A. Background

In an essay ‘On methods and morals’ A H Halsey (1985) observes that a range of disciplines have brought many methods to bear on the definition and explanation of values, only ever developing partial and provisional responses to an infinitely complex term. By keeping an open mind about what we mean by values and how they may be defined we have tried to situate this study creatively within a divergent literature in following way:

Values and social change

A body of empirical work has documented movement in the values in Western cultures over time, identifying a ‘culture shift’ from material to post material values (Inglehart 1990) and the development of increasingly tolerant and individualistic interpersonal morality (Harding et al. 1986, Ashford and Timms 1992). This empirical material lends some support to theoretical studies which point to the progressive decline in the influence of tradition and social institutions in the formation of values, a process variously described as ‘detraditionalisation’ (Heelas et al. 1996), ‘individualization’ (Beck 1992) and ‘disembedding’ (Giddens 1991). A belief in the efficacy and value of the self has grown in parallel with this decline (Giddens op cit.) with authority increasingly located in the individual, responsible for making decisions about what is right and wrong. Commentators have pointed to the emergence of new ethical stories and communities (Weeks 1995, Plummer 1995, Tronto 1993) and warned of rising anxiety. In Bauman’s terms the ethical paradox of the postmodern condition is that it ‘restores to agents the fullness of moral choice and responsibility while simultaneously depriving them of the comfort that modern self confidence once promised’ (Bauman 1996: xxii).

Young people as moral agents

Influential theorists such as Giddens and Beck point to the erosion of generation as a legitimate marker of authority, but there has been relatively little sociological work that seeks to document or explain the values of children and young people within this context. Such studies as exist are primarily descriptive (Roberts and Sachdev 1996, Francis and Kay 1995) or speculative (Wilkinson and Mulgan 1995). There is a body of psychological literature concerned with documenting and theorising the processes of moral development in children and young people. This work has developed some important insights on the importance of age, gender and the relative complexity of a young person’s environment to their learning process, but has tended to develop models of moral development that exist outside of particular times, cultures and gender relations. Harvey (1993) has observed that attendance to the specificity of place thwarts the development of meta-theories, and some of the most interesting studies of the young as moral agents are those that seek to document the processes of identity-making in small scale local cultures, demonstrating the importance of community (Back 1997), friendships and reputations (Hey 1997), the family (Brannen 1996), and consumption (Miles 1997) as sites of moral meaning.

Values, identities and capital

In seeking to bridge the gulf between these literatures we have found it useful to think of values as implicated in beliefs, discourses and identities, but also as representing commodities or resources that are given worth within particular economies or communities. In understanding value discursively we have built on the view that sources of moral authority have proliferated, resulting in an ‘aestheticisation of the ethical’ (Tester 1992, Shusterman 1988). Not only has there been a proliferation of moral discourses
between which one can move in the construction of a moral self (Tronto 1993) but in moving between these discourses or economies one is involved in the appropriation and transformation of meaning. This process has been documented clearly in the field of consumption, where young people have been shown to appropriate and transform the material value of consumer products such as computer games. By drawing these games first into the moral economy of the household, and then into the public sphere through their knowledge, expertise and ability to talk about the games with friendship cultures, young people effectively transform their value between different economies (Silverstone et al. 1992). A body of more ethnographic work achieves a similar end by adopting the theoretical tools of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) (in particular the concepts of social, cultural, material and embodied capital) in order to understand the relationship between what individuals value, their identities and their social environments (Skeggs 1997, Connolly 1998, Thornton 1995).

B. Objectives

While data analysis and writing up are on-going, we have been able to meet all of our stated aims and have addressed each of our research questions (see report).

1. To contribute to theory in the area of the social construction of identity by examining how young people position themselves in relation to different contemporary value systems and to understand how this positioning relates to processes of identity formation including experiences of social inclusion and exclusion.

Analysis of data from all sources in the study have led us to significant theoretical insights in this area, discussed more fully in the report.

2. To produce new data providing qualitative and quantitative documentation of the variety of moral world views within and between groups of young people aged 11-16 in the UK with particular reference to differences of age, gender, ethnicity, faith, social class, family formation and location.

We have been successful in generating new and high quality qualitative and quantitative data sets in excess of those we anticipated (see section C below) and data analysis is ongoing. We have produced in-depth analyses of patterns in the quantitative data and of the qualitative material through dimensions of location, social class and gender, but more work remains to be done in the areas of faith, ethnicity and family formation.

3. To produce knowledge of the factors that contribute to moral development and of the strategies that young people employ to cope with moral dilemmas and diversity. We will develop understanding of how social and intergenerational change have affected the legitimacy of sources of moral authority for young people.

Through a range of methods (described below) we have been able to produce a broadly based picture of how young people understand the process of moral development, explained and detailed more fully in the report, nominated publications and Thomson et al. (2000). We have explored young people’s strategies for coping with moral diversity both directly (focus groups, questionnaires and interviews) and indirectly through an analysis of the diversity of our sample and observation of their practice in groups. Our methods have also provided insight into the effect of intergenerational change on legitimacy of sources of moral authority for young people (see Section D).

4. To make a major contribution towards youth policy in the areas of health, education, parenting and criminal justice by providing an understanding of young people as active moral agents, documenting the range of their moral world views and elaborating their understanding of moral legitimacy. The study will make a practical contribution to educational practice and methods, and will identify potential strategies for the support and guidance of young people from different social environments.
Oct 98  May 99

Additional group, individual interviews (n1 1)
We have made a significant contribution to a number of policy and practice developments in England and Northern Ireland during the funded period of the study and this is an ongoing activity (see Sections E. Activities and G. Impacts for details of contributions to date).

C. Methods

1. Introduction

The methods proposed in the original application demanded a reflexive and incremental design, encouraging and responding to young people’s participation throughout the research process. To do this we:

- consulted young people initially about the focus and methods of the research through developmental pilot groups;
- incorporated young people’s own voices, ideas and language into the research tools;
- were aware of the research process as an ethical intervention into young people’s lives in the ‘present tense’ as well as the longer term. This entailed development of participatory research techniques, observation and recording of group dynamics, negotiation of ground rules and careful negotiation of consent.

Changes to the research design

There were some changes to the proposed design leading to an expanded sample and significantly improved value for money.

a) Sample size. Referees encouraged an expansion of the Northern Irish sample from one to three schools to include denominational differences, which we did. We also expanded the additional groups proposed to include a broader range of ‘socially excluded groups’ including groups of lesbian and gay young people and young people living in local authority care.

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b) Individual interviews:

We originally proposed to interview young people identified by peers as ‘moral leaders’ twice over the course of the study. Further interviews with up to 10 adults identified as ‘leaders’ by young people were planned. Our referees identified problems of confidentiality and consent with which we agreed and we abandoned this route. As a result of an extended period of fieldwork and our success in securing funding for a subsequent longitudinal element to the study, we decided to eliminate the second interview. Instead we widened the net of individual interviewees, choosing those identified as leaders (by researchers, teachers and pupils), as well as a range of others including young people who were quiet in focus groups and those who were seen to have unique experiences, such as young people with disabilities and young people from minority ethnic groups, head boy! girl etc.

2. The methods employed (further detail in Appendix I, II, III)

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with the developmental pilot groups who contributed ideas to the content, wording and design. We also adapted questions from a number of existing studies including the European Values Study (Ashford and Timms 1992), the West of Scotland 11-16 Study (Sweeting and West 1995), the British Social Attitudes Young People’s Survey (Roberts and Sachdev 1996) and the ESRC 11-16 Adolescent Identities Study (Banks et al. 1992), which had the advantage of...
allowing comparison with other studies. The questionnaire was administered to over 1700 young people in eight different schools.

**The focus group**
The group discussion method used in the study was an adaptation for research purposes of a game used in training and personal and social education. The values continuum provides a means for participants to ‘explore values and attitudes in a group and to enable participants to acknowledge similarities and differences in values’ (Lenderyou 1994:19). This method enabled researchers to observe group dynamics as well as generate opinion and discussion on relevant themes. Sessions, with between 4-6 participants, were usually one hour long and most were held in schools. Some took place in other locations, for example youth clubs and children’s homes. Two researchers were present, one facilitator and one observer, and each session began with introductions followed by agreement of ground rules, and clarification of the meaning of confidentiality and anonymity.

**The individual interview**
The research team themselves engaged in regular sessions of memory work throughout the project (see Crawford *et al.* 1992) as a mean of developing insight and reflexive awareness about the research topic and this work informed the individual interview schedule. The primary aim was to gain insight into young people’s perceptions of their own process of moral development. We employed a biographical approach, asking them to recall their earliest memories of good and bad and the key people, places and events of their moral development, reflecting on leadership, moral authority and difference in relation to others. Interviews took on average 1 hour and were tape recorded. Issues of consent, confidentiality and anonymity were reconfirmed at the start and end of the interview. Data included the transcriptions of interviews and researcher’s field notes.

**Research assignments and class work**
Research assignments were semi-structured interview schedules encouraging young people to interview an adult about what the world was like ‘when I was your age’. 272 assignments were returned from 7 schools. While the administration of the method means that systematic analysis or interpretation is difficult, the research assignments have been subject to content and qualitative analysis and provide us with rich illustrative material. Schools were also invited to undertake class work in relation to the themes of the research. Again, participation in this method was voluntary and we received ‘problem page’ responses from young people in four of the eight schools and creative work based on trigger words from one school.

**Methods of analysis**
All data has been transformed into machine readable form. The quantitative data set has been coded, cleaned and subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS PC. Focus group and individual interview data has been fully transcribed and coded on NUD*IST. Initial analysis has been undertaken to identify key patterns and emergent themes. The class work and the research assignments have been coded and analysed and linked to the main data set as off-line data. An analysis of the media related data has also been undertaken, including a selected content analysis. Further analysis and writing up is ongoing and will continue. We have secured funding from South Bank University to support Sheena McGrellis part-time for 6 months to write up and work on the dissemination of the Northern Irish findings.

**D. Results**

Our central finding has been that young people have sophisticated value systems, that they are deeply engaged in the emotional and ethical labour involved in constructing their identities and their lives. We are able to show and explore this in many ways drawing on data produced by our different methods of investigation.
The structure of youth values

By comparing our questionnaire sample to relevant baseline data we found that these young people’s values did not differ significantly to those documented for adults. Issues appear to fall into three areas: those about which there is a consensus (for example the overwhelming majority believe that stealing, drug taking, racism and joyriding are wrong), those about which there is widespread uncertainty or diversity in opinion (for example abortion, suicide, euthanasia and pornography) and those over which there is controversy, i.e. where views are polarised, (for example attitudes towards homosexuality.

Our quantitative analysis has enabled us to see how the values of young people differ according to age, gender, social class, location and their orientation towards authority. For example we identified an overall age pattern where young people’s responses to ethical issues become more circumspect and tolerant with age. On most issues there are small gender differences, with young women tending to be slightly more disapproving than young men. In some areas (including attitudes towards divorce and sex outside marriage) this pattern is reversed, and in others (such as attitudes towards homosexuality), we find a polarisation of view taking place along the lines of gender. A factor analysis of responses identified an internal structure to young people’s values, confirming and complicating that identified by Ashford and Timms (1985), showing for example that attitudes towards ‘Life Issues’ (such as abortion, suicide, euthanasia) not only ‘hang’ together but may be shaped more by social class than gender or religion. We also found that location had a profound impact on certain values, enabling us to identify a discrete structure of values in Northern Ireland as well as significant local variations elsewhere. Further discussion of the content of the factors and their relationship to key demographic data can be found in the nominated publication (McGrellis et al. forthcoming).

The quantitative data has given us an overview of young people’s values, but also questions with which to approach our qualitative data. For example, questionnaire responses indicated that the most tolerant attitudes towards drug taking occurred in the rural site and the least tolerant in the inner city site. We could make sense of this only through qualitative case studies (Henderson, 1999). Similarly, the identification of dramatic gender differences in sexual values in the middle-class commuter belt site and their relative absence in the isolated estate provided a route into mapping the contrasting economies of values of the two communities and the place of early parenthood within this (Thomson, b forthcoming). Below we briefly report those findings most directly relating to our original research questions, drawing on all our sources of data as relevant.

Our research questions

1. What or who do young people recognise as sources of moral authority and what factors contribute to the legitimacy of moral authority? (see objective 3)

Distinguishing power and authority

Authority has been described as power with legitimacy, i.e. power that neither needs to be explained nor defended. We found that young people were questioning the legitimacy of many forms of power. The line between legitimate and illegitimate power in young people’s moral worlds is complex and contested most tended to distinguish their own personal morality, the values of their particular friendship groups, the informal and formal values of the school and the values of the wider culture. While they were able to exercise some degree of control over the first two levels, they experienced themselves as subject to systems of collectively enforced values which informed the maintenance of reputations, popularity and fashion. Young people also distinguished between value systems (usually embedded within rules) that were formal and accountable and those which were unspoken and assumed.

Traditional authority figures, such as the police, religious leaders and the royal family received very little automatic respect from young people. They explained that respect must be earned, authority won and merit proven. This ethic of reciprocity was particularly apparent in young people’s discussion of the purpose and application of school rules and the behaviour of teachers. While young people did not always invest teachers with moral authority, they
watched them closely to see if they were worthy of it. The factors that
contribute in young people’s view to being a ‘good teacher’ provide insight into the factors that they see as contributing to the legitimacy of moral authority, such as consistency, care, the ability to listen and practical skills.

The individualisation of authority?
The sources of moral authority recognised by young people are consistent with (an uneven) shift from traditionally ascribed authority to its negotiation and location in the individual. Young people were quick to defend their moral autonomy, stressing self determination, but the legitimate moral agent (self or other) could be complicated. First, the moral self was also the ‘true’ self and young people talked a great deal about the need to pursue self knowledge and authenticity in friendships and as individuals. It is also possible to identify a tension in young people’s discourse between an assertion of moral individualism and a lived morality in which they are implicated in structures, identities and loyalties that transcend the individual. An example of such tensions can be found in young people’s relationship with the cultural authority of the media Young people tended to deny suggestions that they were influenced by the media, since it implies lack of agency or independence. Negative influence from the media was more likely to be mentioned when young people took on an adult position in relation to younger siblings, in stories of younger brothers and sisters acting out sequences or fantasies from cartoons, movies and games. But in less direct discussions, the media emerges with a significant place in their own moral landscapes as a source of information, a resource for the development of moral identities, and a source of prepackaged moral discourses.

The family as a haven of obligation
As a group parents were the most respected and unquestioned sources of authority, and of parents, mothers the most commonly admired and defended. In many ways parents and the family appeared to be relatively exempt from the reworking of authority that is evident more widely. While there is some evidence that young people are compelled to renegotiate family relationships (Finch and Mason 1993) from necessity (through family conflict) or choice (friendship relationships with mothers) they tend to describe the family in terms of its difference from wider relationships based on choice, consent or more explicit relations of authority. So parents have the right to hit children, there is an obligation to fight for family honour, you can only really trust family members, and ‘telling’ is honourable only when it involves the family. A number of those in our study were alienated from their families, either living away from home independently or in the care of the local authority. Yet in most of these cases moral authority was still attributed to the family of origin, particularly in response to the alternative assertion of authority by the state in the form of social workers. The one exception to this was in the case of a group of lesbian and gay young people where the notion of a ‘community’ and ‘a family of choice’ (Weeks, Donovan and Heaphy 1999) was posed as a positive alternative. Whether or not these ideals translated into practice, the family clearly played a symbolic role in moral landscapes a haven of obligation in a world of choice.

2. How do they perceive changes in values across generations? (see objectives 1 and 3)

We asked young people to undertake research assignments, interviewing a significant adult about changes and continuities between the worlds of their childhood and now. In focus group discussions and in the questionnaire we asked young people about their hopes and fears for the future.

Narratives of loss and gain
Many of the same themes characterise the accounts of adults and young people. Most are double edged, speaking of both loss and gain, with the voices of the young accentuating the positive. One key theme identified by both was change to the family. On a positive note a greater openness in relations and communications between parents and children, and greater equality between the genders in terms of leisure and freedom was observed. On the negative side an erosion of parental authority, family breakdown, sexual pressure and lack of family time were mentioned. The condition of ‘kids today.’ was a way in which adults identified wider changes related to consumption, authority, and gender equality. Notions such as ‘children today have no respect’, ‘have too much freedom’, ‘are spoiled for
choice',
simultaneously grieved a lost golden age while expressing concern about new risks faced by the young. Both young and old expressed positive views about improvements in the quality and standards of education. Continuities were discussed less frequently and in less detail than changes, and included comments on the enduring structures of everyday life—schooling, work and family life.

In discussions we found that young people were able to move within and between these narratives of loss and gain, taking up different positions, observing decline as well as progress, attributing blame as well as asserting hope. Their hopes speak of continuities between the generations. Young people generally wanted to find love (often marriage), have children, a steady job, and good health for themselves and their families. While most young people’s hopes and fears centre on those things over which they feel they have some control, they are particularly fatalistic and resigned about those they see as beyond their control, such as the politics of the environment, the peace process in Northern Ireland, the economy. It is here rather than in the intimate spheres of family life and friendships that young people blame adults, expressing frustration with their failures, their ‘short termism’ and their greed.

3. How do they respond to diversity in contemporary value systems? (see objectives 1, 2 and 3)

We approached this question in a number of ways: Young people experience diversity very differently according to where and how they grow up. Pilot work exploring the language of values revealed dramatic differences in the linguistic repertoires available to young people for moral discourse. While young people in the inner city site generated an excess of words for making judgements of right and wrong, and expressing ambivalent positions in between, young people in our rural site were able to report few such words. The different levels of complexity of language in these two sites could be seen as reflecting the relative complexity of the moral worlds they represent: the former a diverse, socially mobile community, ethnically diverse and relatively privatized beyond the shared spaces of schools and shops; the latter an ethnically homogeneous, relatively stable community where all are known to each other. The young people could appear inconsistent, but we theorised that they were able to switch between value regimes; a strategy for dealing with diversity. For example, discussing issues of parenting, such as whether it is appropriate to have a child if you cannot support it, we found that young people moved between the subject position of the child to that of the parent and back, and between value regimes of personal choice and self sufficiency. Rather than acting to resolve ethical uncertainty and complexity, young people’s moral discourse tended to capture and reflect it.

Many young people responded positively to research methods that facilitated the expression of differing views, noting that this was an unusual experience. While only a small minority expressed hostile reactions to diversity, it became apparent that few young people felt confident about expressing private opinions publicly, observing that in their social worlds it is usually only popular people that ‘get a say in how things are’. Others may refrain from expressing views that they consider to be out of step with dominant public values, or may prefer to keep their discussions within smaller, safer friendship groups. Yet the meaning of ‘difference’ called for closer investigation in discussion with young people. At one level there was a consensus among most people in most research sites that ‘it’s good to be different’. But this endorsement of difference in principle did not stand up to interrogation. It emerged that only some differences are good—those that are chosen and acquired (for example the cultivation of a unique personality and music tastes) rather than embodied or ascribed (for example having a body that falls outside of the normative aesthetic standards of youth, being considered to be poor, to be insufficiently masculine or feminine etc). It can be argued that in their immediate endorsement of difference young people were evoking a discursive formation, consuming difference rather than being different (Miles, 1997). So while it may be ‘good to be different’ it is neither good, nor safe to be ‘weird’.

While the consumption of difference was for some a means of accessing a common culture, a number of young people employed ‘strategies of distinction’ deliberately aligning themselves with values, identities and cultural resources that were not shared by the majority. Media consumption (especially
music) played an important part in this process, and ‘distinction’ in consumption was associated with
4. How do young people understand the processes of their own moral development and how does this contribute to adult identity? (See objective 1, 3 and 4)

From our quantitative data we could see a pattern in young people’s values with attitudes becoming less judgmental and more tolerant with advancing age. By plotting the moral dilemmas reported by young people in relation to age we noted how these varied by age in different places, enabling us to give very grounded feedback to schools to facilitate curriculum planning. Our primary aim was not to elaborate any particular theory of moral development but to document young people’s own perceptions of the process, and to do this we employed focus group discussions of parenting, learning and punishment, as well as inviting young people to tell their own stories of development through individual interview accounts.

**Adult subjectivity**

When describing the process of moral development young people tended to take the position of the adult subject and were often more comfortable talking about the development of younger siblings than their own development. The acquisition of moral autonomy was closely aligned with the development of physical and emotional competence (Thomson et al. 2000) and they considered it was when children had developed confidence in and control over their bodies that they were able to be responsible for the consequences of their actions. As with other dimensions of moral development, the relationship between the efficacy of choice and the development of moral autonomy was also associated with the acquisition of gendered identities.

**Trusting, testing and ‘teaching’**:

Young people had contradictory views on parenting, punishment and the learning process, but at the centre of the learning process they identified the need for a person who defines and polices moral boundaries. It is vital that this person has the power to punish and that they are trusted to use this power appropriately. While parents were rarely criticised directly for their failures in parenting, teachers were commonly taken to task for failing to find the required balance in this role. With developing experience and autonomy young people describe internalising moral boundaries and becoming less dependent on the ‘teacher’ for guidance. However, they describe a similar process of experiential learning within their friendships where the creation and the testing of trust (through the testing of confidentiality) lies at the heart of the development of social relationships (Misztal 1996).

One of the strongest emergent themes in the study concerns the ubiquity of violence in many young people’s lives and its significance in their understanding of moral development. Young people described a wide range of forms of violence that they were familiar with from the chastisement and punishment of children by parents, the verbal violence of teachers, peer violence in the form of bullying and fighting, domestic violence, street and community violence associated with crime, gangs, and territorial borders and violence associated with policing which in Northern Ireland includes the actions of paramilitaries and political violence. Young people described violence as undermining the process of becoming an autonomous moral subject. Although they had very different experiences of violence, they expressed relatively similar views about its effects and place. First they considered violence to be a high risk strategy as children learn by doing if they are hit they will hit, leading to escalation and a loss of control. They also observed that if the perpetrator of violence can see its effects they are unlikely to stop, and so the only way to escape violence is to ‘firm up’ and hide its effects. This was discussed primarily in terms of bullying, but the idea of embodying punishment as a way of learning is echoed in young people’s discussions of the learning process at home. Physical punishment by parents tended to be seen as ‘necessary violence’, although talking was always considered to be more effective. Some thought that parents could be trusted to use such ‘necessary violence’ for the right reasons, but that the line should be drawn at ‘battering’.
5. What is the relationship between young people’s values and their expectations and experiences of social inclusion and exclusion (See objectives 1, 2 and 4)

We found that young people’s values and the values of their communities were deeply implicated in processes of social inclusion and exclusion. One way in which we have explored this relationship is in a case study of sexual values in two contrasting communities (Thomson forthcoming b). Here we have shown the way in which post material values and cultural capital of the middle class commuter belt equality, authenticity, educational achievement and androgyny - are consistent with socially mobile futures in which sexual experience and risk taking are deferred. In contrast, young people living in an isolated public housing estate are tied more directly into values of embodied capital (hardness, good looks, risk taking, experience) that are valued in the present, but which may thwart mobility. Unlike the first group, it is difficult for these young people to exchange their social and cultural capital in other cultural fields, thus confirming and reproducing their exclusion. In this instance class and location reinforce difference and inclusion/exclusion.

Although young people draw on a number of explanatory models to account for processes of social exclusion (for example poor parenting, the cycle of deprivation) we have been struck by the individualisation of failure in their moral discourse. This is particularly the case around education, but is also evident in relation to poverty and resources that might be translated into ‘family support’. Our data provides some confirmation of what Furlong and Cartmel (1997) have posed as the epistemological fallacy of modernity where individuals increasingly take responsibility for the outcome of social processes that are beyond their control.

E. Activities

The research team has been actively involved in a range of networking and dissemination activities throughout the study. A full list is provided in the appendix.

F. Outputs

Outputs from the study include: (see Appendix III for detail)

* A range of academic outputs including conference papers, working papers, journal articles, book and chapters;
* Contributions to key policy and practice fora and processes including relevant media activities;
* Contribution to the ESRC Children 5-16 programme and related activities;
* A detailed outline and proposal for the production of curriculum materials based on the study;
* A proposal for a book based on the study;
* Quantitative and qualitative data sets. A copy of the quantitative data set will be deposited with Quantidata with relevant research instruments, as appropriate. As the qualitative data set is still subject to analysis and will be built upon in the forthcoming ‘Inventing adulthood’ study we have informed Qualidata that it is not yet available for consideration for archiving.

G. Impacts

Interest has been shown in the research by a range of users, including national and local policy makers with an interest in values related issues, for example in sexual health and drugs. We were invited to submit evidence to the PSE advisory group as part of the review of the
National Curriculum and to the Social Exclusion Unit as part of their review of teenage pregnancy. Interest has also been shown in the research by educationalists and we have given briefings on emergent findings to BBC education to inform the development of a new set of programmes on PSE. We are in consultation with educational publishers about the possibility of developing an educational pack on the basis of the research. (See appendix for further details of activities).

H. Future research priorities

The main research priorities identified by this study relate to the question of how change takes place over time and the place of values in young people’s transition to adulthood. In particular we have looked at how values contribute to or are implicated in social mobility and processes of inclusion and exclusion as young people move into adulthood. The research team has been successful in securing funding from the ESRC Youth, citizenship and social change programme. The study entitled ‘Inventing adulthood: Young people’s strategies for transition’ builds on the sample and findings of the ‘Youth Values’ study, following a group of approximately 100 young people over a further period of 2.5 years, employing intensive narrative and individual interview methods. The data from Youth Values informs the direction of Inventing Adulthoods, and that from the latter informs the continuing analysis of the former.
Bibliography
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Appendix

I The research sites
Four of our schools are in England and four are in Northern Ireland. In the short description of the schools below, all names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

The Northern Irish schools
While the physical distances between the four schools in Northern Ireland is not great, they are located in areas which reflect the diversity of traditions there and are attended by young people from across different religious, class and sectarian divides. Two of the schools are on a religious interface, one Catholic, one Protestant, one is a new designated integrated school and the fourth is a school whose religious make up has become more mixed in recent years due to internal migration in the city.

Turnmill (School 1) was originally a Protestant school but is now attended by a higher proportion of Catholics due to the steady outflow of the Protestant community from the surrounding area. The school is located in an inner city area and has a predominantly working class catchment.

Knowlands High (School 2) is located in a suburban area of the city, with a mixed class and religious (integrated) catchment. Young people are bused and driven into the school and come from within the city, the outskirts of the city, as well as rural hinterlands and neighbouring county.

St. Saviour’s (School 3) is situated in an inner city community with a working class and religiously homogenous catchment (Catholic). The school is located in a Catholic enclave - a community surrounded by “the other side” and is a site for sectarian disputes and conflict.

Castleglen (School 4) is a Protestant school situated on the interface with St. Saviour’s. It lies in the heart of a predominately Protestant inner city area with a working class catchment. The area suffers from similar levels of deprivation and unemployment to that experienced by the community served by St Saviours. The visibility of a sectarian demarcation of space in this community is painted on the wall murals and the kerb stones, and at times acted out in violent clashes along the interface.

The English schools
North Park (School 5) is located in a large housing estate with a working class and ethnically homogenous catchment. The estate is one of the largest in Europe, developed in the 1930s as a ‘garden city’ creating housing “fit for heroes.” Today much of the accommodation is derelict and vandalised. Located several miles from the nearest city or town, the estate is both physically and socially isolated, offering few commercial or cultural facilities. Unemployment is high, as are levels of petty crime and drug use. A motorway physically divides the estate, public transport is poor.

South Park (School 6) is located in inner city London in a largely working class, ethnically diverse, and fast changing community. While up to 17 languages are spoken in the school, many young people live their life outside of school in small ethnically homogenous communities. Estates in the area are notorious for drug use, joyriding and the crime rate is generally high.

Forest Green (School 7) is located in a commuter belt to London with a largely middle class and ethnically homogenous catchment. The school is located in a greenbelt area, featuring picturesque villages as well as road and rail links to London. The area is mostly affluent although there are pupils from working class background at the school.

Crossways (School 8) is located in an isolated rural village with a mixed class and ethnically homogenous catchment. The area is almost wholly agricultural. Some young people live up to 20 miles from the school in very isolated areas only seeing other young people and friends at school. Public transport is poor and local services for young people are limited. Traditionally many young people would have taken up employment on leaving school in their family business or farm, although this is now in decline.
### II The Research Process

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<tr>
<td>Nov 96- Feb 97</td>
<td>Access and selection of research sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 97-June 97</td>
<td>Pilot and developmental focus groups. These included the convening of non-sample groups in London and Northern Ireland over a series of meetings to reflect on the aims of the study as well as to develop ideas for the content and methods of the study. In addition groups were held in each of the research sites with year 12 students to explore local background, the language of values used by young people in that area. Finally, more formal ‘pilots’ were undertaken of the questionnaire and of the focus group method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-June 97</td>
<td>Administration of questionnaires in school sites, to mixed ability tutor groups in each year group. Research assignments were also distributed to students in 7 of the school sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct Dec 1997</td>
<td>Half sample analysis of questionnaire data on SPSS completed and used to contribute to design of focus group method. Half sample reports made to each school. Feedback used to help in selection of focus group composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-April 1998</td>
<td>Focus groups undertaken in each of the eight research sites (n=56), including single and mixed gender groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-June 1998</td>
<td>Schedule designed, sample selected and individuals invited to take part in individual interviews. Interviews undertaken before end of summer term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-Oct 98</td>
<td>Identification of additional groups (In England: young people leaving care, pupil referral unit, lesbian and gay youth group, In NI: marginal youth group, residential care group). Administration of questionnaires (n=72) and focus groups (n=6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oct 98 May 99** Additional group, individual interviews (n1 1)
III Detail on selected methods (Section C in final report)

**Questionnaire**

Participating schools were also consulted and as a result a separate questionnaire (omitting a number of questions on sexuality related issues for years 7 and 8) was used in one of the Northern Irish schools. The questionnaire was administered to over 1700 young people in eight different schools. Two or more researchers were present and conditions varied across groups from exam conditions in some schools to more informal settings in others. Young people were given the same set of instructions across all sites and encouraged to request help from the researchers as needed. Confidentiality was emphasised as was the fact that responses would not be fed back to teachers or carers on an individual level. The queries and comments young people made were noted by the researchers. The majority of queries were on the meaning of a few questions ‘euthanasia’ ‘pornography’ and ‘cloning’ (q16 and q20). The younger age groups were in need of more help and explanation than the older age groups. The instructions in the questionnaire were generally understood across all groups and the design and layout appealed to most. The questionnaire included an evaluation and comments made were, on the whole, favourable: ‘Very thorough and well presented’, ‘Good questionnaire dude’, ‘Thanks this has helped me to be independent and make my own decisions’. However, some young people felt it was too personal: ‘Too personal at the start (demographic questions) I don’t like being asked to give information about my family and friends’. A word search at the end of the questionnaire was also popular and was a good time filler for those who completed early.

**Focus group**

A set of statements printed on coloured card were produced for discussion in the groups from the initial questionnaire stage of the research. Examples of statements used include: ‘It good to be different’, ‘older people should be respected’, ‘it’s wrong to have a child unless you can support it’. A selection of statements was made for each group. On the floor or on the table in the middle of the circle a large sheet of flip chart paper was placed. On this paper were five lines, at one end the words ‘strongly agree’ were written and at the other ‘strongly disagree’.

Each member of the group was then given a set of ‘postit’ stickers, these stickers were numbered according to the person’s place in the seating plan. Each participant was invited in turn to pick and read aloud a statement from the pack. On hearing this statement, participants were asked to think about their own response, to position themselves on the values continuum and to explain their position to others. In most cases participants engaged each other directly in debate. Approximately 5-7 statements were used in each 1 hr session, ideally each participant will have the opportunity to read out a statement. The last five 10 minutes of the session was used to wind the group up and repeat assurances of confidentiality and anonymity.

The data produced by this method included the transcription of the discussion, the values continuum for that group and the detailed notes on group dynamics recorded by the observer and drawn subsequently from field notes.

**The individual interview**

Interviewees were selected primarily from focus group volunteers and invited to take part in an interview by personal letter. Our criteria included selecting young people who we considered to be ‘leaders’ based both on our own subjective judgement from focus groups as well as the informal reports of other students and teachers, young people who we considered to have particularly interesting or unique experiences and young people who had not been forthcoming in focus group conditions. Interviews were then negotiated
with schools who provided private rooms for the meetings. Interviews with young people from non-school sites were undertaken in a range of settings including the research office, their own homes and youth clubs.

Research assignments and classworks
Issues of consent and problems raised by schools not wishing to overburden students with research tasks arose in relation to the research assignments, and we agreed that each school would distribute the assignments according to their particular circumstances, emphasising that they were not compulsory. Many schools expressed initial enthusiasm, but most were unable to realise these initial plans. We offered schools two ‘ready made’ class work options. First to undertake creative work in art, English and drama in relation to key trigger words drawn from the research. Second to invite students to answer ‘problem page’ letters drawn from dilemmas provided by participants in the questionnaire.

Media analysis
This has included drawing out media related findings from the questionnaire, using these in order to select items to be subject to a media content analysis. Findings from this process were fed into the development of focus group and individual interview tools, the data from which is currently being integrated into a full report on the media analysis.
III Detail on selected methods (Section C in final report)

IV The Youth Values Data Set

Table 1: School Data

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| Fgroup  | 5    | 7    | 8    | 7    | 8    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 56    |
| Male    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 14    |
| Female  | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 18    |
| Mix     | 1    | 3    | 3    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 4    | 24    |

| Ind Int  | 3    | 4    | 4    | 6    | 8    | 7    | 5    | 6    | 43    |
| Male    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 22    |
| Female  | 3    | 2    | 1    | 3    | 4    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 22    |

| Pairint | 1    | 1    | 30   | 76   | 21   | 25   | 18   | 25   | 6     |
| Male    | 2    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 3    | 5     |
| Female  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |

| Ras     | -    | 30   | 76   | 21   | 25   | 18   | 25   | 6    | 272   |

| Claswk  | -    | Dilem Trigg+ | Dilem | - | Dilem | - | Dilem | |

Table 2 - Extra groups data

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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of young people participating in project:

Quantitative
Questionnaire 1727 + 72 1799

Qualitative
Focus Group 301 + 30 331.
Individual Interviews 43 + 11 54
Pair Ints (4x2) 8 8
Total 393
III Detail on selected methods (Section C in final report)

V Detail on Activities undertaken (Section E in final report)

Participation in academic networks within and outside the research programme:
June 1997. Presentation at Thomas Coram Research Unit seminar series,
June 1997. Presentation at Family Values Seminar series, School of EPSS, South Bank University.
October 1997 Presentation to NPRA (Network of Postgraduate Research into Adolescence), University of London Institute of Education.
Nov 1998 Presentation of paper at ESRC Children 5-16 Programme conference bringing together British and Norwegian researchers, Manchester.
Nov 1998 Presentation at seminar bringing together researchers and practitioners hosted by the Centre for Feminist Research, University of Oslo on Adolescent sexuality, gender and change: Research and Practice.
Feb 1999 Presentation of paper on sexual values, Oxford Brookes Centre for Family Research.
April 1999 Presentation of paper on drugs values, International Conference on Reduction of Drug Related Harm, Geneva.
March 1999 Participation with programme subgroup looking at methods of analysis, Birkbeck College.
May 1999 Presentation of paper at ESRC Children 5-16 programme meeting, Manchester.

Contributing to relevant policy and practice fora and initiatives
The project was invited to report on emergent findings to inform the discussion of this group who have the responsibility for proposing a new curriculum for Personal and Social Education to the QCA for the review of the National Curriculum in 2000.
Oct 1998 Presentation to a meeting of the Sex Education Forum on emergent results in the area of sexuality, National Children’s Bureau, London.
Oct 1998 Submission to social exclusion unit consultation on teenage pregnancy at the invitation of the Department of Health.
Dec 1998 Discussions with BBC Education of emergent findings to inform the development of new PSE schools videos for key stages 3 and 4.
Feb 1999 Presentation of findings on drugs and young people at a conference for health service purchasers and providers in the Northwest.
Feb 1999 Presentation of main findings to Conference of Users organised by Director of Childhood 5-16 Programme.
June 1999 Presentation at Conference to launch new guidance materials on pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at school, organised by Lewisham Local Education Authority.