Ross Deuchar + Kalwant Bhopal

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Problems and Prospects from the Margins

Young People and Social Control

Ross Deuchar • Kalwant Bhopal

Young People and Social Control

Problems and Prospects from the Margins

Ross Deuchar
School of Education
University of the West of Scotland
KA8 0SX, United Kingdom

Kalwant Bhopal
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Birmingham, United Kingdom

In loving memory of Ian Deuchar, 1935–2016

Foreword

I have always been shocked at the tendency among those of us so-called mature adults to give up on the young. Colleagues and I have written extensively about the normative pressures toward what psychologists call 'generativity' in adulthood (Maruna et al. 2004). As we age, adults are largely expected to become less self-centered and more focussed on caring for and supporting the next generation(s), and this trend is typically supported in studies of adult development (see e.g. McAdams et al. 1998). As such, the widespread tendency for adults to write off the younger generation as beyond hope strikes me as a bizarrely pessimistic social pathology, casting doubt on the very future of society.

Not that this is anything new of course. One commentator, for instance, wrote: 'What is happening to our young people? They disrespect their elders, they disobey their parents. They ignore the law. They riot in the streets, inflamed with wild notions. Their morals are decaying. What is to become of them?' That was Plato's writing in fourth century BC (cited in Merchant 2013). Indeed, no one has chronicled the persistence and ubiquity of these generational fears better than the late Pearson (1983), whose remarkable book *Hooligan* traces the term 'hooligan' to an 1898 moral panic about unruly youth and demonstrates that similar fears can be found in nearly every subsequent era in British society and beyond:

> What is remarkable is that each time that this social anxiety crystallises around the youth question, it is accompanied by the same vocabulary of complaints: the lack of respect shown to all forms of authority . . . that is said to be a radical departure from the subordination shown in the past. Young criminals are also said to be becoming younger. Then there is the repeated accusation of family decline and the break-up of parental discipline. . . . Finally, the corrupting influence of popular amusements (Pearson and Sinclair 2011).

These troubling fears for the young become even more pernicious when they are selectively applied to young people from working-class or minority backgrounds and remarkably dangerous when they proceed to influence social and criminal justice policy as they so often do. Internationally, the most notorious case of this is surely the infamous invention of the 'juvenile super-predator' created to scare a generation of Americans immune to talk of 'delinquents' into taking radical action in criminal justice in the 1990s. Conservative commentators Bennett et al. (1996) coined the term when predicting an unprecedented coming crime wave led by what they called a 'generational wolf pack' of 'fatherless, Godless and jobless' teens. Not only were these 'super-predators' said to be younger and more dangerous than any other generation of young offenders before them (just as Pearson's research predicted), they were also said to be growing in size, leading to predictions of a 'bloodbath' of youth violence (Fox 1996). Of course, the tidal wave of super-predators never arrived. Instead, juvenile crime plummeted in the twenty-first century in almost every major US city, making the prediction one of the worst in the history of criminology. What did come was a bloodbath of irredeemable criminal justice policy. After all, only a belief in irredeemable super-predators could justify the American experiment in mass incarceration of the past three decades.

  In this important, new work, Deuchar and Bhopal seek to reverse this cycle of moral panic and reactionary policymaking. They give authentic voice to marginalised young people's concerns and fears regarding stigmatisation across a series of key life domains including schools and employment, but primarily the systems of criminal justice and crime control that are so closely associated with them. Importantly, the book does more than record and decry these clear societal failings in regard to the next generation. Instead, in appropriately generative fashion, Deuchar and Bhopal end the

book with a note of genuine optimism, illustrating promising new approaches to working with young people who are 'assets based' both inside and outside the criminal justice context.

One leaves the book thinking there may just be hope yet – not just for the current generation of young people but even more importantly for their parents and grandparents' generations as well. Deuchar and Bhopal demonstrate that we have little to fear but fear itself.

University of Manchester   Shadd Maruna

References

Bennett, W., DiIulio, J., Jr., & Walters, W. (1996). *Body count.* New York: Simon & Shuster.

Fox, J. A. (1996). *Trends in juvenile violence: A report to the United States Attorney General on current and future rates of juvenile offending.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Maruna, S., LeBel, T., & Lanier, C. (2004). Generativity behind bars: Some 'redemptive truth' about prison society. In de St. Aubin, E., McAdams, D., & Kim, T. (Eds), *The generative society* (pp.131–152). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

McAdams, D. P., Hart, H., & Maruna, S. (1998). The anatomy of generativity. In D. P. McAdams & E. de St. Aubin (Eds.), *Generativity and adult development* (pp. 7–43). Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association Press.

Merchant, J. (2013). Troubled youth: Risk, individualisation and social structure. In J. Kearney & C. Donovan (Eds.), *Constructing risky identities in policy and practice* (pp. 91–105). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pearson, G. (1983). *Hooligan: A history of respectable fears*. London: Macmillan.

Pearson, G., & Sinclair, I. (2011). Respectable fears resurface: Reaction to the riots. New Left Project, September, pp. 1–4. Available online. http://www.newleftproject.org. Accessed 1 January 2017.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to thank all of the young people who agreed to participate in the research that is outlined in this book and who provided us with such insight into the challenges and personal journeys that characterise their lives. We are also most grateful to the groups of police officers, teachers, social workers, prison chaplains and local community residents who provided us with insight into the transformative practice they are engaged in.

Our thanks also go to the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, the British Academy and the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) for providing the funding that supported some of the research outlined in this book.

Finally, as always our special thanks go to our families for supporting us throughout this project – to Karen, Alan, Martin, Dylan, Yasmin, Deva and Sachin . . . we couldn't have done it without you.

Contents

1

Introduction

As authors of this book, we have spent the majority of our research careers exploring how the processes of exclusion and marginalisation operate in the lives of socially disadvantaged and ethnic minority young people. We have also spent many years examining how these processes can be reversed in ways that will promote social justice and inclusion. As a critical criminologist, Deuchar has placed an emphasis on exploring the links between social disadvantage, violence and the stigmatising effects of the criminal justice system on young lives – with a particular focus on the policing and criminal processing of young men. As a liberal and emancipatory sociologist, Bhopal has consistently thrown light on the way in which the processes of racism, exclusion and marginalisation operate in predominantly White spaces and the resulting impact on minority young people's experiences in education, employment and local communities.

Across the pages of the book, we bring our collective insights, concerns and vision together to shed new light on young people's experiences of social control and the type of interventions that can help to reduce its stigmatising impact. Throughout, we draw upon over a decade's worth of our own critical empirical research to place the

views and perceptions of those young people living at the margins of society to the fore. In so doing, we illustrate the differing ways in which they often feel oppressed by the most dominant control agents, as well as highlighting good practice.

The agents of social control we explore within the pages of this book are specific networks of actors who are, in effect, agents of the government who have coercive power and considerable discretion over use of that power in different ways and in differing contexts (Tyler et al. 2007). In the process of examining the impact that these agents have on young people, we avoid adopting a deterministic approach to the issues of marginalisation and the impact of social control on young people's lives. The chapters draw upon data that have emerged through using an inductive analytic approach and that reveal important tensions between young people's lack of agency on the one hand but also their creativity, resilience and (at times) forthrightness on the other. Drawing upon Giroux (2013, p. 123) as well as a range of other contemporary literature, we provide empirical insights into the ways in which young people often find ways to engage in new forms of collective struggle and form creative modes of solidarity built around 'shared rather than individualised and competitive values'. We also examine the work of small groups of professionals who manage to put in place processes that have the ability to transform the entrenched structures of oppression and nurture social justice and inclusion.

In Part I, we examine the existing evidence that suggests the growth of deficit and risk-averse policies and practices concerning disadvantaged young people and their impact on social inclusion. We also draw upon qualitative research insights that we as authors have gathered in Scotland and England via in-depth interviews with, and observation of, young people in schools, youth clubs, on the streets of socially deprived communities, in courts, police custody cells and prisons. In so doing, we believe that we succeed in providing a truly unique, real-world insight into young marginalised people's experiences of and views on social control and the main problems and barriers they come across in terms of justice, equity and inclusion as a result.

In Chapter 2, we begin by providing a holistic overview of the existing international research that suggests that public concern has continued to

grow in relation to young people, even in communities where youth disorder and crime has fallen rapidly. The chapter explores the evidence that suggests that a deficit focus on young people in socially disadvantaged communities and from minority groups has continued to dominate. It examines the nature and impact of neoliberal policies focussed on risk, fear and enhanced social control from an international perspective, but with a particular focus on the punitive turn within the UK.

In Chapter 3, we begin presenting our collective empirical insights by exploring the experiences of young people in schools in relation to racism, exclusion and marginalisation. By drawing upon case study data from inner-city schools in England, we demonstrate the way in which schools continue to demonise pupils from disadvantaged and ethnic minority backgrounds and explore the extent to which approaches to discipline contribute to some young people becoming disaffected. Insights from the voices of ethnic minority, working-class young people are complemented with an analysis of British educational policymaking and the impact this has had on 'othering' Black and Gypsy, Roma Traveller minority ethnic groups in secondary schools. Against this backdrop, we also explore the way in which some young people may deal with some of the impact of this structural marginalisation by gaining solidarity in groups and by drawing on personal support systems to counter negative school experiences. The chapter draws upon these insights to make some recommendations for future policy and practice for driving forward the process of inclusion in schools, and ensuring that the education system does not continue to suppress and marginalise based on intersecting issues related to race and class (Jamieson 2012; Wacquant 2009).

In Chapter 4, we continue to focus on Black Minority Ethnic (BME) youth, but with a particular focus on their experiences in the labour market. We examine the evidence that suggests that these groups experience disadvantages during recruitment and promotion and the fact that wage and unemployment gaps exist due to ethnic background. We draw upon case study data with students from BME backgrounds in England who were in the final year of their undergraduate degree. In so doing, we illustrate the way in which their ethnicity, socio-economic and gender backgrounds significantly affected processes of exclusion within the

labour market and their future educational choices, effectively leading to a process of stigmatisation and sociospatial exclusion. Young people's active responses to these issues of anti-democratic capitalism are examined, and the implications for the future work of Higher Education institutions in terms of enhancing systems of support for these minority groups are explored.

Having explored the disadvantage that can emerge for working-class ethnic minority groups within the context of the labour market and education system, Chapter 5 then turns towards the way in which young, working-class men may experience disadvantage at the hands of the police. Insights from participant observation of police patrols and interviews with young men in Scotland illustrate the policing strategies that often lead to the alienation of young people, including the use of stop and search that can sometimes be based on stereotypical social information. The insights are drawn upon and related to Foucault's (1977) analysis of surveillance, panopticism and disciplinary control. In so doing, we consider the impact that contemporary policing culture and practice can have on contributing towards alienating forms of social control and the way in which this can undermine young people's experiences of justice, equity and inclusion. We also explore the way in which some young men may react towards this structural oppression by drawing on particular techniques to confront, evade and spite police officers and the way in which the confrontations that emerge on the streets ultimately hinder crime prevention.

The lens examining the criminal justice system subsequently widens in Chapter 6, where we turn our attention to the judiciary system. Here, we consider the detrimental impact that formal processing through the justice system can have on young people. We argue that court exposure and prison sentencing often represent negative turning points in young people's lives that can inhibit desistance from offending as well as social inclusion. Further, we examine the way in which these experiences often intersect with issues of class and race. By drawing upon insights from interviews with young offenders from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Scotland, we illustrate the way in which they often feel anxious and nervous before and during court appearances, unsupported throughout the process and confused about the proceedings. We argue that these

factors, combined with the criminalising sentencing outcomes and painful nature of incarceration experiences, often increase the likelihood that young people will offend again and re-enter the system. The insights arising from this data are drawn upon and related to Foucault's (1977) focus on disciplinary control as a key mechanism in creating a normalising society. We argue that, through exposing young people to multiple layers of stigmatising punishment, the judiciary and wider criminal justice system contravenes their rights. Further, we argue that the painful experiences they encounter are more conducive to facilitating, rather than desisting, criminal attitudes and violence.

In Part II, we draw upon a range of creative case studies to present examples of good practice that create important prospects for barriers to be broken down between young people and the agents of social control and a sense of justice and inclusion to begin to emerge. In Chapter 7, we begin by exploring how the establishment of border-crossing networking initiatives can facilitate the building of social capital characterised by trust-based relationships among disadvantaged young people, the police, youth workers, teachers, families and local residents. We draw upon small case studies from schools and local communities in Scotland and England, where social deprivation and intense distrust and disharmony between young people and the agents of social control have dominated for many years. The case studies illustrate that, through the dedicated efforts of a small group of professionals and local organisations that place emphasis on what is already present and not absent among young people and in the local neighbourhoods, local networks can be created. These networks enable some initial social bridges to be built between diverse individuals and organisations and for increased trust to lead to wider forms of social glue between previously antagonistic groups (Lang and Hornburg 1998). We draw upon the insights from the case studies to make some important inferences about promoting open, democratic dialogue among local groups of police officers, educators, young people and residents; the prioritising of local skills, talents and assets; and the building of social capital within disadvantaged communities (Deuchar et al. 2015; Miller et al. 2015).

Moving beyond the focus on community participation into the context of the criminal justice system, Chapter 8 then draws upon case

studies from Scotland that illustrate that, in the process of replacing judicial and penal structures that simply oppress with empowering practices, disadvantaged young people may have a greater chance of avoiding and/or desisting from crime (Freire 1972). For example, we provide an overview of the court support service for under 18 s provided by one local authority in the west of Scotland, set within the wider context of the Scottish Government's (2011) Whole System Approach (WSA) to reducing and preventing youth offending. Through drawing upon qualitative data gleaned from interviews with young offenders and service providers working as part of the local Whole System Team (WST), we illustrate the way in which the service helped young people to avoid being remanded into custody or receiving a custodial sentence by supporting them to attend court and providing judges with comprehensive bail reports. Further, we also present insights about the work of prison chaplains and the use of spirituality as a tool in its broadest and most holistic sense in supporting and engaging with young men who do become subjected to custodial sentences. Drawing on interviews with young Scottish inmates and prison chaplains and pastors in one Young Offenders' Institution (YOI), we highlight the way in which the chaplains provide young male inmates with a space where they feel safe and human again. We illustrate the way in which chaplains expose the young men to comforting, trusting, non-judgemental relationships and instil feelings of calmness, resilience and peace that are conducive to forming desistance-related attitudes.

Finally, in Chapter 9, we look back across the collective insights outlined within the pages of the book in relation to the differing ways in which young people often feel stigmatised and oppressed by the most dominant control agents. Drawing upon the writings of Wacquant, Bauman and Foucault, we summarise the impact these experiences have in terms of the exclusionary closure and deepening marginalisation that many young disadvantaged people experience. We also look back across the collective insights from the outlined case studies and draw some conclusions about the role that educationalists, police officers, rehabilitation and support agencies can play in transforming the entrenched structures of oppression and nurturing emancipatory practices that empower (Giroux 2005). In drawing upon these collective

insights, we highlight the key implications for future policy and practice in western societies in relation to young people and social control.

We believe that the book's multi-perspective content will hold appeal to scholars of sociology, criminology, education and youth studies. By illustrating 'real-world' empirical analysis of the type of interventions that can reduce the stigmatising collective impact of social control on disadvantaged young people, we also hope that the book's content may act as a stimulus for policymakers to critically explore the types of social, educational and justice-related policy that characterises and labels socially excluded young people. Finally, by providing insights through the collective voices of young people and through case studies of organisational responses, we believe that the book's content will help to support practitioners' development of creative and liberal practices that can potentially empower young people.

References

Deuchar, R., Miller, J., & Barrow, M. (2015). Breaking down barriers with the usual suspects: Findings from a research-informed intervention with police, young people and residents in the West of Scotland. *Youth Justice*, *15*(1), 57–75.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish – The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Sheed and Ward.

Giroux, H. A. (2013). *Youth in revolt: Reclaiming a democratic future*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Giroux, H. A. (2005). *Border crossings*. Oxon: Routledge.

Jamieson, J. (2012). Bleak times for children? The anti-social behaviour agenda and the criminalization of social policy. *Social Policy and Administration*, *46*(4), 448–464.

Lang, R. E., & Hornburg, S. P. (1998). What is social capital and why is it important to public policy? *Housing Policy Debate*, *9*(1), 1–16.

Miller, J., McAliffe, L., Riaz, N., & Deuchar, R. (2015). Exploring youths' perceptions of the hidden practice of youth work in increasing social capital with young people considered NEET in Scotland. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *18*(4), 468–484.

Scottish Government. (2011). *Diversion from prosecution toolkit: Diverting young people from prosecution.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Tyler, T. R., Callahan, P. E., & Frost, J. (2007). Armed and dangerous(?): Motivating rule adherence among agents of social control. *Law and Society Review, 1*(2), 457–492.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity.* Durham: Duke University Press.