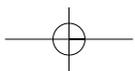
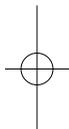


7

Youth and Social Policy: Control, Regulation and Governance

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Overview

Chapter 7 examines:

- the ways in which the everyday lives of young people are subject to particular forms of social regulation;
- various 'sites' of youth regulation including housing, welfare benefits, training schemes, parenting programmes and the policing of public space;
- the relationship between criminal justice and social policy;
- the politics of social control and notions of a disciplinary or carceral society;
- how the concept of 'social control' has been utilized in various criminological theories;
- the policy implications of discourses of 'social exclusion' and 'social inclusion';
- new modes of youth governance in the twenty-first century.

key terms

'anti-social' control; carceral society; dispersal of discipline; governmentality; marginalization; risk society; social control; social exclusion; social inclusion; state control; transcarceration; zero tolerance

This chapter explores the control and regulatory effects of welfare and social policy in the UK. Social policy has traditionally been viewed as an ostensibly progressive series of social arrangements concerned with the distribution of resources in order to meet individual and social needs. Yet, since the nineteenth century, social welfare provision has also contained rationales of regulation and discipline. Nevertheless while problems of control and order have always lain at the heart of discussions of youth justice and penal policy, it was only from the late 1950s that any sustained attempt was made to apply such concepts to the apparently benign implementation of social policies in such areas as health, education, housing and employment. One of the earliest contributions was Saville's (1957) Marxist thesis that the welfare state arose largely out of capitalist self interest: in order to increase social stability, secure a compliant workforce and ensure the financial gain of the few. Any progressive elements were portrayed as a series of concessions, just sufficient to blunt working-class resistance to the structures of their exploitation and powerlessness. Such lines of argument have been significantly developed since the 1960s. For some radical criminologists, a major concern has been to examine how the 'exceptional' and 'exclusionary' interventions of criminal justice intersect with the continuum of 'everyday' and 'inclusionary' interventions to be found in education, social work, employment and leisure.

This chapter assesses the ways in which the everyday lives of young people are regulated by examining developments in youth training, welfare entitlement, housing policy, family policy and policing from the 1980s to the present. While **Chapters 8 and 9** examine the relationship between young people and formal agencies of control, this chapter looks at the different ways in which social policy and policing establish a structuring context in which 'what it means to be young' has become more tightly defined and increasingly regulated. Indeed, criminal responsibility is one of the first 'rights' that are afforded to children in the UK (see Box 7.1).

Box 7.1

Becoming an adult: regulations, rights and responsibilities

Age	Regulation, Rights and Responsibilities
5	drink alcohol in private (placed under review in 2008)
8	be held responsible for a crime in Scotland
10	be held responsible for a crime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland be taken into the 'protective custody' of 'intensive fostering'; be sent to secure unit for 'grave' offences
12	be held in a secure training centre own a pet
13	have a part-time job (with conditions)
15	be sent to a young offender institution
16	pay taxes consent to sexual intercourse have a homosexual relationship (lowered from 18 in 2000) leave home/marry with parents' consent leave school (to be raised to 18 by 2015) seek full-time employment drive a moped buy aerosol paint (introduced in 2003) join the army buy a lottery ticket
17	drive a car pilot a plane emigrate
18	vote in elections (to be reduced to 16?) serve on a jury buy a knife or razor blade (raised from 16 (except in Scotland) in 2006) buy alcohol buy tobacco (raised from 16 in 2007) marry without parents' consent

	be tried in a magistrates' court
	buy fireworks and sparklers (raised from 16 in 1997)
	bet in a betting shop
	entitled to lower rate of national minimum wage
	get a tattoo
	buy an airgun or replica guns (raised from 13 in 2003 and from 17 in 2006)
21	adopt a child
	become an MP
22	entitled to adult rate of national minimum wage

Social policy development since the 1980s has been dominated by the neo-liberal objectives of economy (reducing public expenditure), efficiency (reliance on market forces) and effectiveness (enhancing consumer choice). Yet it has also been influenced by a neo-conservative authoritarianism in which the imperatives of order and control have dominated. The contradictions have played themselves out in the identification of social exclusion as both the cause and product of crime. Work and family morality have been identified as the key targets in tackling the causes of crime. As a result, an eclectic series of concerns – from truancy, poverty, homelessness, worklessness to teenage pregnancy – and legitimating rationales – self-help, empowerment, responsibility – have been identified, in the process, drawing social policy and criminal justice agendas closer together in the business of overt and covert social control.

Theorizing Control, Regulation and Governance

7.1 The term **social control** is notoriously difficult to pin down. In functionalist sociology the concept appears as a neutral term to describe a variety of social processes – from infant socialization to incarceration – that induce social order, and to explain how conformity is maintained in pluralist democracies. Within interactionism the focus is somewhat narrower, but similarly concludes that the key to social integration lies in the realm of informal and primary socialization. Such benign readings of 'social control' as a functional necessity and as essentially apolitical were mirrored in traditional positivist criminology whose key concern, at least up to the 1950s, remained one of developing 'scientific', pragmatic and institutionally based policies for the individualized control of offenders (see **Chapter 3**). As Cohen and Scull (1983, pp. 5–6) recall, the standard definition of 'social control' is rooted in a social psychological perspective and is used as a term first simply to describe all the means and processes through which social conformity is achieved and, second, to construct a

hierarchy of such means ranging from primary socialization, through informal mechanisms (such as peer group pressure) to formal methods associated with the police and the legal system. Within all such readings it is widely assumed that a consensus exists in society; that primary socialization is largely successful in achieving a widespread and uncontested conformity; and that external agencies are only called upon to 'mop up' those deviants who have suffered a failure or lack of adequate socialization.

It was not until the late 1960s that an alternative view of social control, as organized repression, came to the fore. Generated by the protest movements in America (civil rights, Vietnam, counterculture) and the emerging utopian and personal politics of the 'new left', arguments concerning the essential consensual nature of society became harder to sustain (see **Chapter 6**). In particular, labelling contended that the identification of the deviant and the criminal was an intrinsically political process through which, for example, capitalist institutions and the ruling classes were able to impose their will on the exploited and the powerless (see **Chapter 4.1**). In this formulation, social control was conceptualized not simply as a reactive exercise, but as an active force in the identification and creation of the deviant. As Chunn and Gavigan (1988, p. 109) noted, 'the concept of "social control" as "doing good" had become the concept of "social control" as "doing bad"'. Such a premise did indeed become influential in critical readings of a wide range of purportedly reformist and welfare-related practices. For example, a key concern of the National Deviancy Conference was to reveal the coercive – but often hidden – aspects of control entailed in the professional practices of youth training, social work, law, probation, medicine, schooling, psychiatry, and so on. The intrusion of the state into the private and familial; the capacity for behaviour to be continually subjected to surveillance, monitoring and regulation; and the spectre of mind control – all these constructed a powerful portrayal of a one-dimensional society (Marcuse, 1964) in the image of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932).

Moving the concept of social control from its benign underpinnings, this *control culture* approach maintained that social control, whether weak or strong, informal or formal, remained all-pervasive. There was very little that remained that could not be seen as an instrument of social control (Stedman-Jones, 1977). The key neglected issue – particularly within labelling – was how and why such control operated differently in different social contexts. Lacking any precise definition and consistent use, the concept was aptly described by Cohen (1985, p. 2) as 'Mickey Mouse' and by Lowman et al. (1987, p. 4) as 'a skeleton key opening so many doors that its analytic power has been drained ... a spectral category which becomes all things to all theorists'.

From Social Control to State Control

In the 1970s, the answer to such ambiguities lay in situating particular processes of social control in their precise socio-structural and historical settings. The emerging Marxist criminology and sociology of law, for example, placed a theory of the state

centre-stage in the analysis of how control was exercised (see **Chapter 4.1**). Hall et al. (1978, p. 195), for example, found the control culture approach to be ahistorical and too imprecise for an adequate understanding of processes of conformity, legitimation and, most significantly, opposition, in the class-structured democracies of 'late capitalism'. It did not locate centres of power historically and thus was unable to account for moments of shift and change; it failed to differentiate between different types of state and political regime; and did not specify the type of social formation which requires a particular form of legal order. Above all, it adopted a predominantly coercive view of power and legal relations. Simply substituting coercion for the functionalist notion of consensus failed to identify how the exercise of power was often legitimized. The complex combination of processes of social regulation and civil liberties; of naked force and willing consent; and of resistance and deference was, quite simply, lost in a perspective that caricatured all police, social workers, teachers, philanthropists and reformers as unconscious agents of socio-cultural repression (Hall and Scraton, 1981, p. 470). As a result, Hall et al. (1978, p. 195) argued for the abandonment of the term 'social control' (except for 'general descriptive purposes') and its subjugation to that of **state control**. This, they argued, would enable recognition that the production of consent is achieved not simply through coercive measures, but through state leadership, direction, education and tutelage. Chunn and Gavigan (1988, p. 120) reached a similar conclusion, again by stressing the ahistorical nature of 'social control' and by arguing that critical scholars should be searching for alternative concepts that are 'attentive to the dynamic complexity of history, struggle and change'.

Feminist research has also alerted us to significant gender-based differences in the operation of both social and state control (Heidensohn, 1985). Disobedient or runaway young women and the 'unfit' teenage mother are far more likely to be candidates for intervention than disobedient, runaway or sexually active heterosexual young men. Moreover many social and employment policies have traditionally tended to be predicated on assumptions of female dependency and male independence. Systems of social control impact differently on different subject populations. A state-centred perspective may be able to recognize how 'social control' produces (rather than simply prohibits) certain behaviours, but on its own is unable to capture the nuances of control afforded by a 'gendered lens' (Walklate, 1995). In addition, some feminist authors have argued that the extension of control in some areas, rather than being dangerous, is urgently required in order to protect women from male domestic and street violence. As Smart (1989) argues, the law can be used not simply for disciplinary purposes, but also as a means to pursue a discourse of 'rights'.

Foucault on the Carceral Society

Following the work of Foucault (1977), the term 'social control' was resurrected as a means through which analytical justice could be done to the complex and contradictory means by which order is achieved in democratic societies. Foucault's critique of 'power as state centred' and the shift towards acknowledging the role of processes of diffuse societal power (or the 'microphysics of power') significantly broadened the concept of social control to include not only

state and institutional practices but also the realms of discursive construction, ideology and the production of meaning.

Foucault refers to a continuous *disciplinary discourse*, in which no one source is given privileged attention, which informed and was intertwined with all forms of social control in the late eighteenth century. The reform of prisoners, confinement of the insane and supervision of industrial workers, as well as the training and education of children, all formed part of an emerging **carceral society**, in which it was not only deviance or crime that was controlled, but also every irregularity or the least departure from the norm (see Box 7.2).

Box 7.2

The disciplinary society

[I]t was no longer the offence, the attack on common interest, it was the departure from the norm, the anomaly; it was this that haunted the school, the court, the asylum or the prison ... [I]t is not on the fringes of society and through successive exiles that criminality is born, but by means of ever more closely placed insertions, under ever more insistent surveillance, by an accumulation of disciplinary coercion. In short the carceral archipelago assures in the depth of the social body, the formation of delinquency on the basis of subtle illegalities, the overlapping of the latter by the former and the establishment of a specified criminality ... By operating at every level of the social body and by mingling ceaselessly the art of rectifying and the right to punish, the universality of the carceral lowers the level from which it becomes natural and acceptable to be punished.

Source: Foucault (1977, pp. 299, 301, 303).

The carceral discourse, it is argued, is so pervasive that ultimately it affects our very vision of the world: it enters the human soul. The power of the prison, and in particular the juvenile reformatory (see **Chapter 2.2**) in the 1840s, is less explicable in terms of penal philosophy, or as a success or a failure, than it is by the 'power of normalization' that operates simultaneously and to varying degrees in the school, the hospital and the factory. This power emanates not simply from the state or a mode of production but, for Foucault, from forms of knowledge that inform all social relations. The emergence of the reformatory was but one reflection of the diffusion of new forms of knowledge grounded in positivism and the human sciences which first began to surface in the late eighteenth century. The aim was to produce a new kind of individual subjected to habits, rules, orders and an authority that is 'exercised continually around him, and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him' (Foucault, 1977, p. 129). Foucault's initial investigation of penal reform became a means of exploring the wider theme of how domination is achieved and how individuals are socially constructed in the modern world. It is because of this broad canvas, on which images of regulation, discipline, surveillance, consent, normalization and coercion are constructed, that Foucault's work remains influential in historical and contemporary readings of social control.

For example, it has enabled criminology to study the way in which various welfare state institutions are deeply implicated in the 'regulation of life'. But it also allows for a greater sensitivity to the interrelations of social structure with processes of power, knowledge and governance. It is at once attuned to processes of domination *and* enablement; of constraint *and* resistance (Lacombe, 1996).

Donzelot (1979), for example, has argued that from the mid-nineteenth century onwards 'expert knowledges', whether emanating from welfare agencies, the school or the juvenile court, have continuously devised remedies for the 'aberrant' which have penetrated deep into the everyday life of the urban working classes. Psychologists, paediatricians, social workers, teachers and health visitors formed a 'tutelary complex' to 'watch over' not only the young but also their families. This was achieved not by overtly coercive means but by persuading the family of its social responsibility to others and to its own members. Familial autonomy, or government *by* the family, was replaced by government *through* the family. The aim was to govern society by delegating legitimacy to professionals empowered to nurture individuals into social citizenship. Such programmes had as much to do with the governance of particular moral and social orders as they had explicitly to do with crime and disorder. Every departure from the norm comes under scrutiny to be monitored and regulated not simply through formal criminal justice legislation but through an ever-expanding range of familial and social policy interventions. Moreover as these interventions can act anywhere along a disciplinary/enabling continuum, they are difficult to characterize as either one or the other. Rather they are progressively internalized such that citizens come to unreflectively make and remake their own conceptions of themselves within a disciplinary discourse.

Foucault and Donzelot's work clearly avoids any ready identification with 'grand' theoretical paradigms and more readily escapes the critique of essentialism so often directed at general theory. Indeed, Garland (1990, p. 154) concludes that, as a result, there is now 'a much greater sensitivity to the nuances of penal measures and to what they can tell us about the regulatory means through which we are governed and the forms of subjectivity (or objectivity) into which offenders are pressed'. Terms such as 'regulation', 'knowledge', 'normalization', 'governmentality' and 'discipline' have come to hold a central place in this 'revisionist' literature of social control. The key elements of Foucault's argument are summarized in Box 7.3.

Box 7.3

Foucault's Discipline and Punish

- The punitive techniques of supervision and surveillance first formulated in the prison have penetrated the whole of society.
- Punishment is aimed not at the body, but towards training the human soul.
- Such techniques are directed not only towards offenders, but to all departures from the norm.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- Disciplinary networks become natural, legitimate and 'normalized' elements of the social landscape.
- Social control becomes diffuse, hidden and dispersed.
- Social control is exercised not simply through the state but through power-knowledge strategies. As a result, control may be pervasive but is always contingent. It produces resistance as well as subjugation.

Cohen on the Dispersal of Discipline

Stanley Cohen's (1979, 1985, 1987) **dispersal of discipline** thesis reworks that of Foucault to contend that as control mechanisms are dispersed from custody into the community, they penetrate more deeply into the social fabric. A blurring of boundaries between the deviant and non-deviant, the public and the private occurs. A 'punitive archipelago' is expanded as new resources, technology and professional interests are applied to a growing number of 'clients' and 'consumers'. Entrepreneurs are drawn into the control enterprise in search of profits. Communities are mobilized to act as voluntary control agents in their own right. But, throughout, the growing invisibility and diversification of the state's role do not mean it has withered away. The prison remains at the core of the system. The rhetoric of community control continues to camouflage what is really going on: 'The price paid by ordinary people is to become either active participants or passive receivers in the business of social control' (Cohen, 1985, p. 233). The end result of drawing law and order agendas into social policy for youth has meant that any progressive elements have become obscured by ambivalence and ambiguity (see Box 7.4). Alternatives to prison (such as community supervision) and crime prevention (rather than law enforcement) policies have failed to reduce the reach of criminal justice and have drawn more young people into the mesh of formal controls (see **Chapter 9**). Such reforms have also been supported for non-progressive reasons, as, for example, 'solutions' to the fiscal crises of the state, rather than as determined responses to youth marginalization or exclusion.

Box 7.4

The outcomes of 'community control'

- The weak, pathetic and sick are subject to too little 'control'. Neglected and deprived of help, treatment and services, they are left to suffer silently or to be exploited by commercial interests.
- The petty or 'potential' delinquents are subject to more intrusive and disguised control in the name of diversion or prevention.

- The hardcore, serious criminals are subject to further degradation. As the soft end of the system appears more and more benign, so the hard core criminals appear more hopeless and become easy targets for policies such as selective incapacitation.
- The powerful remain free to carry out their depredations with impunity.
- The ordinary population are subjected to further and more subtle involvement in the business of social control. Everyday life becomes 'controllized' by Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, informers, new systems of surveillance of public space, and databanks. Whole populations are made the object of preventive social control before any deviant act can take place.

Source: Adapted from Cohen (1987, pp. 363–4).

Lowman et al. (1987, p. 9) argue that these developments can best be captured in the concept of **transcarceration**. They argue that as the old institutions of control remain and the new are created, we are now confronted with

[a]peno-judicial, mental health, welfare and tutelage complex ... [F]or delinquents, deviants and dependants this means that their careers are likely to be characterized by institutional mobility as they are pushed from one section of the help-control complex to another. For control agents, this means that control will essentially have no locus and the control mandate will increasingly entail the 'fitting together' of subsystems.

In congruence with Foucault's thesis, this formulation of control continues to acknowledge its versatility: infiltrating many levels of discourse and 'arenas of action' and serving and constituting a diversity of interests. Of particular note is how, by the 1990s, much of this control became privatized – that is, removed from direct state control and activated by communities, voluntary agencies and private security companies. It is in this context that Cohen (1994, p. 74) can begin talking of social control as a commodity: as something to be purchased and sold.

Rose on Governance

To make sense of these shifts in crime control and social regulation, numerous authors have increasingly turned to the concept of 'governance'. Derived from Foucault's (1991) brief writings on 'governmentality', 'governance' (though often used in an eclectic fashion) draws attention to the numerous means through which power is exercised, and how particular 'mentalities' of governing are constructed, both within *and* beyond the state. Governance means something more than state government. Foucault suggested that, rather than framing investigations of regulation and control in terms of the state or politics, it would be more productive to investigate the formation and transformation of rationalities, discourses, proposals, strategies and technologies in order to explore, in his terms, 'the conduct of conduct'

(Dean, 1999). **Governmentality** theory challenges reductionist analyses by focusing on how particular modes of power depend on specific ways of thinking (rationalities of power) and of acting (technologies of power) (Garland, 1997). It is less concerned, for example, with how law is *imposed* and more with the *tactic* of using particular knowledges to arrange things in such a way that populations accept being governed and begin to govern themselves. It implies that power is not simply achieved through sovereign state dominance, but through myriad institutions, procedures, reflections and calculations in which citizens are ‘made up’ and come to realize themselves. Governing is viewed as heterogeneous in thought and action – captured to a certain extent in the various words available to describe and enact it: education, control, influence, regulation, administration, management, therapy, reformation, guidance (Rose, 1999). Recognition of this *dispersal* of governance has opened a door to examining how youth crime is ‘governed’, not simply by the police and formal control agents, but also by the ‘rationalities’ employed by the likes of the insurance industry, employers, potential victims, head teachers, shopping-centre managers, cognitive psychologists, parenting counsellors, and so on (see Box 7.5).

Box 7.5

The ‘conduct of conduct’

The investigations of government that interest me here are those which try to gain a purchase on the forces that traverse the multitudes of encounters where conduct is subject to government: prisons, clinics, schoolrooms and bedrooms, factories and offices, airports and military organizations, the market place and shopping mall, sexual relations and much more ... They focus upon the various incarnations of what one might term ‘the will to govern’ as it is enacted in a multitude of programmes, strategies, tactics, devices, calculations, negotiations, intrigues, persuasions and seductions aimed at the conduct of the conduct of individuals, groups, populations – and indeed oneself.

Source: Rose (1999, p. 5).

In this analysis the state is relocated as one element in ‘multiple circuits of power’ connecting a diversity of authorities, forces and complex assemblages. The subjects of government are not simply ‘members of a flock to be shepherded, as children to be nurtured and tutored’ but are ‘citizens with rights, rational, calculating individuals whose preferences are to be acted upon’ (Rose, 2000, p. 323).

How can this help us to understand the regulation of young people? Rose (1989, p. 121) contends that it allows us to realize how childhood has, over the past 200 years, become ‘the most intensively governed sector of personal existence’. The continual casting of children in a double bind of in need of support and control has enabled virtually every aspect of their lives to be subject to inspection, surveillance and regulation. In criminology in general, and youth studies in particular, governance theory has also typically been employed in the context of exploring new forms of governance. Crawford

(1997) argues that attempts to control crime through partnerships of statutory, commercial and voluntary organizations imply a new *process of governing* through negotiation and bargaining, rather than command and coercion. The devolution and privatization of functions previously undertaken by statutory agencies suggest that a fragmentation of power into a plurality of competing agencies with none being able to exercise overall control. The idea of 'joined-up' government to attack multi-faceted and complex problems such as youth offending through multi-agency partnerships employing a broad spectrum of social policy interventions represents a significant break with some forms of centralized power. Governance theory then draws attention to the 'ways of thinking' that underpin processes of new managerialism; where governance is achieved 'at a distance'; where a language of risks and rewards has transformed that of care and control; and where partnerships, communities and families have been 'empowered' and 'responsibilized' to take an active role in their own self-government, but where some citizens may also have been 'abandoned' (Clarke, 2005) (see **Chapters 8 and 9**).

Such analysis helps us to make sense of many of the policy reforms of the past two decades. They express a preference for free market solutions, 'best value' competition, deregulation, privatization and workfare (where any benefit entitlement is conditional upon acceptance of work) in a climate where risks are to be calculated and outputs are to be managed through continual performance measures and where policy is justified through recourse to 'scientific' evaluations of 'what works' (see Box 7.6). Above all a multiplicity of modes of governance is created: authoritarian at one time, welfarist at another; delivering discourses of responsibility as well as rights; and driven by a deeply imbued moralization as well as pragmatism (Stenson, 2000; Muncie and Hughes, 2002).

Box 7.6

New modes of governance

- Replacing the command and control structures of government by 'governing at a distance'.
- Building partnerships and networks across the public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve 'joined-up' governance.
- Devolving responsibility for government to individuals, families and communities.
- Creating the 'active citizen' and 'negotiated self governance'.
- Opening up decision-making to greater public participation and the individual desire to govern their own conduct with freedom.
- Involving civil society in the process of governance.
- Privatizing the state sector.
- Promoting the role of government as steerer and co-ordinator rather than as controller.
- Regulating devolved governance through fiscal accounting, audit and evaluation research.

Source: Derived from Newman (2001, p. 24) and Muncie and Hughes (2002, p. 3).

Governance theory, to date, has mainly been concerned with unravelling the processes through which we are governed, but it also marks a significant theoretical step in understanding the detailed nuances and contradictions of reform. Foucault and Cohen clearly broadened the traditional subject matter of the criminology of youth by blurring the boundaries of social policy and criminological knowledges. Their strength lay in identifying major trends in 'the disciplinary' and 'the carceral'. Governance theory goes further by also alerting us to the 'heterogeneity, contestability and mobility in practices for the government of conduct' (Rose, 2000, p. 323). Rights-based social movements, local initiatives and the intrinsic spaces for resistance opened by the commitment to self-governance all suggest possible avenues for a reconstitution of 'social' modes of government. Such authors as Hughes (2007) and Young (2007) have come to argue (albeit in different ways) that the inclusionary principles, values and ideals that inform some social policies should not be abandoned, but resurrected within agendas of social justice, rather than criminal justice. For them, new imaginaries of public safety, transformative politics, mutual aid and social justice remain the preferable goals. For Stan Cohen (1987), it also meant moving away from discourses of crime and criminal justice: 'the further away we move from the discourse of criminal justice, the more likely are we to find the conditions for realizing those values ... [T]o be realistic about law and order must mean to be unrealistic (that is imaginative) about the possibilities of order without law' (Cohen, 1987, p. 374).

Youth Training and the Labour Market

7.2 Research into the relationship between education, training, entry to the labour market and unemployment has tended to view the process as an orthodox linear *transition* from school to work and has failed to recognize its social control implications. Any deviation from an 'ideal' progression from full-time education to full-time employment is perceived in negative terms: as a 'broken' transition, as a 'failure' of certain young people to adjust to the demands of the labour market. Such concern is of course by no means new. The vagaries of the youth labour market vexed many a Victorian reformer and the problems of dead-end jobs, prolonged unemployment, 'wasted potential' and 'idle hands' were uppermost in the minds of the founders of the welfare state after the Second World War. During times of relatively full employment the transition from school to work has been viewed as non-problematic. But, as Coles (1995) has argued, the traditional 'careers' of young people – leaving school and finding employment, leaving families of origin and forming their own, and leaving the family home and living independently – rest crucially not only on personal decisions, but also on prevailing social and economic contexts. In the 1970s most young people seemed to manage these transitions with relative ease. A majority left school at 16 and within six months 90 per cent had secured employment (Coles, 1995, p. 30). By 1980, this picture had changed dramatically.

Youth Unemployment

Triggered by economic recession and a restructuring of the labour market which reduced the demand for young unskilled labour, the numbers of unemployed school leavers rose dramatically from the mid-1970s. In September 1973, there were 14,000 school leavers (under-18s) without a job. By July 1980, this figure had risen to 368,000. This almost 26-fold increase took place despite higher numbers of young people avoiding the labour market by going into higher and further education.

Ever since 1975 when youth unemployment first became a major political issue, governments have poured resources into various job creation, work experience and training schemes. In 1976, the then Prime Minister, James Callaghan set the tone by blaming young people for not having the skills that the economy required of them. He further blamed education for not teaching students what was required of them by the business community. The bulk of subsequent reforms were initially directed towards 16 year old school-leavers. This was not unsurprising. In the early 1980s nearly 50 per cent of Britain's 16 year olds still left school to find work. In July 1983, over half of these were either unemployed or on a government-sponsored training scheme. Numerous programmes were established in the next 20 years, the most notable being the 1978 Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) and the 1983 Youth Training Scheme (YTS) (a 12-month training programme directed at *all* 16 and 17 year old school-leavers) which in 1990 became known simply as Youth Training (YT) and subsequently as Skillseekers. All such schemes have met robust criticism.

The basic premise of such programmes was that youth unemployment had risen because of a sudden failure of youth to be suitable candidates for employment. In effect they promoted a 'blame the victim' ideology (see **Chapter 5**). Youth employment was presented as a problem of faulty supply rather than demand; a failure of the educational system rather than market economies; a personal problem of joblessness due to lack of motivation, experience or skill, rather than of precarious labour markets (Cohen, P., 1982, p. 45). The primary fallacy lay in the premise that a programme of vocational preparation would enable the young to be better equipped to compete for jobs, without actually expanding real job opportunities. As Stafford (1982, p. 77) warned, this form of integrating youth into the labour market would depend on their willingness to accept any alternative to the dole. As such it would be 'precarious and rests on a promise which must surely turn sour'. Similarly, Finn (1987, p. 190) concluded that the aim of youth training was essentially contradictory: 'to produce a generation of young people who are basically skilled and willing to work, but who can also maintain these qualities in suspended animation through any periods of unemployment'.

By 1988 the option of the dole was removed when the Conservative government abolished income support benefit for all 16 and 17 year olds, other than for a small majority who could plead 'severe hardship'. By now 16 year olds were faced with a limited range of options: to continue with schooling or further education; to accept a place on a government-sponsored training scheme; or, if unemployed, to stay dependent on their families. As a result it has been widely acknowledged that

'adolescence' was formally extended, with any possibility of independence removed for the vast majority (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997, p. 43). In 1989, 18 per cent of minimum-age school leavers entered the labour market; by 1994, this had been reduced to 9 per cent. Conversely the proportion of 16 year olds in full-time or part-time education rose to 80 per cent (*Observer*, 23 July 1995).

Those entering the labour market in the 1980s also faced a series of additional hazards. Since the nineteenth century a political consensus had ensured that young people were given some protection from market exploitation, but in the 1980s market deregulation meant that restrictions on hours and conditions of work and rates of pay were removed. The problem of youth unemployment, it was claimed, was one of young people being too expensive to employ. As Roberts (1995, p. 15) records, Young Workers' Schemes offered subsidies to employers only on condition that they hire young people at rates of pay below the average for the age group. In 1986, the protection of Wages Councils was also removed. The jobs available to 16 year olds increasingly became low paid and insecure. Those entering youth training fared little better. This 'route' rapidly contracted in the 1990s as educational participation grew. Despite government claims that YT was designed to improve skills and subsequent employability, the schemes were consistently critiqued by young people themselves as 'slave labour' with employers operating 'try-out schemes' in which young people's work performance was assessed and only the best retained (Coffield et al., 1986). For many, YT was also an exercise in 'warehousing' in which no long-term career benefits were forthcoming (Banks et al., 1992). Mizen's (1995) equally critical, empirical study of school leavers and trainees' experiences and accounts in Coventry painted a picture of YT 'more as an extension of pre-existing forms of discipline and control than as the beginning of a new and welcome chapter in the lives of many working class young people'. It was received by young people with a (realistic) combination of resistance, denial and ambivalence (Mizen, 1995, pp. 197–202). The experience of training was fragmented and stratified by class, gender and 'race'. The most disadvantaged and those from ethnic minorities tended to be concentrated in schemes with low rates of subsequent employment. The promised new opportunities failed to materialize, with the vast majority of schemes reinforcing and reproducing gender stereotypes in their provision of 'suitable' work for young men and women (Griffin, 1985; Cockburn, 1987; Wallace, 1987). Box 7.7 summarizes this parlous state of the labour market for young people in the 1990s.

Box 7.7

Youth labour markets in the 1980s and 1990s

- Shift from manufacturing to service sector.
- Decline in demand for unqualified 16 year old school leavers.
- Growth in part-time, temporary, low-paid and lower tier employment.
- Engagement with 'fiddly jobs' (the marginal economy) as a survival strategy.

- Deregulation of markets prioritizes increased training, flexibility and low labour cost.
- Decline in trade union membership and influence – reinforced by legislation.
- Restricted access to income support and unemployment benefits.
- From 1989 an increase in unemployment – disproportionately for young men and blacks.
- Growth in numbers remaining in full-time education and/or training.
- Complex maze of ‘transitions’ and multiple routes from school to work – ‘transitions’ extended, fragmented, fractured and individualized.
- Maintenance of regional, class, gender and ‘race’ based structures of opportunity and disadvantage.
- Conditions of uncertainty, risk and disaffection exacerbated.

Source: Derived from Furlong and Cartmel (1997/2007, Chapter 3).

One of the most palpable consequences of a contracting and deregulated youth labour market was the expansion of what Furlong and Cartmel (1997, p. 17) described as ‘an army of reluctant conscripts to post-compulsory education’. A range of vocational courses (BTEC, NVQ and GNVQ) have been introduced in schools and colleges of further education, though arguably these have been mainly directed at lower-attaining, working-class pupils and have little affected the traditional academic routes followed by the middle classes. Moreover the ‘careers’ of young people in further education often remained precarious. About a third of those starting a full-time post-16 course left early or failed the relevant examinations. The concepts of ‘career’ and ‘transition’ seemed particularly irrelevant for such young people. Instead their lives were characterized by a *mélange* of training courses, part-time, low-paid work (as low as 33 pence per hour – *Guardian*, 11 February 1998) and unemployment. Here the sensitizing concepts of ‘drift’, ‘normalized dislocation’ and ‘structured aimlessness’ may better capture a sense of youth’s uncertain futures in an unstable market, than those of ‘transition’ or ‘marginalization’ (Fergusson et al., 2000). Indeed, as Brinkley (1997) records, the free market logic of deregulation did not help young people back into work, despite their being cheaper to employ. Demand in industrialized economies for skilled workers meant that the young – especially those without qualifications – were left behind. Between 1979 and 1997, 31 changes were made to how youth unemployment figures were officially arrived at. But using data from Department of Employment Labour Force Surveys, Brinkley suggests that in 1996 the unemployment rate for under-25s was 14.8 per cent; almost twice the national average. Unemployment has always hit the young hardest, particularly so for ethnic minorities. Thus while, in 1995, 15 per cent of white 16–25 year olds were estimated to be unemployed, this compared quite favourably to the 51 per cent of Afro-Caribbean young men, 41 per cent of Afro-Caribbean young women, 34 per cent of Pakistani/Bangladeshi young men and 30 per cent of Indian young men

(*Runnymede Bulletin*, No. 292, February 1996, pp. 6–7). But these estimates also missed a sizeable number of the population. Wilkinson's (1995) Sunderland-based study found that between 5 and 10 per cent of 16 and 17 year olds were neither in education, employment or training (NEET), nor did they have any access to income support. Officially, they did not exist. This could amount to some 100,000 young people nationally who occupied what Williamson (1997) controversially, but perceptively, called 'Status-Zero'.

It was in this context that New Labour announced a range of 'welfare to work' initiatives prior to the 1997 election. In 1998, the New Deal for Young People effectively abolished youth unemployment at a stroke by compelling those not in work to take up the education, training or subsidized work options. However, it was still estimated that half a million 16–24 year olds (around 10 per cent) were unemployed in 2006. Numbers had reduced by a quarter over the decade but young adult unemployment rates remained three times as high as those for older workers (www.poverty.org.uk).

The New Deal for Young People

The New Deal for Young People (NDYP) was introduced nationally in April 1998 after being piloted for just four months. It was part of a broader 'welfare to work' initiative aimed at encouraging lone parents back to work, maintaining commitment to a work ethic, reducing levels of state dependency, compelling claimants to work in return for benefits, tackling social exclusion and encouraging individual responsibility. The NDYP, according to the Department of Work and Pensions, is here to stay as a key element in preventing 'a life on benefit' (*Guardian*, 26 March 2003). But does it offer anything more than the failed programmes of the past?

The New Deal is aimed at unemployed 18–24 year olds who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for six months or more. In 1997, New Labour made their electoral claim that by 2002 the NDYP would get 250,000 young people off benefit and into work, education and training. To do so, young people first enter a Gateway period where for four months they receive support and guidance from a personal advisor initially designed to help find any (unsubsidized) employment. If this fails, there are five New Deal options: subsidized employment, full-time education and training, work in the voluntary sector, work with an Environment Task Force or self-employment. 'A life on benefit' is not an option. The New Deal is mandatory. Sanctions, in the form of cutting benefits, are applied to those who fail to cooperate. For some this smacks of US-inspired workfare, where almost all benefit entitlement is entirely conditional upon the acceptance of work (Fergusson, 2002). As such, while NDYP may hold inclusionary and developmental claims, its underlying rationale remains one of discipline. It is a continuation of the 'welfare bad; work good' ethic. No effort is made to address structural problems of inequality and lack of opportunity in precarious youth labour markets (Webster et al., 2004). Explanations of unemployment remain fixed in a skills-deficit model (Jeffs and Spence, 2000; Tonge, 1999; Hyland and Mussan, 2001). The talk is not of full employment but of 'individual employability'

(Mizen, 2003). The continuing significance of NDYP lies not in finding employment for the young unemployed working class but in promoting the neo-liberal ethos of withdrawing universal public support in favour of free market determinants and of institutionalizing low paid work (Mizen, 2006).

The success or otherwise of the NDYP has been subject to numerous official evaluations. Their findings are at best ambiguous. New Labour met its target of removing a quarter of a million from benefit as early as 2000. By the end of 2001 it was estimated that around 40 per cent of participants had found unsubsidized jobs. But a further 30 per cent had left for unknown destinations. The impact of NDYP was believed to have in reality reduced youth unemployment by some 35,000 while only creating some 15,000 new jobs (NAO, 2002). As with previous employment initiatives, job creation relies on demands in local economies rather than as something amenable to state engineering. Many participants would have found work anyway. Percy-Smith and Weil (2002) maintain that there is little evidence to suggest that the scheme has produced any tangible benefits in job security, conditions and future prospects. All that has been created is an endless roundabout of multiple moves in and out of training, paid work, unemployment, voluntary work: an intensifying of 'churning', frustration and instability (Fergusson, 2002; Webster et al., 2004). Further, the element of 'compulsory inclusion' treats lack of commitment as a 'punishable offence rather than an opportunity for learning' and only ensures integration into a world of inequalities and labour exploitation (Percy-Smith and Weil, 2002, p. 125). Much of this seems borne out by participants' perspectives. Ritchie (2000), for example, reports that nearly two-thirds leave NDYP in the initial Gateway period in order to avoid any of the compulsory (and unattractive) placement options. Avoiding sanctions inevitably means accepting low-paid, low-quality, short-term jobs (which in turn of course keeps wage inflation low). Kalra et al. (2001) report that non-participation and drop-out are driven by poor experiences of the programme and the sense that it would not deliver a decent job, particularly for minority ethnic young people.

The political rationale for youth training and employment schemes lies elsewhere than in the creation of jobs. Indeed, NDYP has been expressly identified as an anti-crime as much as an economic policy (Straw, 1998, p. 12). Yet, if NDYP is a vehicle for crime reduction then non-participation is likely to be interpreted as placing young people 'at risk'. This logic has also informed a raft of 'inclusionary' measures aimed at a younger 13–19 age group. Notable is the Connexions initiative of 2001. This is a universal service of advice and guidance but geared to that 9 per cent of 16–18 year olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Significantly, Connexions is about providing mentors in schools and colleges drawn from a range of agencies, but whose chief preoccupations are those of inducting young people into the labour market and monitoring those 'at risk' of becoming disconnected from the education/training/work complex. It involves establishing a database on all 13–19 year olds with information flowing from one agency to another. For Garrett (2002), it amounts to a 'new regime of virtual control'. The issuing of a Connexions Card to 2.4 million young people effectively allows their levels of 'participation' to be continually tracked and monitored. In 2007, the Children, Schools and Families Secretary looked forward to abolishing

the 16 to 18 year old 'NEET culture' by introducing new laws requiring *all* young people to stay in education or training until the age of 18. This is to be implemented by 2015. Much of this of course easily resonates with the themes of 'active citizenship', 'governing at a distance', 'joined-up governance', 'individual responsibility' and 'state steering' to be found in New Labour's Third Way modes of governance (see Section 7.1 above).

Above all, historically, the young and unemployed working classes have been understood as both a potential threat to the social order and, partly as a consequence, in need of special provision from, and direction by, that same social order if they are to assume their role as the next generation of adult workers. Youth training has always been a vocational fallacy. It has always been a means through which working-class identities can be reworked and remade; providing a cultural, rather than vocational, apprenticeship in working-class expectations of work (Hollands, 1990). In this context, training policies display a Janus face, where what is altruistically proclaimed to be meeting 'needs' also acts to constrain and remake working-class identities. The social order consequences of youth unemployment is one underlying factor in this succession of educational and training initiatives. The fear is never far from the surface that if young people fail to gain experience of a market-based work ethic at an early age, then they will never acquire the 'appropriate' attitudes necessary for the establishment of a flexible, disciplined and compliant citizenship. It is a discourse that has become cemented in the insistence that waged work is the prime route through which young people can be rescued from 'passive dependency' and social exclusion. And that non-compliance must be met with harsher penalties.

Homelessness and the Housing Market

7.3 Measuring the extent of youth homelessness is largely guesswork. In the mid-1990s voluntary organizations estimated that between 150,000 and 250,000 young people became homeless every year (*Guardian*, 16 September 1996). Such estimates are usually based on enquiries or agency referrals to campaigning organizations such as Shelter. Official estimates based on local authority housing department records put the figure substantially lower. This is largely because a number of criteria have to be met before a person is officially *accepted* as homeless. For example, they must show that they are not intentionally homeless and that they have a 'priority need', such as being at risk of sexual or financial exploitation. Both estimates are likely to greatly underestimate the extent of homelessness among women and black youth who for different reasons tend to seek temporary accommodation with friends. The issue is also clouded by the lack of a precise definition of homelessness. It may, or may not, include any of the following: sleeping rough, newly arrived migrants, runaways, people in hostel/bed and breakfast accommodation, people with temporary and insecure tenures, squatters, travellers, people leaving care or prison, and people in involuntarily shared or unsatisfactory accommodation. Nevertheless it is widely regarded that the issue – once a key

concern of nineteenth-century reformers – only resurfaced in many Western industrial countries in the 1970s and 1980s. In media and political discourse the issue has characteristically been phrased in behavioural terms for which the young homeless themselves must take responsibility. As Margaret Thatcher opined in 1988: ‘There is a number of young people who choose voluntarily to leave home and I do not think we can be expected – no matter how many there are – to provide units for them’ (Hansard, 7 June 1988, vol. 134). In contrast, a number of structural arguments have been forwarded which suggest that homelessness has been generated by changes in housing, social security and local taxation, as well as labour market policies. ‘Young runaways’ were an express target of New Labour’s Social Exclusion Unit, which claimed that 5,000 children a year survived by stealing, begging, drug dealing and prostitution (SEU, 2002).

The Withdrawal and Reconstitution of State Welfare

A key cause of youth homelessness has always been a lack of affordable accommodation. In the 1980s access to such accommodation was further limited as a result of Conservative policy which severely reduced council house building from 125,000 in 1969 to 8,000 in 1991 (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994, p. 47). This decline was compounded by the 1980 Housing Act which instituted a ‘right to buy’ policy for existing council house tenants, thus removing 1.5 million residences from the social housing sector. Restrictions were also placed upon local authorities to use no more than 25 per cent of the revenue from sales to provide accommodation for the homeless. The end result has been a decline in publicly rented housing from 32 per cent to under 22 per cent of the total housing stock. Privately rented housing also fell by a half to less than 8 per cent of the total stock. Young people found themselves excluded from local authority housing (being deemed ‘low priority’) and from private rentals (due to cost, declining supply, unemployment and a fall in real incomes). While an expanding gap between demand and supply came to be widely recognized, the Conservative government was content to let the voluntary sector and housing associations fill this space, yet by 1991 the latter accounted for just over 3 per cent of the housing market (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994, p. 50). The commitment was clearly one of forcing young people to stay at home. The scale of the problem was provided by an opinion poll commissioned by Shelter in 1987. Twenty-four per cent of 15–25 year olds were found to have personally experienced difficulty in finding housing. A third of these were still living with their parents. As Killeen (1992, p. 192) argued: ‘this stressful situation could apply to as many as 1.5 million young people in Britain. Youth homelessness is one of the consequences which occurs when families can no longer tolerate this stress.’

The ‘crisis’ has been exacerbated by consistently restricting young people’s access to benefits. In 1985 limits were placed on payments for board and lodgings, following a media campaign against young unemployed who were living on the ‘Costa del Dole’ in seaside towns. Claimants could claim full board allowances only for short periods and no longer than eight weeks. They were then required to leave the area and not return to claim benefit for six months. In 1988 – following the 1986 Social

Security Act – a new era of ‘repressive disciplinary welfare’ (Carlen, 1996, p. 44) was initiated with abolition of all benefits for most 16 and 17 year olds and a graded level of benefit introduced for those under 25. *Age*, rather than *need* became the chief determinant of benefit entitlement. Before the Social Security Act, housing benefit to pay for rent, household rates and water rates was available in full for the unemployed with no income. From 1988, however, all claimants had to pay at least 20 per cent of their rates (subsequently the poll tax, the community charge and then Council Tax) from their income benefit. As Hutson and Liddiard (1994, p. 55) explain, because those under 25 were already on lower benefit rates, these young people found they were required to pay a larger proportion of their income on rent than their older contemporaries. The result was failure to meet rent costs and frequent eviction. And the knock-on effect of having to pay part of the community charge was that increasing numbers failed to register as electors for fear that this would make them more easily traceable. In fact more than a million potential first-time voters did not register in 1992 and 2.5 million, or 40 per cent of 18–24 year olds, did not vote in that election: ‘The consequences of this trend in terms of future participation in democratic processes are not difficult to predict’ (Killeen, 1992, p. 194). In addition, supplementary benefit, housing benefit and income support have gradually been removed for those in further and higher education. Dependency on loans and/or families has been institutionalized (see Box 7.8).

Box 7.8

The withdrawal and reconstitution of state welfare

1983	Unemployed 16–17 year olds living at home lose contribution to board
1984	Extended to 18–20 year olds
1985	Limits on length of time under 25 year olds living away from home can receive financial assistance towards board and lodging
1986	Young people’s wages removed from Wages Council regulations
1987	No supplementary benefits for students during short vacation
1988	Income support withdrawn from most 16 and 17 year olds and reduced for those under 26 Changes to housing benefit rules lead to relatively higher cost of rent for some under-25s in employment or on a training allowance Discretionary Social Fund replaces Exceptional Needs payments Compulsory payment of at least 20 per cent of Community Charge
1989	Employment Act repeals restrictions on hours of work for 16–18 year olds
1990	Students lose housing benefit. Student loans introduced
1991	No income support for students in long vacation
1996	Jobseeker’s allowance replaces unemployment benefit
1996	Housing benefit for under-25s reduced to cover cost of a room in shared accommodation only: the ‘single room rent’ rule
1997	All benefits dependent on adherence to ‘Welfare to Work’ principles Social Exclusion Unit established

1998	Introduction of tuition fees for students National minimum wage introduced, but excludes 16–18 year olds Introduction of New Deal for Young People (NDYP) in 18–25 age group Withdrawal of jobseekers allowance for those failing to take NDYP options
1999	NDYP benefit sanctions increased Rough Sleepers Unit established Piloting of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) to encourage 16–19 year olds to stay in full-time education/training: contingent on signing a 'learning agreement'
2001	Establishment of Connexions service to guide and track progress of all 13–19 year olds
2004	National roll out of EMAs
2006	Introduction of University 'top up' tuition fees
2008	Raising of school leaving to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015

Since 1997 New Labour reconstituted the issue of homelessness as one element in an array of 'risk factors' of social exclusion. 'Rough sleepers' were targeted as a key area for intervention – along with truancy and teenage pregnancy – in the 2001 report *Preventing Social Exclusion*. The Rough Sleepers Unit of 1999–2002 was specifically designed to act on routes into homelessness (such as young people leaving care) through 'joined-up' working with health, employment and education programmes. The main policy recommendations tended to remain at this level of providing integrated support and advice agencies. The lack of affordable housing, high rents, the impact of benefit policies and shortage of social housing were rarely officially alluded to (Kemp and Rugg, 2001). The 2002 Homeless Act did, however, require all local authorities to develop and publish strategies of how they intended to *prevent* homelessness; though again certain conditions such as 'priority need', 'local connection' and 'unintentionally homeless' had to be met. While 16 and 17 year olds are accepted as 'priority need', being the subject of an anti-social behaviour order, for example, may be deemed to have contravened the 'unintentionality' condition. All of these reforms continue to be legitimized in the name of tackling a so-called 'dependency culture' which, it is argued, inflates the costs of social security and actively supports a permanently out-of-work underclass (see **Chapter 4.2**).

Criminalization, Survivalism and Risk

Reviewing shifts in policy up to the mid-1990s, Carlen concludes that there is now 'a much strengthened disciplining of pauperised and redundant youth *independently of the criminal justice and/or penal systems*' (1996, pp. 46–7, italics in original) and that when young people are 'outwith the protection of employment, family and welfare they are most likely to adopt one of the transient lifestyles which may well

bring them into conflict with the law'. Such a possibility has become a reality. A ready connection between homelessness and crime – shoplifting, petty theft, begging, prostitution, drug taking – is widely assumed, so that the homeless are more likely to be criminalized through police harassment and extra police surveillance. For 'homeless' travellers and squatters the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act effectively limited their ability to live within the law. In 1994, John Major, then Prime Minister, launched an attack on 'offensive beggars' – claiming that 'it is not acceptable to be out on the street' and 'there is no justification for it these days' (*Guardian*, 28 May 1994). He urged more rigorous application of the law – begging is an offence under the 1824 Vagrancy Act and sleeping rough is punishable by a £200 fine. A year later the then Shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw, echoed such sentiments by calling for the streets to be cleared of the 'aggressive begging of winos, addicts and squeegee merchants' (*Guardian*, 5 September 1995). As part of a crack-down on 'anti-social' behaviour, in 2003 David Blunkett, Home Secretary, announced that begging would be a recordable offence (*Sunday Times*, 26 January 2003; *Guardian*, 13 March 2003). Reflecting the multiple agendas of social exclusion, youth homelessness is increasingly officially researched and understood in the context of other problems such as drug use (Wincup et al., 2003). Beggars face the prospect of being viewed solely as a criminal nuisance rather than as victims. Ironically, criminalization is known to further increase the risk of homelessness. If apprehended, lack of a fixed address ensures that the homeless are less likely to be given bail and more likely to be remanded in custody. On release, a known criminal record makes the chances of accessing rented or hostel accommodation that much more difficult. A third of young people leaving custody are likely to be homeless or at risk of being so. Criminalizing the young homeless only ensures that a vicious circle ensues (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994, p. 66).

In contrast to such authoritarian 'solutions' based on images of a 'feckless criminal and dangerous underclass', Carlen's (1996) interviews with 150 homeless young people in Manchester, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and rural Shropshire led her to argue that the real issue was not one of homelessness, but an **anti-social** control characterized by the denial of citizenship rights to those who already face destitution (see Box 7.9).

Box 7.9

Carlen on youth homelessness

Young homeless people do not constitute an underclass with moral values different to those held by any other cross-section of society – though their struggles to survive unpromising childhoods may have made them cynical about the extent to which those moral values have ever had (or ever will have) any political effects.

Young homeless people are a threat to society not because of their minor lawbreaking activities but because the economic, ideological and political conditions of their existence are indicative of the widening gap between the moral pretensions of liberal democratic societies and the shabby life chances on offer to the children of the already poor.

The crimes of 'outcast youth' in general should be understood neither in relation to motivational factors, nor in relation to social control, but in relation to 'anti-social' controls which, having deliberately excluded certain young people from citizen rights and citizen duties, in turn furnish the state with further justifications for abrogation of its own obligations to a youth citizenry denied.

Source: Carlen (1996, p. 124).

Taken collectively, these shifts in employment, welfare and housing policy have created a situation in which young people have to negotiate a set of risks unknown to previous generations. Furlong and Cartmel (1997, 2007) draw on Beck's (1992) and Giddens's (1991) notion of a late modern **risk society**, to explore this changing context. They suggest that while Western industrial societies are undergoing a dramatic transformation in which the old and predictable structures of labour markets and welfare systems are being dismantled, some old structures of inequality remain. While risks have clearly increased, they continue to be distributed in a way that reflects established social divisions of class, gender and 'race'. Although the 'collective foundations of social life have become more obscure, they continue to provide powerful frameworks which constrain young people's experiences and life chances' (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997, p. 109).

Exclusion, Reintegration and Inclusion

7.4 Tony Blair first coined the 'realist' slogan 'Tough on Crime, Tough on the Causes of Crime' in January 1993 in an attempt to wrestle the law and order agenda away from the Conservatives. This seemed to imply that anti-crime policies would have to be based on a number of social and economic, as well as legal, measures if they were to be effective. The following decades indeed witnessed a succession of initiatives – some old, some new – in an effort to prevent the onset of offending. These have included:

- proactive policing of public space;
- zero tolerance policing of incivilities;
- the targeting of 'dysfunctional' families;
- expansion of CCTV surveillance and population monitoring;
- 'positive activity' programmes and youth inclusion projects;
- the ethos of '*Every Child Matters*'.

All of this can be considered to have significantly blurred the boundaries between traditional social policy and criminal justice agendas.

Policing Public Space

Public space, and particularly the street, have always provided one of the main arenas for youth leisure. Public space provides one of the few sites in which young people can 'hang out' relatively free of direct adult supervision. Yet it is on the streets that troubling aspects of their behaviour are at their most visible and where crucial elements of the relationship between young people and the police are forged. As Corrigan's (1976, 1979) conversations with 'the boys' from Sunderland revealed, alternative sites for leisure are rejected because they 'are not open to the boys as real choices'. The cinema, disco, dance hall and clubs were frequently too expensive. Home was constrained by parents. Youth clubs were bypassed because of the need for compliance with their rules and regulations. As Loader (1996, p. 50) put it, 'the routine use of public space is not altogether a meaningful choice. Rather it is one consequence of an age-based exclusion from both autonomous private spaces and cultural resources of various kinds.' As a result, certain local places and spaces – the street corner, the city centre, the shopping mall, the precinct – take on a special significance, cementing a sense of collective *safety*, independence, territory and identity (McAra and McVie, 2005). Empirical studies in Belfast (Jenkins, 1983), Sunderland (Callaghan, 1992), Manchester and Sheffield (Taylor et al., 1996), Edinburgh (Loader, 1996) and Brighton (Measor and Squires, 2000) have all demonstrated the centrality of localized existences in framing the 'cognitive maps' of young people.

In popular and political discourse much is made of the street as a site of territorial rivalries and conflict, but for Corrigan's 'boys', their main street activity was 'doing nothing'. 'Doing nothing' though may be interpreted by external observers as 'loitering with intent'. It is an apparent lack of productive activity that inspires a hostile reaction. The boys' experience of leisure was likely to attract the attention of the police at some time. This was how they got into trouble:

The boys see trouble as something connected purely with the police, or other social control agents; one cannot get into trouble without the presence of one of these groups. At no stage do they perceive it as doing wrong or breaking rules ... What wrongs are they doing if they just walk around the streets and the police harass them? The reasons for the harassment lie with the police, and *not* inside any rule that the boys are breaking, since for the boys the streets are a 'natural' meeting place. (Corrigan, 1979, p. 139)

Similarly, Loader's (1996, p. 78) interviews with police officers in Edinburgh showed that one of their most prominent views was that young people hanging about in groups were either directly or indirectly involved in criminal behaviour. Their objection was largely to the 'collective use of public space irrespective of whether or not others find it unsettling'. The issue here is essentially the historically recurring concern of 'who controls the streets', in which the imaginary connection between a 'dangerous' place (the street) and a 'dangerous' time (youth) is constructed and maintained (Cohen, P., 1979, p. 128). In the Brighton study (Measor and Squires, 2000), the act of congregating, gathering or hanging

out in public places was essentially for the purposes of socializing, to do the things adults did when they got together – eat, drink, talk, flirt. Despite the fears expressed by welfare professionals and local inhabitants, these authors argued that such gatherings may be noisy but are largely harmless. They are as much the province of girls as of boys; of high achievers as well as the ‘excluded’. These are not ‘youth out of control’ but moments of socialization afforded by the relative freedom of the street. Similarly McAra and McVie’s (2005) exhaustive study of children’s experience of policing in Edinburgh found that ‘police working rules’ based on assumptions about suspicious dress and appearance serve to construct a population of young people who are viewed as innately criminal and deserving of continual scrutiny: ‘the policing of children may serve to sustain and reproduce the very problems that the system ostensibly attempts to contain or eradicate’ (p. 28). Such selective and targeted policing has also almost certainly been compounded by the contraction of spaces deemed to be ‘public’. Young people, for example, using shopping centres as a meeting place are, quite literally, rendered ‘out of place’. From the point of view of ‘consumption’, unemployed and dispossessed youth are ‘virtually worthless’ and need to be moved on (White, 1990 and see Box 7.10).

Box 7.10

Surveillance

The planning and design of urban space have increasingly been informed by wider concerns for population control and surveillance. In 2003, plans were announced to close certain alleyways and footpaths on the grounds that they encourage anti-social behaviour (*Guardian*, 7 May 2003). The CCTV camera, along with gates, locks and alarms, has become a familiar sight in many public areas and is becoming so on housing estates and in rural villages. By 2008 there were believed to be over 4 million cameras across the country giving the UK the highest density of ‘eyes on the street’ in the world and marking it out as an ‘endemic surveillance’ society alongside Russia, USA and Singapore. Pioneering research on three such schemes by Norris and Armstrong (1999) found that those targeted for surveillance were disproportionately young, male and black. They were targeted not because of their involvement in crime but for ‘no obvious reason’ and on the basis of ‘categorical suspicion’ alone. Areas of commerce and affluent neighbourhoods are relying on a fortress mentality of gated communities and private armed response patrols to insulate themselves from the ‘outside’ and from ‘outsiders’. New technologies of surveillance are rendering certain sections of the population both literally ‘out of time and out of place’. They also fuel the demand for ever more sophisticated means of profiling, monitoring and tracking entire populations through smartcards, mobile phone alerts, eyescans, facial recognition, and so on (McLaughlin and Muncie, 1999). In 2006, police loaded the three-millionth genetic profile onto the UK’s national DNA database including some 24,000 10 to 18 years olds who had never been cautioned, charged or convicted for any offence. Some 37 per cent of black men were on the database compared to 9 per cent of white men (*Sunday Times*, 22 January 2006). By 2008, there were 4.5 million DNA records including those of 150,000 children under the age of 16 (*Daily Telegraph*, 18 March 2008).

Source: Adapted from Muncie (2004, p. 233).

Despite these perpetual concerns, detailed qualitative studies of youth–police encounters are (somewhat surprisingly) relatively rare. Most are American. A report to the US Department of Justice in 2007 found that those in the 18 to 24 age group had the highest percentage of contact with police (29.3 per cent) compared to those aged 65 or older who had the lowest (8.3 per cent). American research on police–juvenile interactions conducted in the 1960s and 1970s reported that the majority of encounters resulted from a complainant’s request for police assistance. However, 20 years later further research based on a study of police patrols in Indiana and Florida suggested that the police themselves were now initiating about a half of their encounters with juveniles as a result of giving greater attention to less serious quality-of-life (‘broken windows’) offences (Worden and Myers, 1999). In the Edinburgh study, 44 per cent of a sample of over 1,000 11–15 year olds had been ‘moved on or told off’, 13 per cent had been stopped and searched and 10 per cent had been arrested or detained in a police station in the previous nine months. Police/youth relations also appear to be highly racialized and gendered. African-Caribbean youth appear especially vulnerable to ‘pro-active’ policing. Currently in the UK, black young people are up to six times as likely, and Asian youth twice as likely, to be stopped and searched than white youth. Further, when black young people come into contact with the police, whether as victims or witnesses, their perceptions and experiences of the police tend to be worse than for white young people (Webster, 2006). It is also a highly gendered relation. In one of a very few ethnographic studies, research in St Louis, USA, found that while African American young *men* routinely describe being subject to aggressive policing and being treated as a suspect regardless of their involvement in delinquency, young *women* typically describe being stopped for curfew violations and being sexually harassed (Brunson and Miller, 2006).

The evolution of police cautioning programmes in the UK provides a telling example of recent shifts towards more proactive and interventionist forms of policing young people. From the early 1970s until the mid-1990s the delivery of a juvenile caution was one of the major means the police used to deal with young offenders. Inspired by a ‘protective’ and ‘treatment’ logic that young people’s behaviour should be challenged but that formal proceedings were more likely to do harm than good, cautioning (in the form of a verbal admonishment usually with parents and a social worker present) was promoted as a key means of ensuring pre-court diversion. In 1970, 35 per cent of under-17 year olds arrested were cautioned; increasing to 50 per cent by 1979. Home Office circular 14/1985 furthered the process by encouraging the police to use ‘no further action’ or ‘informal warnings’. By the 1990s, about 60 per cent of young offenders were being dealt with informally although there were wide and fluctuating regional variations. There is little doubt that the police discretion to *informally* caution made a significant impact on reducing court appearances and protecting young people from the stigma of a criminal record (as well as reducing police paperwork). However, this policy was to prove short-lived. Some critiqued the process because of its potential to administer a punishment without any judicial hearing; others argued that it simply widened the net by targeting the minor ‘pre-delinquent’ (Pratt, 1986). But the most influential

governmental critique of cautioning was eventually to emerge in the White Paper – ‘No More Excuses’ – which preceded the 1998 *Crime and Disorder Act*. It claimed that police cautioning (whether informal or formal) was applied too readily, inconsistently and haphazardly. Moreover it was argued that there was often little or no follow-up so that youth were allowed to ‘flout the law with impunity’. The interventionist (rather than diversionary) principles of the 1998 Act saw the replacement of cautions by reprimands (on first offence) and final warnings (on second offence). The latter drew in particular from the experience of ‘caution plus’ approaches and place the police under a statutory duty to refer the young person to a youth offending team (YOT) for standardized risk assessment and with the expectation of some eventual ‘programme of intervention’. In 2005, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales set a target for all YOTs to include intervention in at least 80 per cent of final warnings. This removed large parts of police discretion and effectively abolished informal action. The result, however, has not been a decline, but a rise in the number of prosecutions. In 2004, the Audit Commission reported that too many minor youth offences were being brought to court, taking up time and expense. The current evidence suggests that the formalization of early intervention, particularly through final warnings, has indeed led to a net widening where more children and young people are being prosecuted for trivial offences and with a subsequent related impact on the rate of custodial sentencing (see **Chapter 9**). Between 2003 and 2006 there was a 25 per cent increase in the numbers of 10 to 14 year olds receiving reprimands, final warnings or conviction: a rise NACRO (2008) has explained with reference to a greater willingness of the police to criminalize minor misdemeanours in order to meet government targets of increasing detections from 1.02 million in 2002 to 1.25 million in 2007/08 (see **Chapter 1**). In 2008 new initiatives were announced giving police greater powers to stop and search without having to state a reason and encouraging the police to actively harass groups of young people on the streets. This included ‘frame and shame’ operations (pioneered by Essex police in Basildon) to film and repeatedly follow and stop ‘persistently badly behaving youths’ (*Guardian*, 8 May 2008); and ‘voluntary’ curfews (pioneered by Devon and Cornwall police in Redruth) targeted at under-16 year olds during the school summer holidays but backed up by parenting and anti-social behaviour orders (*The Times*, 9 July 2008).

Zero Tolerance, Curfews and Dispersal Zones

Zero tolerance refers to intensive community policing strategies that were introduced in New York in 1994. The strategy is based on the principle that by clamping down on minor street offences and incivilities – begging, under-age smoking and drinking, unlicensed street vending, public urination, graffiti writing – and by arresting aggressive beggars, fare dodgers, squeegee merchants, hustlers, abusive drunks and litter louts, many of the more serious offences will be curtailed. In part, **zero tolerance** is based on Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) right realist theory which claims that if climates of disorder are allowed to develop, then more serious crime will follow in their wake. Merely leaving a broken window unrepaired, they argued, will quickly

encourage outbreaks of vandalism. Failure to combat vandalism will see an escalation in the seriousness of crimes. In practice, zero tolerance was the brainchild of William Bratton, Police Commissioner of the NYPD, who reorganized New York policing strategies by making each precinct commander accountable for monitoring and reducing *signs of crime*, as well as crime itself (Dennis, 1997). Primary emphasis was placed on crime prevention and disorder reduction.

It was heralded as a great success, particularly in reducing the number of firearms offences and rates of murder. New York, once synonymous with urban violence, fell to the 144th most dangerous in an FBI comparison of crime in America's 189 largest cities. Even though the precise reasons for such a decline remain disputed – over the same period many American cities witnessed a fall in their crime rates without the introduction of zero tolerance; it was also part of a longer trend in the decline of violent offences associated with the trade in crack cocaine – the idea of creating environments which discourage offending and incivility was imported into Britain in 1995 as part of New Labour's campaigning agenda. In Britain, the concept was also appropriated from the 'presumption to arrest' policies advocated by anti-domestic violence initiatives. Limited experiments in zero tolerance policing were first pursued by the police in King's Cross, London; Middlesbrough; Hartlepool; Birmingham; Shoreham; and Glasgow in 1996. In Glasgow, for instance, Operation Spotlight was specifically targeted at after-hours revellers, groups of youths on the streets and truants. As a result, charges for drinking alcohol in public places increased by 2,240 per cent, dropping litter by 320 per cent and urinating on the street by 140 per cent. Whatever its success or otherwise, 'zero tolerance' and 'broken windows' have become powerful policy narratives, but arguably doing more to impress public audiences than rigidly framing particular policing objectives (Newburn and Jones, 2007).

'Giving the concept of zero tolerance teeth': this is how a Home Office source first described such proposals to impose curfews, exclusion zones and other restrictions on vandals, persistent offenders and drug dealers (*Sunday Times*, 22 June 1997). What was novel about the renewed interest in curfews in 1997 was their application to children under the age of 10 and on the *presumption*, rather than committal, of crime. Again the notion has American origins. San Diego first introduced a juvenile curfew in 1947, but it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that the policy took off as politicians sought to 'act tough' on crime. By 1995, juvenile curfews were routinely used in at least 146 of America's 200 largest cities. Typically aimed at those 17 and under, they usually run from 10.30 p.m. to 6.30 a.m. but a growing number also operate during school hours. President Clinton, in 1996 pre-election mode, advocated curfews for all teenagers by 8 p.m. on school nights on the grounds that it would help people to be better parents. Violators can be fined, or can face community service and probation, or their parents can be fined. Again the policy has been lauded as a great success. In Phoenix, for example, juvenile crime was believed to have dropped by 26 per cent since a curfew was introduced in 1993; in Dallas serious offences fell by 42 per cent; while New Orleans claimed a 29 per cent fall in auto theft and 26 per cent fewer murders.

However, curfews are notoriously difficult to enforce and are likely to be implemented in a highly selective way in which all manner of myths and stereotypes

about 'troublesome' people and places are likely to come into play. Nevertheless, in October 1997, Strathclyde Police became the first in Britain to 'pilot' a dusk to dawn curfew on under-16 year olds on three estates in Hamilton, east of Glasgow. They were empowered to escort children home or to the local police station if they had no 'reasonable excuse' to be on the streets – playing football, meeting friends – after 8 p.m. It was legitimized as a caring service to protect children and address public fears of harassment (*Guardian*, 4 October 1997). But its main impact appears to have been one of raising unnecessary fears among the elderly population and increasing parental insecurity about the safety of their children (*Guardian*, 11 April 1998; Waiton, 2001). On the grounds of civil liberties, Jeffs and Smith (1996, p. 11) argue that curfews are discriminatory and fundamentally wrong: 'Wrong because they criminalize perfectly legal and acceptable behaviour on the grounds of age ... to select young people and criminalize them for doing what the rest of the population can freely do is doubly discriminatory.' Or as Ferrell (1997, p. 27) put it, 'curfews protect symbolic constructions of adult authority by patrolling the cultural and temporal space of kids ... they work to unravel the nocturnal cultures and alternative spaces that kids have built around coffee houses, raves, music and style'. In so doing, positive communication between the generations is lost.

The 2003 *Antisocial Behaviour Act* introduced a further range of enforcement-led interventions including Parenting Contracts, Fixed Penalty Notices and Dispersal Orders. The latter operate in designated dispersal zones when authorized by the local authority and the police on the basis that a member of the public 'might be intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed'. If two or more people, together in a public place, fail to disperse under the instruction of a police officer they commit a criminal offence and face possible detention. Under-16 year olds, if unaccompanied by an adult, can be escorted home by the police. (for further discussion of anti-social behaviour legislation, see **Chapter 9**). Between 2004 and 2006 over 1000 areas were so designated in England and Wales with a further 6 in Scotland. Most were directed at young people (see Box 7.11).

Box 7.11

Dispersal zones

- Most commonly used in relation to groups of young people.
- Can antagonize and alienate young people who frequently feel unfairly stigmatized for being in public spaces.
- Compliance more likely when accompanied by respect and procedural justice.
- Uncertainty about the value in removing under-16 year olds to their homes. Many police chose not to use the power.
- Reinforces a view of view of young people as a risk to others, obscuring the extent to which they are 'at risk' themselves.

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- Generates displacement, shifting problems to other area.
- Provides short-term relief for local communities but invariably fails to address wider causes of troublesome behaviour.
- A 'sticking plaster over local problems'.
- Confusion over criteria for dispersal.

Source: Derived from Crawford and Lister (2007).

The legality of one such zone in Richmond was successfully challenged by a 15 year old in 2005. This, however, should be viewed against the increasing use of ultrasonic devices to disperse young people – their sound being reputedly only audible to those under the age of 25. The manufacturers have been quite clear of their purpose:

The Mosquito ultrasonic teenage deterrent is the solution to the eternal problem of unwanted gatherings of youths and teenagers in shopping malls, around shops and anywhere else they are causing problems. The presence of these teenagers discourages genuine shoppers and customers from coming into your shop, affecting your turnover and profits. Antisocial behaviour has become the biggest threat to private property over the last decade and there has been no effective deterrent until now. (cited by Walsh, 2008 pp. 122–3).

Parenting Deficits and Family Remoralization

'Parental responsibility' became something of a watchword in many aspects of British social policy in the 1980s and 1990s (Allen, 1990). While notions of 'good' and 'bad' parenting have informed much of youth justice reform since the nineteenth century, an image of wilfully negligent parents colluding with or even encouraging misbehaviour was popularized by the Conservatives in the 1980s as the inevitable result of a 1960s permissive culture. The breakdown of the nuclear family unit, high divorce rates and increases in single parenting, it was argued, were the root causes of moral decay epitomized by increased crime rates, homelessness and drug taking. In addition, excessive welfare dependency had encouraged families to rely on state benefits rather than on each other, and in this process children's moral development had been eroded (Murray, 1990; Dennis and Erdos, 1992 and see **Chapter 4.2**). On coming to power Tony Blair continued this theme:

We cannot say we want a strong and secure society when we ignore its very foundations: family life. This is not about preaching to individuals about their private

lives. It is addressing a huge social problem ... Nearly 100,000 teenage pregnancies every year; elderly parents with whom families cannot cope; children growing up without role models they can respect and learn from; more and deeper poverty; more crime; more truancy; more neglect of educational opportunities, and above all more unhappiness. Every area of this government's policy will be scrutinized to see how it affects family life. Every policy examined, every initiative tested, every avenue explored to see how we strengthen our families. (*Guardian*, 1 October 1997)

Six years later it was reiterated that 'strong families are the centre of peaceful and safe communities. Respect is all-important and this is missing in families that behave dysfunctionally' (Home Office, 2003a, p. 8).

In these ways family rhetoric appears to have an enduring political and emotional appeal but built around traditional images of a 'safe haven' of conjugal, heterosexual parents with an employed male breadwinner. It is single parenting, teenage mothers, 'broken homes' and absent fathers that are identified as the key harbingers of social disorder (Day Sclater and Piper, 2000). One of Labour's key formative influences in defining a 'Third Way', Etzioni's communitarian agenda, also emphasizes that the root cause of crime lies within the home and that it is in the domestic sphere that the shoring up of our moral foundations should begin (Etzioni, 1995, p. 11). It is such a communitarianism which speaks of parental responsibility and moral obligation that continually resurfaces in the reforming agenda of the twenty-first century (Hughes, 1996, p. 21).

Successive governments have introduced a series of legal measures to enforce parents to bring up their children 'responsibly' (and penalize those that do not) but these initiatives have gathered pace in the last decade (Mooney, 2003) (see Box 7.12).

Box 7.12

Enforcing responsible parenting

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1933 | <i>Children and Young Persons Act</i> establishes the juvenile court to act <i>in loco parentis</i> even if no crime had been committed. |
| 1982 | <i>Criminal Justice Act</i> orders parents to pay juvenile offenders' fines. |
| 1991 | <i>Criminal Justice Act</i> empowers courts to bind over parents to care for and control their children. |
| 1994 | Extends bind over provisions to ensure compliance with a community sentence. |
| 1998 | Parenting order compels parents to attend counselling and guidance classes. |
| 2001 | New offence of aggravated truancy created, carrying maximum 3 month prison sentence for parents 'condoning truancy'. |
| 2002 | Mother in Oxfordshire given a 60-day jail sentence for failing to ensure her daughters attended school. |

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- 2002 Plan announced for head teachers to issue fixed penalty fines for failing parents.
- 2003 *Anti Social Behaviour Act* gives parenting contracts the force of law and allows inclusion of a compulsory 'residential element'.
- 2005 Plans announced to invest £1.25 million to ensure failing parents are given 'intensive rehabilitation'.
- 2006 Respect Action Plan advocates extension of parenting contracts and parenting orders to allow schools to participate in their application.
- 2006 *Police and Justice Act* allows local authorities and landlords to apply for parenting orders.
- 2007 National Parenting Academy established.
- 2007 'Intensive care sin bins' established for 'disruptive families'.
- 2007 Plans announced to identify unborn babies 'at risk' of later offending and to give intensive support from midwives and health visitors until the child is 2 years old.
- 2007 New offence announced of 'failing to ensure a child is found in a public place without reasonable justification'.
- 2008 A £218 million expansion of Family Intervention Projects announced to sign up 1000 of the 'worst behaved children' to good behaviour contracts.
- 2008 Advice given to parents at what age they should allow children to drink alcohol at home.
- 2008 Plans announced for doctors and schools to identify children 'at risk' of offending and provide 'non-negotiable' intensive mentoring and training.

A centrepiece was the introduction of parenting orders in 1998. These enabled the juvenile court to require parents of every convicted juvenile offender to attend parenting classes and to ensure their children attend school or avoids associating with specified people in specified places. In 2003, further powers were introduced to fine parents who failed to comply with a parenting order. The conclusion is clear: all parents are to *blame* for their children's behaviour (Arthur, 2005). From a slow start, between 2003 and 2006 over 4,000 parenting contracts and 1,138 parenting orders were issued but with wide geographic variation. The only evaluation study was generally positive but also revealed the level of desperation of some parents who voluntarily joined parenting and counselling classes in the absence of any other means of support (Ghate and Ramella, 2002). It is clear that in many cases parenting skills and advice are not avoided but are highly sought after. This seriously calls into question the continuance of governmental rhetoric and policy based on compulsion and punitiveness. Inevitably such powers are also targeted on some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. But acknowledgement of the typical

material contexts of poverty, economic hardship and inadequate housing is lost in the use of punitive means to tackle issues of family support and failures in welfare services (Goldson and Jamieson, 2002; Rodger, 2006; Garrett, 2007).

Tackling Social Exclusion

On coming to power in 1997, the first New Labour administration placed considerable rhetorical emphasis on the significance of securing social justice for children in general, and on 'tackling' child poverty in particular. It announced its 'historic aim' to reduce child poverty by a quarter by 2004/05, halve it by 2010 and eradicate it completely by 2020. This presented, and continues to present, a formidable challenge. In 1979, 10 per cent (1.4 million) of all children in the UK were living in poverty (defined as below 50 per cent of mean income after housing costs). The annual statistics on poor households showed that in 2005, 3.4 million children continued to live in poverty – 300,000 more than the target set in 1999 (*The Independent*, 8 March 2006). But, by 2008, the corresponding figures had risen to 33 per cent (3.8 million) (<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>). Moreover it is clear that being in paid employment is no guarantee of moving out of the poverty trap. Six in ten poor households have someone in work: 10 per cent more than in 1997 (*Guardian*, 3 January 2008). In the mid-1990s the Commission on Social Justice had observed that: 'Britain is not a good place in which to be a child' (cited in Goldson and Muncie, 2006) and it is clear that this remains so for a significant number of children. A report by UNICEF in 2007 placed the UK at the bottom of 'child well being' rankings across 21 'rich' countries (see **Chapter 10**).

Social exclusion is a relatively new term in British social policy. It has been officially defined as 'what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001, p. 1.1). Young (2007, p. 18) sets out five key principles which underpin this thesis (Box 7.13).

Box 7.13

The social exclusion thesis

- 1 THE BINARY that society can be divided into an inclusive and largely satisfied majority and an excluded and despondent minority.
- 2 MORAL EXCLUSION that there exists a vast majority with virtuous conduct and stable family structures and a minority who are welfare-dependent, dysfunctional and criminogenic.
- 3 SPATIAL EXCLUSION that the excluded are isolated from the included by barriers which are rarely crossed.

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- 4 DYSFUNCTIONAL UNDERCLASS that a residuum exists which is dysfunctional to itself and to society at large.
- 5 WORK AND REDEMPTION that the provision of work will transform the underclass: changing their attitudes, habits, hedonism, dysfunctionality and criminal tendencies and transport them into the ranks of the contented.

Source: Abbreviated from Young (2007, p. 18).

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) had by 2002 identified and reported on five issues: neighbourhood renewal; rough sleeping; teenage pregnancy; school exclusion and truancy; and young people not in education/training/employment. Clearly it was not just crime, but youth and 'disorder', which was driving this agenda. The discovery that child poverty had trebled between 1979 and 1995, that Britain had more children growing up in unemployed households than anywhere else in Europe, that it had the highest teenage pregnancy rate, and that 80 per cent of rough sleepers used drugs, encouraged something of a move to a holistic approach to tackling the 'problem of youth'. The SEU was – along with the Children and Young Persons Unit established in 2000 – designed to co-ordinate policy-making across government, businesses, voluntary agencies, schools and communities. A plethora of initiatives have followed including: *Sure Start* to encourage young parents back into work through provision of nursery places; *Quality Protects* to provide sex education for those in care; *Positive Activities for Young People* (PAYP) and *Splash Schemes* to provide leisure activities for those 'at risk' during school holidays; *Education Action Zones to reduce truancy*; *Neighbourhood Renewal Funds* to improve local services; *Youth Inclusion Projects*, targeting 'high-risk' 13–16 year olds, as well as the *New Deal* and *Connexions* (see Section 7.2 above) and numerous advice and mentoring schemes which in turn all connect with the work of crime reduction partnerships and the Youth Justice Board (see Chapter 8). All of this is directed at a perceived excluded underclass believed to be responsible for most crime (see Chapter 4.2). They have all been justified as 'ways of helping to tackle the roots of juvenile crime' (Home Office, 1997c, p. 10). Needless to say, some have been widely condemned by those on the right for rewarding troublemaking and in the case of PAYP, of providing a 'perverse incentive to offend' (*Sunday Times*, 10 August 2003).

In 2003 and 2005, two White Papers – *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* and *Youth Matters* – were published. Both promised a radical transformation in support services in which it was claimed that support would be available 'for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances'. *Every Child Matters* promoted the five key principles of: Be healthy; Stay safe; Enjoy and achieve; Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well-being (see Box 7.14). In the *Youth Matters* paper such opportunities and support were made contingent on

accepting responsibilities. A balance is sought between *support* and demanding *responsibility* in return. The key initiative was the granting of 'opportunity cards' to provide discounts on 'constructive' activities but which can be withdrawn if a youth's behaviour is deemed 'unacceptable'. Similarly, the 2006 Social Exclusion Task Force paper, *Reaching Out* was clear that 'opportunity and support' are contingent on individuals taking responsibility themselves and with 'clear consequences if those responsibilities are not met'.

Box 7.14

'Every Child Matters'

Our aim is to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people.

When we consulted children, young people and families, they wanted the Government to set out a positive vision of the outcomes we want to achieve. The five outcomes which mattered most to children and young people were:

- **being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- **staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect
- **enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- **making a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- **economic well-being:** not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

The Government has built the foundations for improving these outcomes through Sure Start, raising school standards, and progress made towards eradicating child poverty.

Source: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

At first sight these initiatives do seem to reveal some long-term, enlightened and structural responses to youth **marginalization**. Pitts (2001, p. 147), however, argues that they only offer a partial understanding and only deal with superficial aspects of the economic and political problems that lie at the heart of social exclusion.

First, the dynamics of exclusion result from market *forces* which generate economic insecurity and from market *values* which promote individual adaptations rather than fundamental reform. For Young (1999), we have witnessed a shift over the past half century from an inclusive society based on incorporation and full citizenship to a society organized around the material and cultural ramifications of *exclusivity*. Unless real opportunities are opened up through the advancement of a 'radical meritocracy', he argues, then little will be achieved either to facilitate

inclusion or dismantle the structures of exclusion. Or as Currie (1985, p. 225) has argued, in order to tackle the roots of the crime problem 'we must build a society that is less unequal, less depriving, less insecure and less corrosive of cooperative values'.

Second, the very concept of 'exclusion' promotes a view of inequality as something peripheral; existing only at the margins of society. Attempts to reintegrate 'the excluded' fail to acknowledge that their inclusion would only be to a world dominated by market exploitation, discrimination and a widening gap between rich and poor. As Levitas (1996, p. 7) put it: it is a discourse unable to address the question of unpaid work in society (work done principally by women) or of low paid work and completely erases from view the inequality between those owning the bulk of productive property and the working population, as well as obscuring the inequalities among workers. Further, Young (2007) argues that constructions of inclusion/exclusion reinforce false ascriptions both to the 'otherness' of the 'excluded' and the 'normality' of the 'included'. The social exclusion discourse implies minimal reform. It stresses that it is the responsibility of individuals to accept the structures of their own dominance. It centres a puritanical work ethic as the route to inclusion, denying other forms of reciprocity and solidarity. It allows a benevolent view of society to be maintained even while levels of inequality multiply (Levitas, 1998).

Third, social exclusion *individualizes* social problems as personal failure to take up the opportunities on offer. The issue is then transformed from one of social justice into how risks can best be managed (Gray, 2007). The problem is defined as inadequate management rather than structural inequality; response becomes managerial rather than transformative (McLaughlin et al., 2001; Young and Matthews, 2003).

Finally, inclusionary policies are also frequently underpinned by coercive measures. Forcing young people into an insecure labour market on poverty wages, for example, may indeed be viewed as *promoting* exclusion rather than moving to its abatement. Targeting 'at risk' populations may simply exacerbate negative perceptions of particular areas or groups and accelerate their criminalization. Above all the talk is of economic and moral inclusion. The issue of *political* inclusion, through which communities might be empowered and full citizenship achieved, is largely overlooked (Percy-Smith, J., 2000). Indeed, exclusionary processes may stem more from an 'overclass' intent on protecting their own political and economic interests than from an 'underclass' in whose name the SEU sought to govern. The SEU was disbanded in 2006 and its work – persistently critiqued as 'failing to deliver' – transferred to a smaller taskforce in the Cabinet Office focussing on the 'most severely excluded'.

Criminalizing Social Policy? _____

As detailed in this chapter social policy has never been solely about an altruistic provision of welfare support or new educational and employment opportunities. It has also been underpinned by regulatory and disciplinary logics. For example, Pearson (1983, p. 239) noted in his historical analysis of hooliganism (see **Chapter 2**)

that 'too often matters of vital public importance – jobs, homes, schools – are swallowed up in the maw of "law and order" discourse, and publicly addressed as if the only important consideration was whether these social deficiencies might lead to crime, vandalism and hooliganism'. However, the explicit notion of the *criminalization* of social policy did not emerge until the late 1980s in the context a study of multi-agency crime prevention partnerships which sought the collaboration of probation, social work, health, housing, recreation, education, employment and police in the 'fight against crime'. As a result, Blagg et al. (1988) argued that the welfarist values of social policy agencies were in danger of being merged with (or buried beneath) those of crime control. A decade later various commentators (Gilling and Barton, 1997; Crawford, 1997) noted that the issues of crime prevention and community safety were becoming major drivers of social policy decisions. What were once domain issues of social welfare, such as anti-unemployment and anti-poverty programmes, were increasingly being redefined in terms of their potential contribution to crime control. Through broad and loose definitions of crime prevention, disadvantage has been turned into a problem for targeted family intervention, policing and criminal law.

Such analysis is all the more pertinent to unravelling the trajectories of youth policy and youth justice since the first New Labour administration of 1997. A major preoccupation with the family, parenting, youth employment, social exclusion and anti-social behaviour has formed a central element of British social policy over the past two decades. These agendas, driven by a rhetoric of tackling the causes of crime, have drawn numerous aspects of social policy – housing, income support, race relations, family support, employment and nursery provision – into an expanding remit of crime control. In crucial respects it has become harder to disentangle social policy and welfare from youth and criminal justice. It is clear that any number of inclusionary and exclusionary practices can be legitimated within the general rubric of 'crime reduction, crime prevention and community safety'. Complex inter-related problems of child poverty, urban degeneration and social inequality are increasingly responded to through disciplinary techniques. Reform in these areas may be primarily legitimated in the name of opportunities, support and community empowerment, but it also raises the prospect that 'social deficiencies are being redefined as "crime problems" which need to be controlled and managed rather than addressed in themselves' (Crawford, 1997, p. 230).

The tendency is for all aspects of social policy to become governed by an overriding concern for crime and disorder management. Youth workers, for example, have been redefined as adjuncts of the criminal justice system (Stenson and Factor, 1994, p. 1). A problem for much social inclusion work, therefore, is that their operations are simply grafted onto the operations of the criminal justice system, rather than remaining independent with no formalized connections to the police, courts or corrections. Targeted government funding for, say, urban regeneration or family support or for welfare services in general, appears increasingly dependent on 'evidence' that they will impact on rates of crime. Access to resources is dependent on prior assessments of 'risk'. Early intervention, driven by the urgency to 'nip crime in the bud', intensifies the processes of scrutiny and surveillance to which children and families are subjected (see further **Chapter 9.1**).

A myopic focus on troublesome behaviour clearly devalues notions of positive and creative citizenship. As Muncie et al. (1995) claimed, the benefits of a preventive approach based on principles of social inclusion ultimately require a commitment to long-term change which cannot simply be measured by a reduction in the costs of crime and crime control, or by managing 'risks', but by improving the quality of life for all young people. Similarly, numerous commentators (Pitts, 2001; Hill and Wright, 2003; Gray, 2007) have called for a renewed political commitment to forge routes to social justice based on tolerance, mutual respect, empowerment and entitlement, rather than criminalization.

Intensive schooling, employer-led training, the reduction of welfare, parental rehabilitation, crackdowns on teenage nuisance, the resort to the rule of law: all of these attest to the conditions of being young, becoming 'a much more arduous state to be' (Mizen, 2004, p. 183). While there have been important shifts in discourse and practices over the past two decades, the dominant terms of the political debate over 'the youth problem' have not been disrupted, but extended. Intervening in all aspects of young people's lives has come to be an expected and essential requirement. Given the dangers and potentials of 'youth' – and the limited discourses of depravity and deficiency in which they are caught – the 'doing nothing' option has been rendered unthinkable.

■ ■ Summary ■

- Social policy for young people is generally constructed around three competing discourses: young people as *either* the producers of 'trouble' for others *or* as vulnerable and in need of protection *or* as deficient and in need of supervision and training.
- Anxieties concerning youth are realized in a growing multitude of welfare, educational, employment, crime prevention and policing programmes which serve to control and shape young people's lives by lengthening the period of family dependency and by moulding petty details of the domestic lives of their parents. In this way discipline is dispersed.
- State agencies act to tighten conceptions of 'normality' (as in youth training), but in other arenas state intervention is withdrawn (as in welfare support). Such withdrawal is legitimized by 'multi-agency partnership' and 'community responsibility'. The state has initiated ways of acting at a distance, of activating 'private' agencies and co-ordinating sectors of social policy to reorder all aspects of youths' everyday lives.
- Economic contingencies provide the parameters in which any social reform is entertained (e.g. housing policy, youth labour markets). Youth is generally perceived as lasting longer. Pathways to adulthood are broken, non-linear and individualized.
- Class/gender/'race' relations are reproduced through systems of discipline and surveillance (e.g. in employment policy, routine policing).
- Certain languages and classifications legitimize institutional practice and are exemplars of power in their own right (e.g. 'individualized risk', 'social exclusion' and 'blaming the victim' discourses).

- Social policy has its own propensity to create conditions of exclusion and 'risk' (e.g. housing and homelessness; labour market and unemployment) in which alternative survivalist 'careers' may be initiated.
- It is indisputable that since the 1970s more areas of young people's lives have been subject to surveillance, monitoring and institutionalized regulation. Governance has moved from a reactive to a proactive pre-emptive force – identifying the 'anti-social', anticipating disorder and criminalizing 'nuisance'.

■ ■ study Questions

- 1 How has social policy reform in Britain in the past three decades affected young people?
- 2 Does New Labour's emphasis on social exclusion represent a break from or a continuation of past failures?
- 3 How do employment, welfare and housing policies encourage a protracted adolescence?
- 4 In what ways can it be argued that social policy and policing do not alleviate or control crime, but actively create it?
- 5 What is the evidence for the 'criminalization of social policy' or the 'socialisation of criminal justice policy'?

■ ■ Further Reading

There is no existing work which *explicitly* draws on theories of social control and governance to explore the regulatory practices embedded in social policy for young people, but Mizen's *The Changing State of Youth* (2004) is an authoritative overview of how recent reforms in education, training, work, social security and youth justice continue to centre 'youth' in the political management of capitalist societies. For an empirical overview of how various youth policies in the 1990s (education, training, housing and criminal justice) fermented poverty and disaffection amongst the young, see Williamson (1993). Coles' *Youth and Social Policy* (1995) and Furlong and Cartmel's *Young People and Social Change* (1997; 2nd edition, 2007) cover much the same ground and in more detail, the former working with the concept of 'career', the latter with the concept of 'risk'. See Taylor (1999, Chapter 3) for an insightful analysis of how the material outcomes of market societies regulate the social circumstances and behaviours of the young. For the most incisive critical analyses of the concept of social exclusion, see Young's *The Exclusive Society* (1999), Young's *The Vertigo of Late Modernity* (2007) and Levitas' (1998) *The Inclusive Society*?

For those interested in sociologies of social control, the 'dispersal of discipline' thesis and theories of governance, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and Cohen's *Visions of Social Control* (1985) are the obvious places to start.

The journal *Youth and Policy* provides a useful critical analysis of most of the relevant issues.

: // Web Resources /

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/
Formerly the Social Exclusion Unit, provides access to their publications dating back to 1997.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>
Government site to facilitate the 'joining up' of children's services across education, youth justice, social care, health, training and culture.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/>
A daily news update on all matters relating to children and young people including health, education, childcare, youth work and youth justice.

<http://www.poverty.org.uk/>
The UK site for statistics on poverty and social exclusion.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/child-poverty/>
Details research on child poverty carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/>
Site of the Child Poverty Action Group campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK.

<http://www.nch.org.uk/>
Site of the NCH action for children, a charity which supports children and young people affected by poverty, disability, abuse or neglect.

<http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/>
The Children's Legal Centre is a charitable organization established in 1981 and based at the University of Essex, UK. It is home to the monthly journal, *Childright*.