized by criminality, the avoidance of employment and a range of anti-social behaviours.

This research looks at perceptions of class difference amongst children from widely differing backgrounds. It asks whether they see society in terms of social difference, how relevant they think poverty and inequality are to understanding their lives and also explores differences and similarities in their values, experiences and attitudes.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

Does class still matter? The findings here suggest that even in childhood there is a strong awareness of social differences, even though the children may not see the relevance of the terms sociologists might use, such as inequality and poverty. There were also important differences between the two groups, for example in how they saw schools and their futures, but there were also some similarities.

These findings have implications for debates about social policy. The antagonistic view both groups of children had of children who were not like them suggests there is a need for better understanding of social difference, for which citizenship education in schools could be used. In terms of the current drive for extended hours in school, the views of the estate children suggest that they will not want more of the same, simply staying in school for longer. The researchers also stress the active role of the estate parents in monitoring their children and trying to steer them away from problem areas and activities; street play does not automatically imply inadequate parenting.

METHODS

This research used a wide variety of methods which can be collectively referred to as participatory methods. The researchers deliberately avoided determining the themes of the research. Instead, the participants, all children, were allowed to shape the research questions and to decide its focus. The methods include role-playing, mapping, drawing and writing, photography and 'walkabouts' with the children.

42 children aged between eight and 13 took part in the research. They were from two contrasting backgrounds:

- 19 were from an estate with high numbers of lone parents, high incidence of family stress and large numbers of children receiving free school meals. Contact was made through a youth centre, with informed consent obtained from parents who opted into the research. Most of the children had lived in the area since birth. Half of the children were from lone parent families and most were from families receiving benefits or tax credits.
- 23 were from a fee-paying independent school. The school's fees were from £2300 to over £5000 per term, and the researchers took this as indication that the children were from relatively affluent families.

These groups were subdivided into smaller groups by age and gender. The research was explained by letter and at the start of every research session the researchers checked that the children still wanted to take part. The children knew they could leave at any time. Informed consent was therefore obtained continuously throughout the research. The children were given gift vouchers for taking part.

The children were told that the research was being carried out on an estate and in a private school, but no reference was made to poverty, inequality or related issues. The researchers wanted to see whether and how these themes would be brought up by the children themselves.

There was a potential contradiction between the researchers' wish to let the children shape the agenda and the need for both groups to have a common agenda so that their perceptions and experiences could be compared. This was overcome by feeding the ideas arising from one group (for example, lists of what was important to them) to the other group and then 'bouncing' them between the groups.

After the main period of research, the early findings were summarised on Powerpoint slides and shared with both groups, with the children able to discuss and even challenge the findings.

The research was carried out over a period of six months

KEY FINDINGS

None of the children thought of themselves as rich or poor, both groups wanted to be seen as 'average'. The concepts of 'poverty' and 'wealth' were ones they saw as applying to other people in extreme circumstances.

For example, poverty was seen as being about people in the Third World or the homeless and beggars in the UK. They did, however, see social difference in terms of 'chavs' and 'posh people'. The estate children saw being rich as being 'posh' which to them meant being snobby, mean and, for children, having few friends and little fun. The private school children saw 'chavs' as badly behaved with parents who did not care about them. Both groups placed a very high value on being able to see themselves as part of a peer group and did not want to be seen as different.

There were several similarities between the two groups of children. Both:

- Put relationships and activities above material circumstances
- Saw education, free time, favourite things and friends and family as most important
- Owned a similar core of most valued things, such as pets, toys and games.

There were significant differences in their experiences of school and leisure. The estate children were negative about school which they associated with a lack of freedom. They had few opportunities for after-school activities. The older estate children were particularly negative about school. They complained that teachers did not treat them with respect. On the other hand the private school children were positive about school, had a lot more homework and were involved in many school-associated activities.

In their free time the estate children played on the streets with their friends. Parents regulated but did not supervise this time and, because they were visible, the children were likely to be seen as 'trouble'. They understood their parents could not afford to pay for activities. The private school children's free time was more structured and organised, covering a wide range of activities, usually with adult supervision and often related to their learning. Where the private school children valued private space within the home, the estate children valued the open public space where they played.

EVALUATION

The findings here show a number of important similarities and differences between the two groups of children. It breaks new ground in its methodology, allowing a perhaps surprising amount of freedom to the children to shape the development of the project, treating them as equal partners. Despite the small numbers involved and the reliability problems associated with these methods, the result is a powerful insight into the perceptions and experiences of children from very different socio-economic backgrounds.

FIND OUT MORE

Sutton, L., Smith, N., Dearden, C., and Middleton, S. (2007), *A Child's Eye View of Social Difference.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available as a free download from **www.jrf.org.uk**

Research carried out by the National Centre for Social Research, Loughborough University (**www.natcen.ac.uk**)

'ALL THAT IS SOLID?'

CLASS, IDENTITY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF A COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION AMONGST REDUNDANT STEELWORKERS

ROBERT MCKENZIE, MARK STUART, CHRIS FORDE, IAN GREENWOOD, JEAN GARDINER & ROBERT PERRETT, 2006

CONTEXT **At one time the steel industry in South Wales employed many thousands of workers, and provided the basis for a strong occupational community.**

The collective experience of dangerous and demanding work led steel workers to see themselves as a group sharing attributes and values that made them different from other groups. They belonged to a strong trade union and shared interests outside work. They also identified with the wider working class, so their strong collective identity formed the basis of a wider working-class solidarity.

From the early 1980s onwards the policies of the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher led to a restructuring of the economy with many traditional working-class jobs disappearing. In the Welsh steel industry some of the plants closed down and many jobs were lost. These changes led some sociologists, following on from the embourgeoisement theories of the 1960s and 1970s, to suggest that because working- class jobs in heavy industry were disappearing, social class was in decline. People would begin to see themselves more as individuals than as members of a class and, in the case of steel workers, lose the strong collective identity which had been based on occupation, trade union membership and identification with the wider working class. These changes are often referred to as individualisation and privatism. It is argued that people will increasingly base their identities around their lifestyle and consumption patterns, with collective identities such as class losing importance. Greater prosperity for some and greater insecurity and reduced income for others are said to undermine class identities.

This research looks at what happened to the redundant steel workers, asking how their sense of a collective identity changed and whether, having lost the shared experience of work, they would see their class identity as less important.

FIND OUT MORE

McKenzie, R., Stuart, M., Forde, C., Greenwood, I., Gardiner, J. and Perrett, R. (2006), 'All That Is Solid?': Class, Identity and the Maintenance of a Collective Orientation amongst Redundant Steelworkers, *Sociology* vol. 40 (5). London: Sage Publications

METHODS

The researchers carried out over 125 semi-structured interviews with ex-steelworkers from five steel plants in South Wales. All five plants had once employed many thousands of people but two had closed completely and many jobs had been lost at the others. Most of the redundant workers were male. Amongst them were workers who had received no payment other than statutory redundancy pay and who had lost their pensions. The researchers also interviewed some of the steelworkers' partners, the staff of economic agencies and trade unions and management experts. The sample was obtained through Steel Partnership Training (STP), the training arm of the main trade union, which was offering counseling and training and which had a data set of all workers made redundant. The interviewing had to be sensitive because the steelworkers had only recently lost their jobs, and the researchers worked closely with the agencies that were providing counseling and training.

The research aimed to find out about the steelworkers' experience of losing their jobs and about how they and their families coped and rebuilt their lives. The interviews lasted between one and three hours and tried to build up a biography of the respondents. Class and identity were not asked about specifically (and were not originally part of the aims of the project) but the interviews allowed respondents to express themselves freely and these themes soon emerged as central ideas in the accounts provided.

EVALUATION

If the experience of the redundant steelworkers of South Wales is typical of other working-class groups then collective identities based on occupations that have been lost, and identity with a wider working-class still survive and are indeed a vital part of the ways that the workers adapt to their loss of occupation, status and income. There is strong evidence here for not assuming too quickly that identities based on individualism and consumption have become all important.

KEY FINDINGS

The identities of being an (ex) steelworker and working class remained very important to the interviewees. Respondents frequently showed a strong sense of a continuing group identity.

They still referred to themselves as steelworkers, had a strong emotional attachment to their old workplace and tried to keep their old social networks alive:

'A handful of us get together once a month for a meal and we still always talk in the 'Royal we' about the plant, so it's still in the back of our minds.'

The men found the reduced income difficult but were equally concerned by the loss of self-image, including the loss of the status that went with working hard, and with how they would be seen by others:

'If you meet someone and they ask you what you are doing, everything stems from that. If you are not working they think you are a lazy bastard.'

They resented having to claim benefits and saw this as an affront to their dignity. They felt guilt and helplessness about losing the role of breadwinner which undermined masculine identity in many cases.

The occupational community had evolved into what the researchers call the 'post occupation community', in which the redundant workers relied heavily on the network of ex-colleagues for information on jobs, training and benefits. They felt bound together and tried to help each other out. The collective orientation also showed in the ways younger workers expressed concern for the older ones and the older ones for the younger – there was solidarity between the generations:

'I'm young enough not to have to worry too much, but my colleagues were badly affected. I'm more upset for other people, more worried for them, but it was a kick in the teeth for me.

My children are grown up so things aren't as bad for me as they have been for some of the other steelworkers.'

A strong sense of class identity could be seen in the ways in which the steelworkers expressed solidarity not only with other steelworkers but with workers in other industries, and in how they saw both work and society in terms of 'us' (the workers) and 'them' (management). The loss of pensions was seen in class terms, with expressions of sympathy for other workers who had lost pensions and with the blame placed on 'thieves in pinstripe suits'.

The collective identity of the steelworkers seems to be a way of resisting their lack of choice in having to accept jobs with low pay, little security and that provide no sense of identity. Faced with low status jobs such as stacking shelves in supermarkets, they held on to their collective identity - to themselves and others they were still, and always would be, steelworkers.

So the decline of traditional, heavily unionised, male working-class occupations does not necessarily lead to a decline in occupational and class identity. Work remains central to these people's identities.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research, focusing on the experience of a group of working-class men, contributes to the study of social class and of changing masculinities. Although the respondents were no longer employed as steelworkers, the research shows the continuing importance of the sociology of work, suggesting that work remains the most important source of collective identity for many. A sense of class identity continues even where the workplace base for it has gone, suggesting that the arguments that consumption and lifestyle are now more important than work and class as sources of identity are premature.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

OF PAKISTANI & BANGLADESHI WOMEN

ANGELA DALE, 2002

CONTEXT **Unemployment rates are significantly higher for Pakistani and Bangladeshi people than for members of other ethnic groups. However, there is a strong gender difference between the employment rates of women and men so that women are far more likely to be unemployed than are men.**

One suggested explanation is that many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are home workers although this is not actually supported by evidence as levels of home work are also high for white women. This research is concerned to see whether younger Pakistani and Bangladeshi women will follow different employment patterns from their mothers and what factors may contribute to their low levels of participation in the economy.

The research is based in Oldham near Manchester. The Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in the north of England often live in relative poverty, with many of the boroughs of Oldham among the most deprived in the country. This research seeks to discover whether family factors and education are a significant influence on young women and their participation in work, or whether there are structural factors created by the opportunities for work available.

Older women from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities often accepted their role in the home. They had heavy commitments to domestic labour, perhaps with several children or husbands who worked long hours. They may have had little access to cars or convenience foods. In addition, women of the older generation may have had poor language skills and few qualifications. However, some of these restrictions no longer apply to younger women. What then are their options?

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This research addresses the relationship of the family to social structure and social change. In terms of family diversity it challenges simple stereotypes and shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi families are experiencing changing patterns of marriage and child-bearing whilst retaining a high regard for family life. Young women are setting challenges to traditional authority and often being supported by their husbands and in-laws.

EVALUATION

This research is important because it addresses and challenges many of the stereotypes that we have of Asian women. It uses the voices of the respondents to illustrate family relationships and the pressures that force families of any culture to change. It describes family dynamics within Pakistani and Bangladeshi cultures and reveals the complicated negotiations and processes that lead to challenges to tradition.

METHODS

The study combines quantitative data collected at a national level and qualitative data drawn from interviews and focus groups involving the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in Oldham. Statistics were gathered from UCAS (the organisation that manages university applications) about the rate of applications to higher education from Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people and their preferred subject choices compared to other ethnic groups.

The qualitative data was gathered through interviewing young people in focus groups. Students aged between 14 and 16 were drawn from two contrasting secondary school, one with a high proportion of Bangladeshi students and one with a more mixed intake. Focus groups also took place with white girls from the mixed school. In addition young people aged 16 – 21 were recruited from a further education and sixth form college and informal contacts were made with young people who had chosen to leave education. In total, 82 Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people were part of this process.

Detailed individual interviews were conducted with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women selected to represent different stages of life, different levels of education and different work statuses. Economically inactive women were recruited by calling at houses in areas with large Pakistani or Bangladeshi populations. Women in work were contacted through a variety of processes of convenience and snowball sampling. This group consisted of younger women born and educated in Britain and also older women. All interviews were transcribed. There is no claim that the samples were representative, so survey data from other sources was used as a control.

KEY FINDINGS

Traditionally, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women marry in their teens. Women do marry later but these women are often from non-traditional families. Many of the respondents had experienced arranged marriages, usually consensual and having met their future partner.

Pakistani women often married within their wider family and the husband came to the UK to live with his wife. The husband and his family were involved in the decision as to whether or not she would work. Among younger women there was considerable variation in attitudes.

Family honour, or izzat, was very important to the community and young women were expected to act in a way that upheld izzat. If her family were compromised by her behaviour then this could affect the respect of the whole community and her own chance of marriage. Izzat was interpreted in different ways by families. For some, this meant they were policed by their parents and unable to continue with education, however, other families allowed their daughters considerable freedom though sometimes having to cope with community pressure and gossip.

The teachings of the Qu'ran and Islam were used to support parental views that varied from very restrictive to liberal. It was not education that parents objected to, but the freedom it gave which might influence their daughters. Women who had experienced very strict restriction as children often resisted imposing these restrictions on their own daughters and some expressed bitterness towards their parents. Girls often negotiated with their parents to stay in education, for example by staying to be educated in Oldham in the knowledge that their parents would hear if they behaved in a way that was not appropriate or by wearing very strict dress. Parents would be less strict if a near relative had already been educated as they could see that success had supported the honour of the family.

Statistical evidence suggests that there are increasing numbers of Pakistani and Bangladeshi young women in the education system. Women who did want to work often had to show considerable determination in the face of family pressure. It was constantly emphasised in the interviews that family is a higher priority for Asians than for the white population.

Young women reported that they experienced education and paid work as positive because they provided self confidence and freedom. Some fathers had resisted their daughter's employment on the grounds that there was no need for extra family income. All of the young women expected to get married. Many also felt that it could lead them to losing freedoms. They felt they were treated as an individual in paid work but recognised that this would not be so after marriage, especially as they would be expected to live with their husband's family. Some women had discussed these issues with their future partners.

Educated young women were often able to work with the support of their husbands. They were able to separate religion and tradition and in some cases to work after motherhood. Nevertheless these women stressed the importance of both work and parenting in their lives. Many young women found support from their mothers-in-law, so the grandparents were actively involved in childcare. Many had actively chosen to delay parenthood, others had taken or were seeking part-time work. Some had experienced discrimination at work and been encouraged by their husbands to withstand it or fight back. It was clear that women with traditional attitudes were more likely to be uneducated, marry and have children whilst still young but also that change between the generations was taking place.

FIND OUT MORE

Dale, A. (2002) 'Social Exclusion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi Women' *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 7(3) (**www.socresonline.org.uk/7/3/dale.html**)

RAISING THE 'MERITOCRACY': PARENTING AND THE INDIVIDUALISATION OF SOCIAL CLASS

VAL GILLIES, 2005

CONTEXT **Up until the 1980s, research on social class tended to focus on male-centred studies based around work and industrial relations but more recent approaches have turned their attention to the lives of women.**

Feminists such as Skeggs have looked at how social class is reproduced in the context of a gendered society. This study takes a similar approach, focusing on the ways in which social class affects parenting.

Working-class culture exists in a society which implies that middle-class life is the normal experience. Government policies reflect the view that people who are disadvantaged experience social exclusion and cannot therefore be full participants in society.

The implication is that opportunities need to be extended to the working class so that they can improve themselves and their lives. The solutions to poverty and deprivation, it is argued, lie with the poor themselves: all that is necessary to solve the problems of working-class communities is 'good' parenting, 'good' values and 'good' relationships.

Since the 1997 election, New Labour has embraced an agenda of encouraging individuals to take control of their lives and to take responsibility for their decisions. They have developed a range of policies claiming to support parents, whilst at the same time encouraging them to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children. In effect, New Labour has attempted to impose middle-class cultural values on working-class people. Critical theorists have suggested that this way of thinking hides the problem of working-class disadvantage and downplays the reality of inequality of opportunity and wealth in modern British society.

FIND OUT MORE

Gillies, V. (2005) 'Raising the Meritocracy.' *Sociology* vol. 39(5). London: Sage Publications

The research is part of the ESRC Families and Social Capital Project (**www.lsbu.ac.uk/families**)

Edwards, R. and Gillies, V. (2005) Resources in Parenting: Access to Capitals Project Report (**www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/workingpapers/familieswp14.pdf**)

METHODS

The aim of this study was to see how class structure can be part of the daily process of raising children. A large-scale survey of parents of children aged between 8 – 12 years old was conducted in addition to detailed interviews with 25 mothers and 11 fathers. The focus on this age group is significant because parents are still responsible for the behaviour of their children but the children are beginning to grow away from parents to form peer relationships and friendship groupings.

The survey adopted what it calls a 'mixed methods' strategy: a large scale survey and small but intensive interviewing. The quantitative study aimed to identify social attitudes and socially accepted norms for behaviour. The qualitative study focused on what people actually do in order to reveal a more complex world where people negotiate their relationships.

A total of 1112 parents from different households were contacted. More than half the sample were female and working class with 10% from minority ethnic groups. Questions focused on the assistance that parents might turn to from both formal (financial, educational, behavioural and health organisations) and informal sources (family and friends) and were framed as multiple-choice questions. In addition, some mock case studies were presented to parents who were asked what they should do in these circumstances.

68% of the quantitative sample agreed that they would be willing to participate in the detailed qualitative phase of the study. Researchers eventually sampled 25 mothers and 11 fathers from 27 households across the UK.

They made their selection by categorising people according to levels of social capital (the links between individuals and social groups). High levels of social capital were defined as families that fit the 'cereal packet' norm of working father, home-based mother and one or two children. Low social capital involved a far larger range of family forms. Lone parents were in this category because of the absence of one adult from the home. Families that survive on benefits have low social capital, as do those with large numbers of children. In terms of the social class make-up of the intense sample, approximately half were from working-class and half from middle-class families spread across the social capital categories.

KEY FINDINGS

Parenting was gendered across all social classes. Mothers took responsibility for the daily care of children despite government initiatives to encourage father-friendly policies encouraging men to form closer relationships with their children. Parents with high status jobs or access to friends and families with professional work used their contacts and knowledge to give their children advantages. Middle-class parents used a range of resources to support their children, focusing on social skills and education. This was in direct contrast to working-class parents who provided their children with strategies to cope with poverty, low social status and vulnerability to emotional and physical abuse and violence. The parents of working-class children focused on providing emotional strength and strategies to cope with injustice and hardship.

Middle-class parents insisted on the rights of their children's individuality to be respected. They insisted that their own children's exceptional abilities or talents be respected and encouraged, sometimes at the expense of those against whom their child may be measured. Parents and teachers were complicit in viewing the middle-class child as in need of protection and nurturing because they shared cultural values and a common language, viewing the 'less able' child as a problem. The issue was that a 'problem child' was often a working-class child.

Working-class parents did not wish their children to be seen as special and their main concern was that the child should stay out of trouble. They did not understand the values of the school. Their own relationships with teachers when they were young were marked by humiliation, failure and embarrassment. In marked contrast to middle-class parents who had contacted the school when they suspected bullying, one interview with working-class parents revealed that the mother had risked prison because she supported her son's truancy when she felt her repeated complaints of bullying were being ignored.

When middle-class parents experienced problems with children, they had a range of resources to draw on. Parents consulted expensive specialists to obtain reports for their children when they had fallen below the parents' expectations. Parents were thus able to ensure a special status for their children. In contrast, working-class parents viewed clinical diagnosis as a problem because they felt it would result in their child being overlooked. One working-class mother had been sent to parenting classes despite the fact that she had escaped domestic violence and had at times gone hungry to feed her children. Her problems were financial in nature; she was homeless and without income, but the support offered by social services and other official bodies was psychological.

This research shows that the middle classes have access to a range of privileges that are denied to members of the working class. It challenges recent sociological arguments which claim that class is no longer significant in British society. This relatively small-scale work is actually a dramatic challenge to established thinking.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study is of use in understanding the diversity of cultures between social classes and the impact of those cultures on parenting styles. It adds to our awareness of the nature of childhood and the status of children within the family and identifies class differences in the experience of childhood. It also helps us understand the patterns of poverty and educational underachievement among different social groups.

EVALUATION

In practical terms, an in-depth analysis of 25 households is rather small although the use of the daily language of ordinary people adds to its validity. However, a selection process has already taken place before we read the report. We do not hear the voices of the schools and teachers or of the social workers to counteract or contextualise the parents' views of their actions. Furthermore research that mentions ethnic minorities as a single category is not representative of the varied and diverse nature of the cultures that form Britain's minority ethnic population.

THE INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

LUCINDA PLATT, 2005

CONTEXT **The link between the social class of a parent and that of their children has been firmly established by research.**

Even at times of high levels of social mobility such as the period of middle-class expansion in the 1970s, the chances of middle-class children remaining within the class of their birth was far higher than for working-class children of entering the middle classes. Britain appears to be a more closed society than many imagine. However, little evidence exists on whether this closure applies equally to those from minority ethnic backgrounds. This research sets out to remedy that gap in knowledge.

The measurement of intergenerational social mobility raises complex methodological issues. Most studies have either compared cross-sections of the community at various points in time, or used surveys to ask about the occupations of parents and of their children. The pattern of these studies suggest that some ethnic groups, such as Indians, do have above average rates of social mobility while others, such as African Caribbeans, have lower than average levels. It is argued that this may be due to the fact that some ethnic groups were not able to obtain the level of work for which they were qualified when they first entered Britain.

This study attempts to take a different approach. It measures parents' social class after migration and takes account of unemployment because it is recognised that unemployment patterns are higher among minority ethnic groups than among the white majority.

LINKS TO KEY DEBATES

This study considers three key variables in social mobility: class of origin, ethnicity and gender. This makes it valuable in any study of stratification and differentiation. More importantly, it offers conclusions on differences in life chances by class, gender and ethnicity. It raises methodological issues on how class can be defined and studied empirically as well as adding to the debates on social mobility.

EVALUATION

Class is often overlooked in modern sociology but this study suggests that it remains an important dynamic in society. More importantly it suggests that the structure and organisation of our society still has an influence on people's lives. Ethnic origin is a major determinant of social class and a source of inequality. Even so, some individuals seem to be able to fight the general patterns so that while class is stable for many people, there is evidence of upward mobility for certain social groups.

METHODS

This study is based on data collected by the Office for National Statistics Longitudinal Study. A sample of people was taken from the 1971 Census by including everyone born on one of four dates. Data was collected from this group and from other groups selected using the same criteria in 1981 and 1991 (the data for 2001 was not available when this study was carried out). The use of official data meant that there was a reduced chance of non-response.

Data was collected from those in the sample aged between eight and fifteen and who were resident with one of their parents. In this way class of origin could be identified and the class position of the children checked when they were adults in the 1981 and 1991 surveys. The sampling method also ensured that the samples were large enough to include members of minority ethnic groups. Nevertheless there were significant gaps in the data in the later surveys, for example 36% of those with West Indian parents were lost to the study but only 24% of those with Indian-born parents.

The final sample consisted of 51,005 people. Data was gathered on their parents' place of birth and social class and also on the respondents' own place of birth and social class. Three different groups became the focus of the analysis: Indians, African Caribbeans and white non-migrants. They were allocated class on a simple division into three groupings: service class (secure middle-class jobs requiring qualifications), intermediate class (lower and less skilled middle-class jobs) and working class (manual jobs). In addition, unemployment was included as a class.

KEY FINDINGS

The class structure of Britain has changed over the past 30 years so that there are more middle-class jobs for those with professional and managerial training. This has resulted in an increase in the number of people who have been upwardly socially mobile.

The comparison between children of white parents and those of ethnic minority immigrant parents suggests that young people from some minority ethnic backgrounds had been more upwardly mobile than most. Those who had made the most progress were likely to be of Caribbean, Black African, Indian and Chinese origin. The level of mobility appeared to be related to success in education so it suggests that migrant parents encouraged their children towards high school attainment.

Migrants were much more likely to have parents in working-class occupations. However, some of the groups were also more likely to show evidence of social mobility than were non-migrant populations. The overall patterns of social mobility suggested that people were likely to remain in their social class of origin with 40% of non-migrants and 30% of migrants remaining in the same social class as their parents.

While middle-class Indians sometimes experienced downward mobility, this was balanced by upward social mobility for Indians from the working and intermediate classes. There was a much less clear pattern for African Caribbeans; it is possible that those of higher social status from the Caribbean community were more likely to return to their original homes in the Caribbean, taking their families with them. The pattern seems to suggest that while service-class origins offered white non-migrants a significant chance of remaining in that class it did not offer the same advantage to those from minority ethnic backgrounds. A different pattern emerged for children of Pakistani migrants who were more likely to be working class and to stay working class. In addition, religious differences between groups were not easily explained by ethnicity alone. Jews and Hindus were more likely to be upwardly socially than Muslims and Sikhs.

Gender patterns were also significant. Caribbean women were highly likely to be in the working class. However, figures were affected by the pattern of partnerships and the way that class was allocated by the Office for National Statistics. Caribbean women who looked after children would be allocated as unemployed because they had high rates of single parenthood. Indian women who looked after children would be allocated to the social class of their partner because most were married. Nevertheless, it would appear that origin and destination classes remained more stable for women than for men in all of the ethnic groups.

It has been argued that parents who lost occupational status on migration would pass on their aspirations to their children, so that member of ethnic minorities would show increased social mobility up the class ladder. This study suggests that the patterns are not so clear cut. Nevertheless there is a conclusion which can be drawn. Class processes are often claimed to be beyond the control of individuals so that children merely reproduce the patterns of the previous generations. This is not so. The patterns for men and for women are quite different. This shows that both gender and ethnicity are factors in class formation.

FIND OUT MORE

Platt, L. (2005) 'The Intergenerational Social Mobility of Minority Ethnic Groups'. *Sociology* vol. 39 (3). London: Sage Publications

Platt, L. (2005) *Migration and Social Mobility: the Life Chances of Britain's Minority Ethnic Communities.* Bristol: Policy Press

The full report can be downloaded from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website at **www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1861348223.pdf**

A summary is available at **www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0545.asp**

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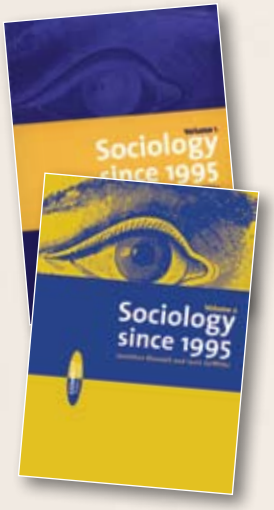

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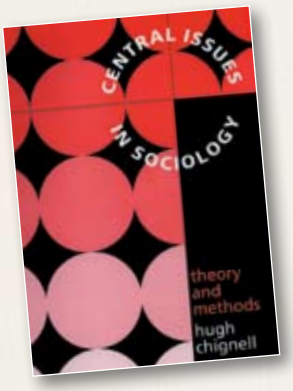

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