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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**'You don't know what we're really like' : a profile of young people's values**

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**“You don’t know what we’re really like”.  
A profile of young people’s values**

**by**

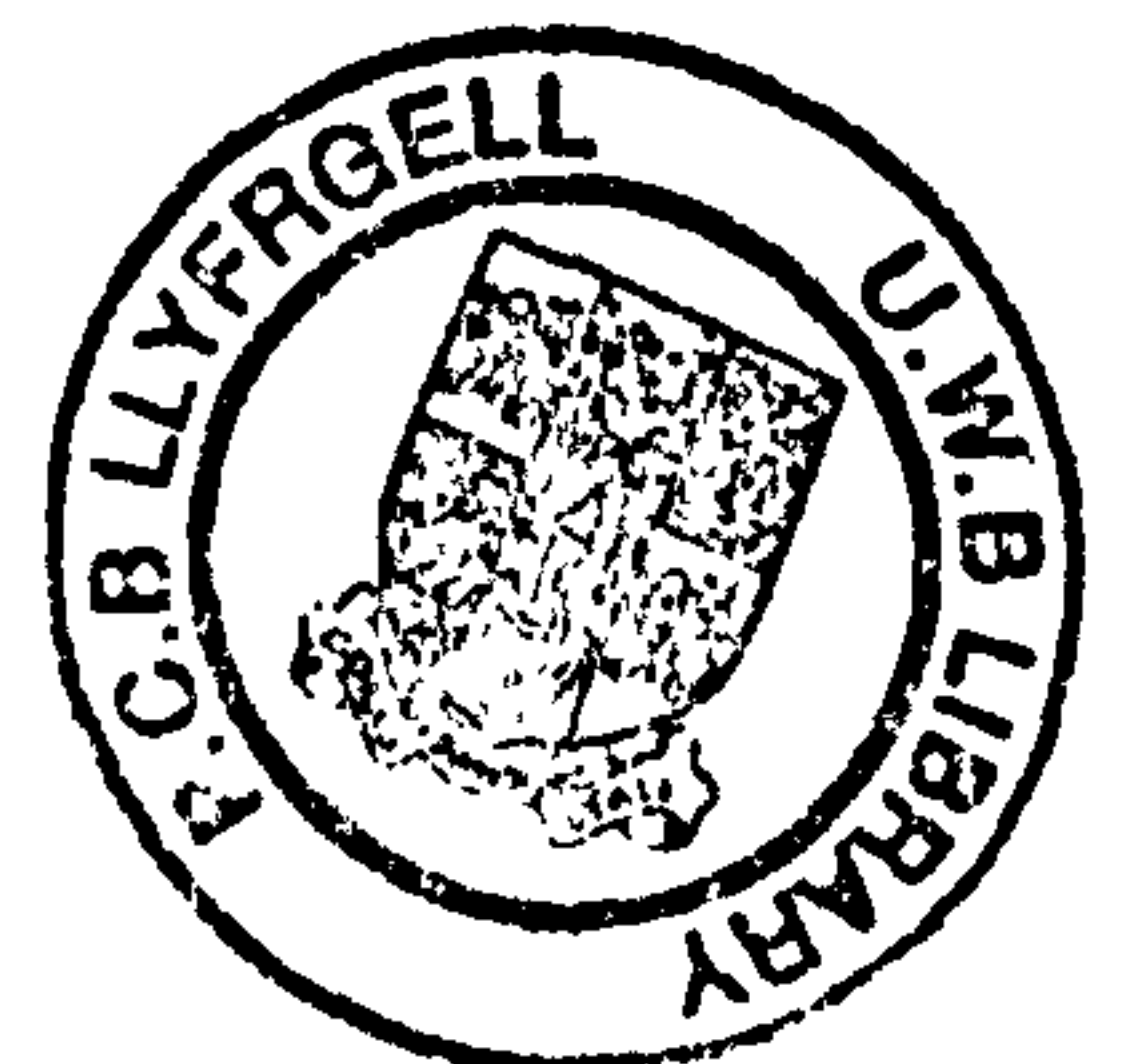
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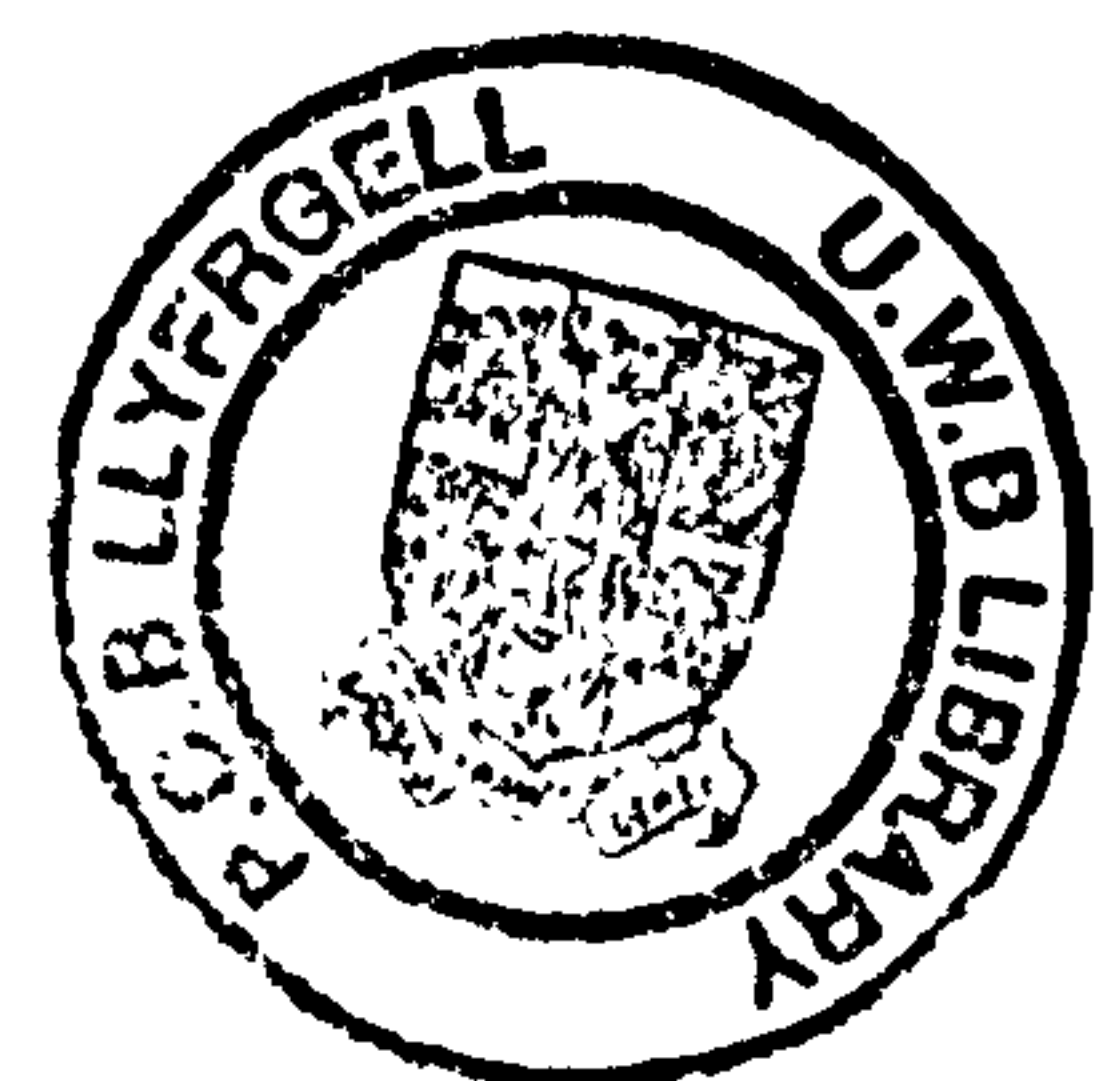
**A dissertation submitted for the degree of  
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**November 2004**



“YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT  
WE’RE REALLY LIKE”.

A PROFILE OF YOUNG  
PEOPLE’S VALUES



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## PREFACE

I would like to express my thanks to all the young people who participated in the focus groups for this study; allowing me access to their thoughts and feelings, and giving their enthusiasm and time in the first stages of this research. I would also like to express my thanks to all the young people and teachers in schools who gave their time and commitment to document their values. Without them this research would not have been possible. I hope that I have done justice to their views, and that they may be taken seriously by those working with, and formulating policy affecting, young people.

I wish to thank the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education at the University of Wales, Bangor, and my supervisor Revd Professor Leslie J Francis for providing a base, resources, and support to facilitate this research. I also wish to thank the St Christopher's Trust for their financial assistance.

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I declare that this dissertation is not, in whole or in part, substantially the same as any that I have submitted for a degree or other qualification at any other university and that it is the result of my own research.

## SUMMARY

This dissertation draws a portrait of young people's values. Young people are frequently stereotyped in modern society, particularly by the media. This dissertation aims to go some way towards redressing this through providing a portrait of young people's values that has integrity for young people and for the researcher. Young people's values are explored through qualitative and quantitative research methods; through focus groups, and by means of a new instrument for assessing young people's values devised in this study, the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI). This study analyses the responses of 2,973 young people to the HaFVI.

This dissertation is divided into two parts. In part one, chapter one presents an overview of the study; its thesis, methodology, and an explanation of the terminology used. Chapters two and three evaluate qualitative and quantitative data already available regarding young people's values. Chapter four presents data from the focus groups. Chapter five describes the way in which the focus group data were utilised in the design of the HaFVI, and the method for the dissemination of the HaFVI.

Part two of this dissertation presents a quantitative map of young people's values. Chapter six provides a background profile of the young people, and chapter seven introduces the profile of young people's values. Chapters eight to 25 each focus on an area of the young people's values from the values-map generated in this study, portraying detail regarding the young people's values in each area. The dissertation concludes with a summary of the young people's values, portrayal of factors of significance when considering these values, and discussion of the implications of the findings of this study.

# **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

**Overview**

**Thesis**

**Methodology**

**Terminology**

**Conclusion**



## **Overview**

Young people are a prominent and important group within society. For example, at government level, young people are the object of many specific policies (Department for Education and Skills, 2002; 2003), and economically, advertisers and companies increasingly view young people as a considerable, separate market group. Both these situations indicate the importance of young people as a recognised group in modern society, both for its present and its future. However, young people are also viewed by many as the cause of society's difficulties. Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004) state that a 'problematizing perspective' (p. xiii) is frequently taken towards young people today.

This study surveys and presents a portrait of young people's values. This is in the face of misrepresentation and stereotyping of young people in the media, and discrimination against them in society. The study aims to give an intimate portrayal of what young people think and feel, providing an insight into, and some understanding of, this valuable and powerful group.

This Introduction contains three main sections. The first section sets out the thesis which this study addresses. The second section explains the methodology by which this study has been undertaken. The third section defines some of the specific terminology used in this study.

## Thesis

The main aim of the present study is to address stereotyping and discrimination against young people, through providing a portrayal of young people's values that has integrity both for the young people and for the researcher. As indicated above, young people today are often misrepresented. Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004) state that 'Generally 'youth' tends to be seen as a problem: young people are beset by predominantly negative images, are seen as either a source *of* trouble or *in* trouble' (p. xiii).

These negative images of young people can be seen through depictions of them in the media. For example, recent BBC reports regarding young people have focused on young people as: more sexually deviant than other societal groups (BBC, 2000); smoking more cigarettes and thus having greater health risks than other societal groups (BBC, 2002a); and abusing solvents and being assaulted by friends (BBC, 2002b). Tabloid newspapers display negative images of young people, for example: 'Boy of 15 gets 7 yrs for rape' (Mirror, 2003). Recent depictions of young people in broadsheet newspapers also include many negative images, for example, as: violent towards teachers (Halpin, 2003); and as murderers (PA News, 2003). The headline used in this latter article (PA News, 2003) effectively demonstrates the issue of stereotyping of young people. The headline states 'Teenager arrested over murder of US artist'. The description of the arrested person as 'teenager' does not appear to be classed by the newspaper producers or many of its readers as discrimination, whereas substituting the word 'teenager' for other societal groups, for example: 'Black person arrested over murder of US artist'; 'Gay person arrested over murder of US artist', would be likely to cause outrage. This demonstrates



the negative stereotypes of young people frequently perpetrated in the media, and that these often go unnoticed.

It is therefore apparent that the media depict negative and stereotypical images of young people, which either cause or perpetuate discrimination against, and stereotyping of, young people in society generally. It is argued that the media in this respect are both a reflection of societal values, and also serve to perpetuate them. Examples of stereotyping and discrimination against young people are evidenced later in this study. These are evident in the focus group discussions, in multifarious descriptions given by the young people of discrimination against them (see chapter four).

Misrepresentations of young people can also be found in academic texts. For example, from her earlier work (Griffin, 1993), Griffin (2004) identifies many academic texts which utilise a 'mainstream' or 'traditional' perspective to young people, that is, which do not to any large extent question the 'storm and stress' approach to young people originally advocated by Hall (1904) (cited by Griffin, 2004, p. 13). Griffin (2004) maintains that these texts are 'primarily engaged in constructing or reinforcing moral panics around youth in general' and 'tend to involve a process of searching for the apparent 'causes' of various constructed social problems, from youth crime and 'disaffection' to drug abuse' (p. 13). From this, Griffin (2004) concludes that:

dominant constructions of youth serve to link young people with specific 'social problems' solely or primarily as a consequence of their youth...mainstream approaches tend to adopt various forms of the victim-blaming thesis, in which young people are represented as the cause of specific 'social problems' - or it is argued that such problems would be alleviated if those young people who are most affected would only change their attitudes, appearance or behaviour (pp. 13-14).



Griffin (1993; 2004) therefore clearly illustrates some of the misrepresentations of young people in academic texts. This problem has also been identified by other scholars. For example, Simmons and Wade (1984) identify the traditional view of 'adolescence' still accepted by many scholars as problematic. To demonstrate this, they use a well-known and influential description of adolescence given by Anna Freud (1952):

Adolescence is by its nature an interruption of peaceful growth, and...the upholding of a steady equilibrium during the adolescent process is in itself abnormal...adolescence resembles in appearance a variety of other emotional upsets and structural upheavals. The adolescent manifestations come close to symptom formation of the neurotic, psychotic or dissocial order and merge almost imperceptibly into...almost all the mental illnesses (Freud, 1952, cited by Simmons and Wade, 1984, p. 16).

This description by Freud (1952) of 'adolescence' as 'abnormal' and close in its 'manifestations' to 'mental illness' is clearly difficult, and arguably presents an unacceptable stereotype of young people as a group that would not be an acceptable description of other societal groups.

However, misrepresentation of young people in academic texts is beginning to be recognised and challenged. For example, Smith (1970) identifies 'adolescents' as a group who are negatively stereotyped. He states that: 'The peculiar status of adolescence in Western society...encourages the development amongst adults of a stereotype of adolescence as a category, which is typified by its irresponsibility' (p. 198). Griffin (2004) identifies 'radical' approaches in studies of young people, stating that these approaches are 'far more likely to *deconstruct* the myriad 'social problems' that are associated with young people' (p. 14). She cites Hall and Jefferson (1975) as one example, indicating that such approaches, as exemplified by them, tend to focus on the

power relations surrounding young people, both in terms of their age, 'race', class, gender, and sexuality. It is this focus, and the inclination to view particular groups of young people as in need of support and empowerment, that distinguishes radical approaches from mainstream approaches (Griffin, 2004).

Negative depictions of young people are also beginning to be challenged in some sections of the media, albeit in areas of the media that are directed at a more specialised, rather than mass, audience. For example, Burne (2002) states that 'Many researchers have looked at the "troubled teenager" theory and found no evidence for it' (p. 23). He suggests that one reason for the prevalence of the 'troubled teenager' theory is its value as a marketing tool, both in terms of products about young people, and products for young people. Burne (2002) concludes that 'Maybe the simultaneous demonising and infantilising of adolescents tells us more about our society's need for good consumers than it does about the nature of our children' (p. 23).

In light of this, it is apparent that misrepresentations of young people are beginning to be recognised in some areas, and consequently challenged and corrected. Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004) emphasise the importance of this in their perception of 'a need to rethink youth in terms of acknowledging and respecting the many positive contributions young people can and do make to their communities' (p. xiii). This acknowledging and respecting of young people's contributions should begin with listening to young people, as stated in line with article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which gives young people and children the right to express their thoughts and values, and to be listened to (see, for example, BT, 2003).



The present study is part of that process, of listening to young people's expressions of their values, and reflecting back and outwards what is heard about what they value as important. In this context, the present study adds to the challenge against misrepresentation and stereotypes of young people, both in academic texts and more generally, through providing empirical evidence of young people's values.

The thesis of this study, therefore, is that, as demonstrated, young people are stereotyped and discriminated against in the media, academic texts, and in wider society. This study acts to further challenge this stereotyping, in two main ways. First, it acts to counter any misrepresentation of young people, through demonstrating what young people actually value. Second, when considering the content of this study of young people's values, it is evident that their values overall, while containing some areas for concern, do not contain any outrageous content, and could be values presented by an 'average' group of adults. Thus, this study challenges the stereotype of young people as the cause of many of society's problems both through drawing an accurate profile of young people's values, and through challenging stereotypes in the content of this profile.

## **Methodology**

The motivation for, and main purpose of, the present study have been explained in the previous section. The present section describes the methods and approach used in this study, in line with the thesis outlined above.

The literature review in chapters two and three demonstrates that many previous studies of young people's values have been undertaken. However, as is also detailed in chapters

two and three, many of these studies contain weaknesses in their methodologies or are outdated. Consequently there is a need for the present study to draw an accurate and current portrait of young people's values. The present study builds on the work of Leslie J. Francis and associates, particularly as evidenced in Francis and Kay (1995) and Francis (2001). However, the data utilised by these studies were generated using a questionnaire which is based in interviews conducted over 20 years ago (Francis, 1982). However, young people at the beginning of the twenty-first century may have different values and perspectives from young people 20 years ago. It was, therefore, necessary to undertake a new study, and generate a new instrument measuring young people's values, grounded in the perspectives of young people today.

Similarly to Griffin (1993; 2004), described in the previous section, Newman (1996) further defines approaches to research regarding young people. Newman (1996) also focuses on the way texts and studies treat power relations between groups. He therefore describes feminist approaches to studies of young people as focusing on the lack of power between young people ('children') and adults. Newman (1996) cites Glaser and Frosh (1988) and Gittins (1993) as examples, and states that:

Feminist and post-modernist critiques ... have dwelt on the 'silence' of children ... and drawn parallels with the historical silence of other oppressed groups ... The distribution of power in child/adult relationships is, according to this paradigm, as imbalanced as that in male/female, black/white, abled/disabled, first world/third world, gay/straight relationships and should be analysed within the same political framework (Newman, 1996, p. 7).

Therefore, the present study, in empirically addressing stereotyping and discrimination against young people, is part of this challenge to imbalanced power relations between



young people and adults. Accordingly, this study can be seen as taking a feminist approach to the study of young people's values.

There has been much discussion of the meaning of a feminist approach to research, many authors have attempted to define this (see, for example, Reinharz, 1992). However, many authors also reach the conclusion that there are not 'discrete methods which are intrinsically feminist against those which are not' (Slee, 2000, p. 6). While recognising this, the present study is grounded within a feminist tradition of research through adhering to two key principles, as identified by Weiler (1988). First, that 'feminist research is characterized by an emphasis on lived experience and the significance of everyday life' (p. 58). This is emphasised in the present study through the grounding of the study in the actual values of young people, rather than imposing the agenda of the researcher. The second key principle, as identified by Weiler (1988) is that 'feminist research is politically committed' (p. 59). This is emphasised in the present study through the commitment, highlighted earlier in this chapter, to challenging stereotyping and discrimination against young people.

The feminist approach to research taken in this study can therefore be seen to be at the heart of what drives this study, and a fundamental impetus for the particular research methodology adopted. Moreover, Weiler (1988) further argues that one weakness of feminist methodology is its failure to address forms of oppression other than gender oppression. This study, therefore, goes some way towards addressing that weakness through using feminist methodology to address stereotyping and discrimination of young people.

Having identified the methodological approach driving this study, the way in which this is evidenced, through the specific methods used, their reasoning, and precedents, are now defined.

This study uses a synthesis of methods, also known as multiple methods. This method has been adopted for two main reasons. First, it utilises both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, and the use of both methods means that many of the criticisms of each method on its own can be overcome. Second, the two methods of data collection mean that the data collected by each method can be checked against the other, to verify and validate the data. Thorne (2001) utilises a synthesis of methods in her study, and states that:

the combination of survey and interview data means the research is both generalisable and authentic. It is therefore possible to make empirical statements (which have important implications for political change), whilst allowing space for the complexity of .... experiences to be explored (p. 47).

Qualitative and quantitative methods have also been used in this way previously by, for example, Levitt (1995) and Nichter, Nichter, Thompson, Shiffman and Moscicki (2002).

Using a synthesis of methods means the research is, by its nature, circular rather than linear. The data from the qualitative research feed into the instrument used for the quantitative research, which generates data, which, in turn, provide further detail on, and refer back to, data from the qualitative research.

Scholars have reflected on the positive and negative factors relating to both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. These considerations have also been undertaken



with relation to a feminist approach to research. Thorne (2001) depicts what she sees as the basics of quantitative and qualitative methods. With relation to quantitative research, which she identifies as arising from a positivistic worldview, she states that:

To measure “social facts” researchers appropriate the same empirical logic of enquiry utilised in the natural sciences ... Positivism is concerned with objectivity, with the measurement of social facts in a neutral, value-free research setting. Methods associated with this paradigm are empirical and are concerned with the production of accurate data ... The outcome of the research are generalisable and reliable data (p. 41).

With relation to qualitative research, which Thorne (2001) sees as arising from an interpretative worldview, she states that:

there are no external realities to be uncovered through logical empirical research in the interpretative paradigm; rather it is the way in which individuals interpret their social world and attribute meaning to their experiences which are the “starting point for objective analysis of society” (May 1993: 28). ... The methods ... are descriptive and are concerned with the production of in-depth data. ... The knowledge resulting from qualitative research can be used to construct theory and the data is rich, deep, but ungeneralisable (p. 41).

However, there have been many criticisms of quantitative research from feminists, for example that quantitative research involves ‘the translation of individuals’ experience into categories pre-defined by researchers’ (Jayaratine and Stewart, 1991, p. 85). However, utilising young people’s values themselves from qualitative research to formulate a quantitative instrument for use in this study means that any categories used are derived from the descriptions by the participants themselves and are not pre-defined by researchers. Thus the young people’s voices are not silenced, but rather echo throughout the study.



Further reservations about using solely quantitative research methods with young people are expressed by Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter and Zukin (2002). They state that, during the course of their research, they found many of the distinguishing characteristics of young people to be subtle and nuanced, a finding which they argue presents challenges for quantitative research with young people. The synthesis of methods utilised in this study, therefore, again overcomes this difficulty through enabling these subtle and nuanced characteristics to emerge in the qualitative phase of research, and then to be explored among a wider sample in the quantitative phase of research. Therefore, utilising a synthesis of qualitative and quantitative methods in the present study means that the data generated can be at once generalisable, and also in-depth.

The specific methodology used for this study is as follows. At the beginning of this study a literature review of existing studies examining young people's values was undertaken. Simultaneously, focus groups were conducted with young people to explore the issues and values of importance to them. The focus groups and literature review were undertaken at the same time, rather than the literature review being conducted before the focus groups, to ensure that this study is driven by the young people's agenda; to ensure that issues arising from the literature review did not drive the focus groups, but rather that the focus groups were an opportunity for the young people to express what they really thought. More detail concerning the distinct methodology of the focus groups is given in chapter four.

Focus groups, rather than individual interviews, were used for the qualitative part of this study for two main reasons. First, using focus groups enables a greater number of young

people to participate in the qualitative research part of the project, but within the same geographical and time restrictions as would be necessary for individual interviews. Thus the values of more young people can be taken into account in the in depth manner facilitated by qualitative research. Second, using focus groups enables the researcher to probe more easily and deeply into the young people's values, and their reasoning behind these values, through the young people's interactions and discussions with each other.

This is emphasised by Kitsinger (1994), cited by Strange, Forrest and Oakley (2003), in highlighting the importance of focus groups as a research method, because of the access they offer to interaction between participants. Lather (1994), cited by Archer (2002), similarly highlights the benefit of focus groups. Lather (1994) articulates the reciprocity of the focus group encounter for the participants and the researcher, and this is critical, bearing in mind the feminist approach taken in this study. Through taking part in a focus group, rather than just an individual interview, the participants are also gaining something from the research experience, through the opportunity to present, defend, and perhaps learn about their views with their peers, and so it is not only the researcher who gains from the experience. This is particularly important when considering, as here, power relations within a research situation, and also in terms of treating the participants as people, and not merely objects of study.

There are many precedents for using focus groups as a qualitative research method in studies with young people. For example, Bryman (1988) describes group discussions conducted by Griffin (1985a; 1985b) among young women, regarding the transition from school to employment. Similarly to the remarks above, Bryman (1988) states that 'these



discussions have the advantage of bringing to the surface the differences among the participants and the contradictions within and between their replies' (p. 50).

Therefore, for this study of young people's values, observing the way the young people explained and defended their values to each other in a focus group discussion provides a deeper insight into the young people's values, than individual discussion of their values with a researcher. Using focus groups rather than individual group interviews also helped to ensure that the young people gained something from the experience.

The focus groups conducted at the beginning of this study are of primary importance in ensuring that the study is grounded in, and driven by, young people's values, and not the researcher's agenda. Furthermore, from the literature review, while it is recognised that many studies of young people's values previously undertaken are now outdated, or contain difficulties in their methodologies, it is also recognised that many of these studies also produce important findings regarding young people's values, which should not be completely disregarded. Thus a values-map from the literature review is utilised here alongside that from the focus groups, to ensure that the present study is grounded in previous studies, to legitimate comparisons that will later be made between the present study and others, and to ensure that the findings from the present study can legitimately contribute to findings in this field.

On completion of the focus groups and literature review, a values-map was drawn from each, describing the primary values of importance to young people expressed through each method of research. These two values-maps were then combined to give an overall

conceptual values-map for young people in England and Wales at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The values-map derived from the focus groups and literature review has been used as the basis for the composition of the quantitative instrument measuring young people's values utilised in this study. The values-map from the focus groups and literature review was broken down into short statements, to examine the values of the young people over the areas identified as important to them.

This quantitative instrument was completed by 2,973 young people aged 13 to 15 years in schools throughout England and Wales. The returns were computer coded and analysed using SPSS (SPSS Inc., 1988), and the results are portrayed in this study. This study gives an overview of the young people's responses to the statements concerning their values, as a portrait of the values of young people. This study also compares their responses according to sex, age, and socio-economic group. In this way, this study begins to analyse the young people's responses and investigate factors of significance with relation to young people's values.

It is intended that the study presented here is a pilot for a much wider study. Reflections on the new quantitative instrument are presented in the Conclusion to this study in chapter 26, alongside areas where it is recognised that changes need to be made. Alongside this wider study of young people's values using the qualitative instrument it is also important that issues arising from the quantitative research are followed up as necessary with individual interviews, or focus group discussions. This is necessary to fulfill the circular



notion of the synthesis of methods approach, and the need for respect for the participants and data collected.

## **Terminology**

Having examined in detail the methodological approach and conduct of this study, definitions of six terms used throughout this study will now be given. Each of these terms is either unique to this study or used in this study in a very specific way. The six terms are: 'Young People's Values Project'; 'the study'; 'Halsall-Francis Values Inventory'; 'values-map'; 'value-area'; and 'young people'.

The term 'Young People's Values Project' refers to the project of which the data described in this dissertation are the first part. This first part of the Young People's Values Project has involved conducting the first qualitative aspect of the project, composing the quantitative instrument to be used, piloting this instrument, and presenting and analysing the initial results. The next part of the Young People's Values Project will involve amending the quantitative instrument in light of the results of this pilot survey, conducting further qualitative research into issues raised from this pilot study, and incorporating more young people as participants in the quantitative aspect of the study.

The term 'the study' refers to this dissertation, which describes the need for the Young People's Values Project, its methodology, the detail of the way in which the first part of the project was undertaken, its content, and the results. The term 'the study' defines the current body of work which describes the conception and first stages of the Young People's Values Project.

The term 'Halsall-Francis Values Inventory' (HaFVI) refers to the instrument devised in this study to quantitatively assess young people's values. It is based in the qualitative assessment of their values undertaken at the beginning of this project, as well as the survey of existing literature examining young people's values. It is therefore driven by young people's, rather than a researcher's, agenda. The HaFVI is presented in full in Appendix One of this study.

The term 'values-map' refers to the conceptual maps of young people's values devised and used in this study. These conceptual maps are derived from the literature review and focus groups conducted at the beginning of this study, and these have been combined to form the ultimate values-map from which the HaFVI is derived. In this study these conceptual values-maps take the form of lists of areas of values that are most important to the young people.

The term 'value-area' refers to an individual area of the values-map, and describes one area of importance in the young people's values. Each value-area may be made up of more than one part, however these smaller parts together constitute one value-area.

The term 'young people' refers to the participants, aged 13 to 15, in this study. However, there has been much discussion among scholars regarding appropriate terminology with which to refer to people of this age group. For example, Simmons and Wade (1984) specifically discuss the term 'adolescence', stating that it may have outlived its usefulness as it now carries stereotypical connotations of young people that may not be true for the



majority of them. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) summarise well these problems of terminology with relation to young people:

'kids' is patronising, 'teenagers' is similarly dismissive, 'adolescents' is unattractive and never used by the people so described... 'children' is insulting (although used by many professionals), 'youth' rhymes with 'uncouth', and even 'young adults' appears grudging in its recognition of status. 'Young people' is less objectionable, but bland (p. 3).

It is evident that scholars have not reached a consensus on this issue of appropriate terminology with which to refer to this age group. As can be seen from chapter four, a wide variety of terminology is used by the young people to refer to themselves and their peers, including the terms 'teenager' and 'kids'. Again, however, there is no consensus among the young people regarding terminology, and the context of their use of many terms indicates difficulties and a lack of identification among the young people with these terms. Therefore, here, the term 'young people' is employed, which, while perhaps 'bland', affords the group recognition and status.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, therefore, this Introduction has outlined and defined the Young People's Values Project of which this study presents the first part. The issues of stereotyping and discrimination which this study aims to address have been clearly outlined, as has the methodological approach, and the specific method of the study. This Introduction has also defined the specific terms utilised in this study.

With this awareness, the study itself can now be considered, beginning with the literature review. The literature review is presented in two parts: first literature examining young people's values from a qualitative perspective; and second literature examining young



people's values from a quantitative perspective. Each of these parts are presented separately here, in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW: QUALITATIVE STUDIES**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**Qualitative studies of young people's values**

*Young people in the North East of England*

*Young people in America*

*Young people and transitions*

*Young people and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland*

**Conclusion**

## **Summary**

This chapter examines four qualitative studies of young people's values in detail. Each study is examined in terms of its method, sample, findings, and weaknesses. It is concluded that while the studies contain important reviews and documentation of young people's values and attitudes, they also have weaknesses, particularly in their methodologies. Thus there is a need for an up-to-date study which accurately portrays young people's values. This chapter establishes a map of the values that are important to young people from the qualitative studies examined.

## **Introduction**

This chapter and the next comprise detailed reviews of existing studies of young people's values. A review of existing literature is important to ascertain the picture of young people's values that is already available. The two chapters discuss literature generated by the two contrasting methods of data collection, qualitative and quantitative. As the present study encompasses both methods of data collection, it is important to examine studies that use both methods.

As well as examining the content of existing studies, this chapter and the next evaluate the methodologies of these studies. This both informs the present study, and demonstrates the need for it.

This chapter focuses on data from qualitative studies. There are many existing studies using qualitative methods to examine young people's values, including, for example, Clark (1998), Dworkin, Larson and Hansen (2003), and Steen, Kachorek and Peterson (2003). Griffin (1993; 2004) demonstrates that evaluating effectively large numbers of studies of young people's values is a study in itself. The aim of the present study is to present original, accurate data of young people's values, using data from existing studies, but not solely portraying data from existing studies. Thus, a different method of consideration of existing studies, rather than sketching the findings of large numbers of studies, has been chosen. A detailed, but selective, approach to the evaluation of existing studies, rather than an outline approach to large numbers of studies, better meets the needs of the present study. A detailed, selective approach enables close consideration of the values expressed by young people in the selected studies; necessary for the accurate



portrayal of young people's values undertaken in the present study. It also enables detailed consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the methodologies of existing studies, which feeds into the design of methodology of the present study (of which an overview is given in chapter one, and more detail in chapters four and seven).

A number of criteria have been utilised to select the studies considered in both the qualitative and quantitative literature reviews. These criteria are that the studies selected should include: a good mix of studies considering young people's values in general and studies considering the values of groups of young people who are less frequently focused on; a good mix of older and more recent studies; and a good mix of studies undertaken both within and outside the United Kingdom. These criteria have been selected with the purpose of the literature review in mind; that the literature review feeds into the values-map on which the quantitative instrument derived in this study is based. Therefore, it is important to consider a mix of studies examining the values of young people generally and of specific groups of young people to ensure that the quantitative instrument derived in this study is widely accessible. That is, to ensure that it not only examines the values of 'mainstream' young people, but also the values of more marginalised young people. It is important to consider a mix of older and more recent studies to ensure that the findings of the present study are comparable with previous studies, and to assess the extent to which young people's values have changed, or not, over time. It is important to consider studies from both within and outside the United Kingdom to ensure that the quantitative instrument devised in this study is usable both within, and outside, the United Kingdom. While the present study focuses on young people in England and Wales, as stated in chapter one, this study is a pilot for a wider study which will be undertaken both

within and outside the United Kingdom. It is important to ensure that the assessment of values in the quantitative instrument is transferable outside the United Kingdom.

Four qualitative studies have been selected for consideration. There are: Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986); Lewis (1996); Barry (2001); and Brennan (2001). Each study is examined in terms of its method, sample, findings, and any weaknesses.

### **Qualitative studies of young people's values**

First, studies examining young people's values generally are considered. Two studies are examined here: Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986); and Lewis (1996).

#### ***Young people in the North East of England***

Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) examine the values of young people growing up in the North East of England during the 1980s. Their study was conducted over two and a half years as a longitudinal, qualitative study exploring young people's lives. They established good relationships with about 50 young people over this period.

The primary research methods used by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) were unstructured interviewing, observation (of individuals, couples, and groups), basic questionnaires, and completion of diaries by the young people. They deliberately employed a mix of methods to check the validity of the data collected. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) state that part of their reasoning for the choice of study and methods was the feeling that questionnaires alone prevent the portrayal of much of the subtlety of young people's lives. They made initial contact with young people through government



organisations and schemes, and this contact was maintained through interviews, discussions, and informal meetings. They also established contact with the friends and partners of their initial contacts. Work for the study was conducted within three different geographical areas in the North East of England to ensure that the study did not focus on one, perhaps atypical, area. While they wished to maintain a good mix of young people in their study, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) recognise that there was a degree of self-selection among their participants in terms of those that came to meetings and thus became involved in the research.

Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) emphasise that their study is driven by the agenda of the young people in terms of areas and values for discussion. They state that they encouraged the young people to decide on the main questions and areas to be discussed, rather than these being provided by the researchers. In terms of publication, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) further emphasise that the study was controlled by the young people, on the principle that they own the facts of their own lives and have the right to decide what should or should not be published. Anonymity and confidentiality were crucial elements of the study.

Although their study examines the lives of individual young people in the North East of England, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) state that the young people's lives could not be understood without reference to the ways in which power and wealth are distributed in Britain, referring specifically to class, patriarchy, race, and the marginal status of young people. They identify three major themes from their study. These are: age; gender; and region. Within these, other themes of importance that are apparent from



their study include: friendships; work and unemployment (the young people in the study were primarily recent school leavers trying to find a job); family; local area; lack of vision for the future; and discrimination and stereotyping.

Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) portray many aspects of family life of importance to the young people. Family relationships are revealed as sources of tension, but also of support. The young people reported very close contacts with their families, and lived in close proximity to both their immediate and extended families. Relationships between daughters and fathers were most frequently referred to, as they were sources of tension. In comparison with sons, daughters reported much greater control by their fathers. The family life observed in the study was primarily traditional, based on a gendered division of both power and labour.

The issue of work and employment arose as having a great effect on the young people's lives. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) state that during the period of their study, almost half of their sample experienced periods of unemployment that were officially defined as long-term (52 weeks or more). Furthermore, they emphasise that young people who were unemployed suffered a double 'stigma', that of being 'on the dole', and that of being young. They describe the two main effects of unemployment as being poverty, which brings humiliation, and also depression. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) describe that, overall, the effects of unemployment were that the young people were 'stuck at home, growing older, but hardly more in control of their lives than they were at primary school' (p. 146).

Those young people who were in work stated that they were both ill-treated and underpaid. Vocational training was criticised by the young people as being ineffective. In spite of this, it is emphasised that they were still very eager for employment, even on modest wages.

Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) state that the issue of greatest importance to the young people was their friends and social life. They observe that the young people discussed this to the greatest extent, especially relationships with the opposite sex. Many different social activities with friends were undertaken, for example: going to the cinema; going to concerts; playing darts and pool; playing football or squash; going fishing; going camping; watching videos; and going out drinking. Five major types of friendship groups were observed in the study: all female; all male; mixed sex; best friend of same sex; and relationships with partners. Alcohol was an important aspect of the young people's social life, and underage drinking was common. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) summarise that alcohol was consumed as a means of socialising, and also as a means of escape. Moreover, crime was observed as a considerable part of the young people's lives and the society in which they lived. Crime is described by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) as being as much a traditional pastime as drinking or keeping pigeons.

The young people demonstrated an intense sense of belonging to their local area. This 'localism' is seen by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) as having both positive and negative aspects. They argue that this deep attachment to their locality among the young people came from a knowledge and understanding of the geography of the area, and a feeling of being part of a close structure of relationships, giving a shared system of



meaning and values. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) see this meaning and values as based in a basic attitude of helping others, which they interpret as coming from the danger element involved with working in coal mines, on which many communities in the North East are built.

The positive aspects of localism as described by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) are that it fostered mutual support, cooperation, and friendliness among young people from the same area. However, they also describe that among the negative aspects of localism is the fact that localism became a wall behind which new ideas, for example, multiculturalism, could be ignored. Localism, although fostering a deep commitment within the young people to their local area, also fostered deep hostility to nearby towns, encouraging long running feuds between areas. A further negative effect of localism was in encouraging stereotypes; many of the racist views that Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) describe that the young people held were derived from local stereotypes. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) maintain that the young people from poorer backgrounds were more open to the negative effects of localism, as they had fewer opportunities to travel due to the expense. The area in which the young people lived, therefore, had a huge impact on their lives, in terms of employment and opportunities, and also in terms of ideas.

Discrimination and stereotyping were a large part of the young people's lives in that the young people reported that they were both victims of discrimination and also perpetrators of it. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) describe that the young people as a group were the target of discrimination, both because they were young, and because they were

unemployed. They argue that the media generalised the adverse behaviour of a few young people on to all young people, which led to young people being discriminated against. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) depict clear differences between the way the young people viewed themselves, and the way they were viewed by older adults and in the media. They maintain that, although the young people hoped for tolerance from older adults, this was rarely achieved, and the young people were often more tolerant than their elders. Within the group of young people, different groups were also the subject of stereotyping and discrimination. These stereotypes, as emphasised by Smith (1970), were frequently based on easily observable criteria such as hairstyles or clothes, by which the young people could be easily 'categorised' (Coffield, Borrill and Marshall, 1986, p. 111). Although Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) highlight the gap between the young people and older adults as unacceptable, they state that it is not new: 'the unwillingness of one generation to accept the next is a recurring theme in all writing about young people from Homer's *Iliad* onwards' (p. 199).

However, the young people themselves are identified by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) as encouraging stereotypes and discrimination, while being aware of the discrimination against themselves as young and unemployed. The society in which the young people lived and functioned is described by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) as both patriarchal and frequently racist. They state that the young people took on these ideas as part of their lives. For example, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) maintain that the young women and men in the study held opinions about each other based on stereotypes of the supposed biological characteristics of females and males, and behaved towards each other according to these set beliefs. Furthermore, the effects of localism



frequently meant that they did not know differently; they were not exposed to other ideas or experiences of ways of relating to females and males.

Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) describe that the young people had a limited sense of collective ideas, as well as a restricted view of their own lives. They demonstrated this by not talking about, or having, many aspirations for the future. Their main focus was enjoying themselves now, and 'living for today'. When asked about their aims in life, many of the young people would not contemplate moving out of the North East, or even their own area, to find a job, although Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) report that about a third of the main sample of young people did want to travel abroad at some point. This restricted view can also be seen through Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) illustration that the young people did not see any connection between national politics and their own lives, and they viewed politics in general with boredom.

From their detailed study of the lives of young people in the North East, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) state overall that the young people were extremely marginalised, both because of their age, and the geographical region in which they were growing up. In conclusion, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) maintain that the attitude of some older adults, that the gap between the generations is unbridgeable, is perhaps the single greatest obstacle to improving young people's lives. Similarly to Musgrove (1964), they argue that what emerged from their study with greatest clarity was the rejection of the young by adults. In attempting to explain this rejection in the face of evidence that young people as a group are not primarily deviant, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) highlight the idea that 'some of the dominant psychological theories about adolescence

... may be partly responsible for the widespread acceptance of adolescence as a deviant category' (p. 211). They emphasise the frequent divergence between academic theory and the real world of young people. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) maintain that either young people must be incorporated into society, or they will become a large, and apathetic underclass (see, for example, Murray, 1984; 1990; 1996, for discussion of Murray's theory of underclass and its characteristics, how it relates to Britain, and the 'developing debate'). Therefore, it is clear that a new study is now necessary, in order to check Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) statement against the lived experience of young people today, and thus further reconcile academic theory with young people's lives.

This description of young people's values given by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) highlights the salience of their study. Many of the main benefits of their study are in their acute observations of the place of young people in society, and in their highlighting of discrimination against young people. Their study also sets good precedents in terms of methodology. However, it is also apparent that there are weaknesses in their study. One of these is the age of the study. It is recognised that the study is very much a product of its time. It may be that some of the primary findings of Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) are applicable to young people today, but a new study would be required to demonstrate this. Moreover, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) study is limited in terms of its specific geographical focus. For conclusions to be drawn that have value in terms, for example, of policy for young people, the study would need repetition in other geographical areas. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) study, therefore, provides valuable data to feed into the values-map for the present study, and sets valuable



methodological principles for the present study, yet through its time and geographical limitations, demonstrates the importance of a new study of young people's values.

### *Young people in America*

The second study giving a general overview of young people's values examined here is Lewis (1996). This study is rooted within the tradition of oral history, in which the young people interviewed are the storytellers. Similarly to Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986), Lewis (1996) begins with the media portrayal of young people, of which she states:

Relying on the media would have led me to believe that, at worst, most teenagers are reducible to being either victims or perpetrators of evil - and that, at best, they are generally empty vessels without insight into their own lives or ours (p.16).

From this, Lewis (1996) moves to documenting the stories, thoughts, and feelings of young people in America. She interviewed 60 young people from many different backgrounds. The interviews were semi-structured, and consisted of four or five basic questions. Lewis (1996) preferred to follow the young person's lead in the interview, to enable them to speak about what was most important to them. The interviews are recorded in the book in the first person voice of the young people, as continuous prose.

Lewis (1996) states that, for the purposes of publication, young people featured who were under the age of 18 were given new names, for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity. She reports that those over the age of 18 were given the choice of whether or not to use their own name, and most chose to do so. The names of family members and names of friends, and at times a parent's profession and the geographical location of the storyteller, were also changed.



In identifying her sample, Lewis (1996) states that her study was not aiming to be scientifically exact, but rather was aiming to gather an evocative group of young people, who differed in age, and in geographic, racial, and social background. The young people were recruited for the study initially through friends and contacts of the author, and then through a snowballing technique (see Barry, 2001). Lewis (1996) acknowledges the role of the researcher in her study, recognising that who she is, and her contacts, affected who she included in the study. She accepts that a different person might have developed a different book. This does not, however, detract from the validity of the stories told, and the values expressed by the young people who are included.

Examination of the stories told by the young people and documented by Lewis (1996) reveals a variety of values and issues of importance to the young people. The most frequent values and issues of importance include: discrimination; the media; technology; social concerns; school; importance of friends; concern about sex; family; aims in life; anxiety, particularly a fear of death; and core values. These are examined in turn here.

Many of the young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) described that they felt discriminated against in being seen as part of their parents' possessions, rather than as individuals in their own right. They were, however, determined that they should be treated with respect. The influence of stereotyping was felt in school, where the young people reported that they felt labelled and judged by teachers because of the way they dressed. They also stated that they felt teachers discriminated against them racially. One 18 year old male described the situation as he observed it, that young people were one group in society that could still be openly discriminated against:

“Back in the teens, women fought for the right to vote - they got it. Back in the sixties, blacks fought for equal rights - they got it. In the eighties and now, homosexuals are fighting for equal rights and acceptance. There’s nobody out there defending teenagers. There’s nobody in Congress or the state legislature or the city council, there’s no organisations” (Lewis, 1996, p. 88).

The young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) also felt stereotyped in, and by, the media. They considered that the media only portrayed stories about young people who are violent, who kill their school mates, or who are pregnant. Yet the young people also recognised the impact the media had in their lives in terms of influencing their actions and choices. Following on from this, the example was given of the strong effect that bands have on young people, in that how bands dress and act affects the way some young people dress and act. They also highlighted the role of advertising. They recognised their value to advertisers, both as recipients, so that advertisers could promote and sell things to them, and as a group to be represented as ‘villains’, to sell things to other people.

A further issue reported as important by the young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) was technology and information. Lewis (1996) describes the young people as ‘the most plugged-in generation ever’ (p. 17). The young people depicted themselves as surrounded by radios, televisions, videos, films, and especially computers; and emphasised the importance of the Internet and e-mail. Lewis (1996) highlights that the young people are surrounded by, and have access to, huge amounts of information. They therefore see themselves as much more sophisticated than young people of their age 20 years ago.

The young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) were concerned about many social issues. These included, for example, the environment and pollution, and violence and guns.



Drugs were also a source of concern, particularly when seen as leading to violence. Other concerns raised by the young people included homelessness, unemployment, crime, and the levels of pride and greed in society. One 16 year old male stated: "Society going downhill stems from pride and greed, the way I see it" (Lewis, 1996, p. 78). The young people also felt that society is too focused on individuals. Overall, they wanted to make a positive contribution to the world. Politically, some of the young people felt that they should now have the opportunity to vote.

School was highlighted by the young people as important in their lives in many ways. They highlighted that school was of social importance, as the primary place to meet friends on a day-to-day basis. School also greatly impacted their lives through the stress caused by homework, work to be done at school, and pressure to achieve. The young people expressed concern about the quality of the education they were receiving, particularly given the importance of education for the labour market. They demonstrated a sense of things 'running out', including educational opportunities and jobs, which made them feel a great sense of haste. Moreover, although some of the young people reported experiencing racism from both pupils and teachers in schools, it was also felt that the best way to combat racism was through education, particularly in schools.

Friends, as well as being an issue connected with school, were described by the young people in Lewis (1996) as a very important part of their lives overall. While the young people stated that friends and their peers were a source of great support, they also reported that they could be a source of great stress, through the effects of peer pressure. Peer pressure was particularly felt by young people in small communities, through judgments



on clothes and opinions. The young people were often 'sorted' by their peers through their interests. The importance of fashion was emphasised, through, for example, being laughed at for not wearing the 'right' clothes. Some of the young people argued that boys were less 'cliquey' regarding clothes and fashion than girls.

The young people participating in Lewis (1996) described relationships between girls and boys as a source of concern. Sex was seen as an important issue by many of the young people interviewed. Many of them were afraid of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV. They also felt that there was peer pressure on young people to have sex, especially pressure on girls from boys.

Lewis (1996) depicts that, along with friends, families were stated by many of the young people to be one of the most important parts of their lives. One 16 year old girl summarised this:

"Family's really important. They should always be there for you, to back you up. The nagging is supposed to be there, and support, and a shoulder to cry on" (p. 52).

As well as being a source of support, however, the young people described that there were also negative effects from their families. Many of the young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) came from difficult family backgrounds, or had suffered abuse as a child. Family issues also impacted on the young people's lives through, for example, arguments with their siblings or questions of parental trust. Yet some of the young people also recognised the influence that their families, particularly parents, had on them, for example in their musical tastes. The influence of their families was the only way in which the young people described religion as being important in their lives. Religion was particularly

important in this way in minority communities, in which the young people described it as either a source of support and privilege, or as a source of tension between the influence of the family and the influence of friends.

The young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) expressed much about their aims in life. Many, especially the girls, had specific aims in terms of careers, for example to be a doctor, an actress, or a horse rider. The young people also often expressed a desire to travel, to go to college, to get married, and to get a good job that provided enough money to live on, and to provide for their future family. There was a great contrast within the group of young people interviewed between those who had very realistic expectations for their aims in life, and those who were more idealistic. Overall, however, the young people expressed a strong sense of aspiration for the future.

Many of the young people interviewed by Lewis (1996) also reported high levels of anxiety. This was expressed with relation to many issues, for example, school, peer pressure, and social issues, and seemed to be a substantial part of their everyday existence. Some of the young people were particularly concerned about death. One 16 year old female expressed this fear: "But the worst thing is that I die before my mother" (p. 52).

In examining the young people's core values, it is apparent from Lewis (1996) that the young people emphasised the importance of freedom, especially the freedom to be themselves. They saw this as crucial to being happy.



Lewis (1996), therefore, through her portrayal of the stories of young people in America, demonstrates something of the values and issues that are important to them. Many of these issues are similar to those portrayed in Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1996). While recognising the importance of the work portrayed by Lewis (1996), there are also weaknesses with her study. Two main weaknesses are identified here.

First, the language used by Lewis (1996) in referring to young people is often problematic. For example, she states that:

The one thing that hasn't changed is the adolescent need to bond - like small herd animals, most young people prefer to travel in packs (p. 14).

While her point may be valid, the language used by Lewis (1996) with reference to young people; 'small herd animals', 'packs', is inappropriate. This language would be condemned if used with reference to any other group in society. Thus, while arguing in her text against stereotyping and discrimination against young people, Lewis (1996) herself appears to be perpetrating it. The title of Lewis' (1996) work ("*A Totally Alien Life-Form*" - *Teenagers*) can also be questioned, as it appears to be stating, rather than questioning, the assertion it makes. While this assertion may be questioned within the book, it is doubtful whether having such an assertion as the title for a book does much to challenge common conceptions. Through unquestioned reiteration of stereotypes in this way, Lewis (1996) does little to challenge them. Furthermore, Lewis (1996) uses the terms 'teenagers', 'adolescents', and 'young people' interchangeably throughout the book, with no reference to her use of terminology, thus suggesting a lack of thought on the issue.



Second, some of the ethics of Lewis' (1996) study can be questioned, particularly regarding issues of confidentiality and respect. For example, while Lewis (1996) appears to emphasise concern for confidentiality and anonymity through changing some of the young people's names, it is arguable that this process is not effectively undertaken. For example, in some cases the real name of the storyteller is given, and in these cases changing the name of their family members will not do much to protect the anonymity of the family. This begs the question of the ethics of a study in which some facts of people's lives are published, perhaps without their permission. The issue of the real confidentiality of the interviews conducted by Lewis (1996) is also challenged through her documentation of some of the conversations she had with young people's parents following an interview in which she discusses details of the interview.

Overall, therefore, Lewis' (1996) oral histories are important in expressing the values of young people, and the stories she presents are important in themselves in this respect. However, Lewis' (1996) limited presentation and remarks, and the design of the study, suggest that it is ill-thought through and uninformed.

Having explored two studies which generally examine the values of young people, studies which qualitatively examine the values of young people less frequently focused on are now considered. Two studies are examined here: Barry (2001); and Brennan (2001).

### *Young people and transitions*

Barry (2001) examines the effects of life transitions on the values, lives, and attitudes of young people. She focuses on four groups of young people: young mothers; young

participants; young care leavers; and young workers. Barry (2001) compiles findings from studies among these four separate groups of young people in different areas of the United Kingdom. The findings are drawn together and general conclusions are established from consideration of the values of the four groups of young people together.

The aim of Barry's (2001) research was to explore young people's views and experiences of growing up in the United Kingdom. Through these, the values and issues that are most important in the young people's lives are apparent. Barry (2001) sees her research as giving the young people a forum in which they could voice their concerns, experiences, and aspirations about growing up and negotiating the transition to adulthood.

Barry (2001) questions the standard model of transition from childhood to adulthood. She argues that this standard model suggests an age-determined linear progression from the confined dependence of childhood to the autonomy and independence of adulthood. She argues that this model is misleading, and denies children and young people their rights as citizens.

Barry's (2001) study was designed specifically to give young people a voice and allow them to reflect on their own experiences. Throughout the project, the young people were involved in planning and implementing the research alongside the research team. The research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with young people. The young people taking part were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous, and were given leaflets to explain the research and their role in it. The



interviews lasted an average of two hours. Some interviews were conducted over two or more visits depending on the needs and wishes of the participant.

At the beginning of each interview the participant was asked to list the issues they thought were important to young people, and then to pick three issues which they would like to talk about. Although this potentially meant that each interview was based on a different set of factors, Barry (2001) states that there was surprising commonality between the interviews. The interviews were also interspersed with written and visual exercises. These helped boost the concentration levels of the participants, and facilitated further discussion of the issues raised.

At the end of the interview, the young people were offered a payment of five pounds as an acknowledgment of the energy and time they had given to the research. Further, because of the sensitivity of many of the issues raised in the interviews, the researchers ensured that support was available for the participant following the interview. Many of the young people commented that the interviews had been an enjoyable experience. One 16 year old male observed that: "Nobody's ever done that, sat down an' just talked...about my life." (Barry, 2001, p. 23).

For the purposes of analysis, the transcripts from the interviews were coded onto a database (NUD\*IST 4) (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty. Ltd., 1985) according to an agreed list of themes. These themes had been identified by steering groups of young people during the progression of the interviews, based also on questions arising from the interview schedule. These steering groups also commented on the reports written from



the study, working particularly with researchers on the recommendations of the reports.

They were also involved in the launches of the reports.

Barry (2001) describes that the sample for her study was mainly assembled through identification of groups of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, who would have been likely to have responsibility earlier than might be expected for their age. The initial sample for the research was composed of young people with whom the sponsoring agency (Save the Children) already had contact. The sample then grew through a snowballing technique, whereby participants already involved in the project were asked to identify other young people who might be interested and able to help with the research. The sample included 108 young people aged between 14 and 27.

Barry (2001) distinguishes some key areas of importance to the young people in her research. These are: friendship; family, including coping with adverse family circumstances and abuse; school; employment, including issues of money; being in care, including the issue of contact with professional workers; voluntary and participatory work; and having children of their own. Issues of citizenship and discrimination are also discussed by Barry (2001) as important issues arising from her findings. These areas are discussed in turn here.

The young people participating in Barry's (2001) study depict their friends as their most important source of support. Barry (2001) states that this finding is not surprising: 'given that all children spend the best part of 11 years at school in close proximity to people of their own age and experience' (p. 48). They describe this support from friends as in the

form of having someone to talk to about their problems, someone they can trust and who is not judgmental, and someone who may be able to empathise with their feelings. However, many of the young people stated that they felt they lacked social skills and confidence. They felt that this could have been boosted through encouragement from adults, and opportunities to become involved in activities. As a result of this lack of social skills and confidence, many of the young people described that they depended greatly on themselves for company, and internalised, rather than shared, their problems.

Many of the young people in Barry's (2001) study emphasised the importance of school as a good place to meet their friends. However, they did not hold their experiences of learning at school in high regard. They felt that paid work, more than school, helped them to be responsible for themselves and others. The young people described that subjects covered at school were irrelevant, boring, and badly taught. They felt that they should have been taught different things at school, including, for example, confidence and aggressiveness, budgeting, and other skills relevant to living independently of the family home. The young people also reported experiencing bullying at school, from both other pupils and teachers. However, some of the young people described good experiences of teachers, in that teachers had acted as advocates and provided a source of support for them. Some of the young people regretted not having worked harder at school. They suggested, however, that this was because they were not considered important participants in planning the curriculum, or in running the school.

The issue of family was seen as very important by the young people participating in Barry's (2001) study, having both a positive and negative influence on them. Many of



them described difficult family circumstances. These included having a child of their own at a young age, being the primary carer for a parent, or having to leave their own family and grow up in care. Many of the young people stated that they had to take on heavy responsibilities during childhood, which brought maturity. However, many of the young people, both females and males, felt that they had missed out on the support of a mother during childhood, and that this was the primary thing they would want. Fathers were not mentioned by most of the young people interviewed, and when they were mentioned, it was often negatively.

Many of the young people's in Barry's (2001) study described the issue of being, or having been, in care as very important for them. They stated that one of the main effects of this was feeling inadequately emotionally supported. However, as with teachers, some felt that they had received positive support from social workers, with social workers acting as advocates on their behalf. Some young people felt a loss of role and responsibility on being taken into care; having previously had the responsibility of caring for others, and they resented loss of this responsibility as it meant loss of status and role. Others, however, suggested that going into care was a welcome relief from the responsibility of caring for themselves or their family.

Some young people also detailed that they had experienced problems when they left care, having difficulties with the transition between living in care and the skills needed for living in general society. It was felt by many of the young people that adequate provision was not made for them in this respect.

'Young workers' were one of the groups specifically targeted by Barry (2001) in establishing the original sample for her study. This group was targeted because so many young people work in the United Kingdom (over 1.4 million at the time of the study), yet there remain questions over the susceptibility of these young people to exploitation, and over the value of this work in enhancing their future job prospects.

Barry (2001) demonstrates that almost half of the participants in her study (53 out of 108) had undertaken part-time work while still at school. Of the participants in the study, the youngest known age for starting work was nine, although the mean age for starting work was 13, which is the age at which young people can legally work on a part-time basis. However, the participants in Barry's (2001) study felt that they gained skills from working, that they did not learn in school, were invaluable to their future lives. Many of the young people who worked part-time reported that this enabled them to be more responsible for others and themselves, as at work they were in an adult environment, taking responsibility and being acknowledged for the work they did, and being accountable to others and to themselves for their actions. However, some of the young people also reported being unfairly treated in their work, and receiving too little remuneration for the level of responsibility they were undertaking. Some of the young people also felt that their part-time work affected their homework set from school. Employment was also stated to be the most important issue by the young people when thinking about their future, the largest proportion (80%) stated that a good job was their main aspiration for the future.



Similar to the positive skills that many young people felt they gained through part-time paid work, other young people felt they gained through voluntary or participatory work in youth organisations. They stated that through such experiences they gained, for example, communication skills, such as talking to others, listening, diplomacy, negotiation, and assertiveness.

Another of the key groups of young people focused on by Barry (2001) was young mothers. These young people stated that the experience of having a child of their own enabled them to develop skills and understanding that they would not have gained elsewhere, for example, in school. They felt that they especially had to 'grow up, mature and act more responsibly at a much earlier age than their peers' (Barry, 2001, p. 33). This was emphasised by one 21 year old young mother who had become pregnant at 18:

"You have to grow up very, very fast because you have another life to look after and you need to make decisions quicker and stick with them really" (p. 33).

Having considered these views and experiences of the young people, Barry (2001) discusses issues of discrimination and citizenship for young people. She states that the difficulties experienced by young people in negotiating the distance between childhood and adulthood leads to stereotyping and discrimination against young people. Barry (2001) argues that the majority of the young people in her study had maturity beyond their years, and that there is a case for redefining the concepts of 'childhood' and 'adulthood', and making rights for young people and adults dependent not on age, but rather on their capacity to take on responsibilities. Barry (2001) describes discrimination against young people as evidenced in the following ways: in the undermining of young people's rights to participation in society; in much of the discourse on citizenship, which marginalises

young people; and in the strong feelings of young people that they are not being listened to and are not having their views or wishes acted on. Barry (2001) maintains that her findings suggest that adults have less respect for young people than their levels of competence merit, stating that:

The differing ages at which adult status is seen to be achieved and the concurrent restrictions on young people by age together create an environment for young people which undermines their rights and minimises their responsibilities (p. 10).

Barry (2001) argues that citizenship could play an important role in addressing discrimination against young people. She emphasises the importance of young people playing a full role in the political process. For example, Barry (2001) argues that it is important for young people to have a vote, based not on an arbitrary chronological age irrespective of emotional or intellectual capacity, but rather on individual capability. Furthermore, the young people participating in Barry's (2001) study wanted better and more accessible information on their rights and opportunities for the future, and more proactive support from the government.

Therefore, Barry (2001) adds understanding to the values and issues of importance to young people, and also contributes a great deal to the debate regarding discrimination against young people. Barry's (2001) methodology also provides some examples of good practice, including brainstorming and listing issues that are important to young people at the beginning of the interviews. These provide an overview of what the young people think is important for young people overall, before the issues are narrowed down to those specific to that person.



However, there are some weaknesses with Barry's (2001) study. Two main weaknesses will be examined, which are mainly concerned with Barry's (2001) sample. First, the selection of the initial sample from young people who already had contact with the sponsoring organisation meant that the sample was to some extents self-selecting, even within the specific groups on which the study focused. Young people who had previous contact with the sponsoring organisation could have adopted a specific viewpoint through contact with the organisation, which may possibly have affected the findings of Barry's (2001) study.

Second, each of the specific groups of young people taking part in Barry's (2001) study were drawn from a specific geographical area, for example, all of the young mothers were from Northern Ireland, and all of the young participators were from Northern England. The experiences recorded, therefore, can only be said to apply to young people in those particular circumstances, from that particular area. However, Barry (2001) appears to use the findings to apply to young people universally.

Therefore, the aims and argument of Barry's (2001) study are seen to be of importance and as providing valuable data to feed into the values-map for the present study. However, it is recognised that her limited sample presents some problems with relation to the argument that she wishes to make.

### ***Young people and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland***

Brennan (2001) examines change regarding young people's affiliation to the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland through work with young people who may be described as

'lapsed' members of the Roman Catholic Church. These young people may be described as not frequently focused on, as studies of religious young people often centre on those affiliated with a church (see, for example, Wright, Frost and Wisecarver, 1993; Smith, Lundquist-Denton, Faris and Regnerus, 2002). Furthermore, young people who are 'lapsed' members of a religious group may be described as marginalised, in that their values may not fit well with either those of the religious group, or those from a more secular perspective. Brennan (2001) explores this with reference to socio-economic change in society, and the effect this has on the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of young people. Overall, Brennan (2001) concludes that:

contemporary Western youth culture, which is characterised by relativism, undifferentiated pluralism, and a deep suspicion of institutions, adversely affects the possibility of the young people's commitment to religious institutions (p. 9).

Brennan (2001) employs a mix of qualitative and quantitative data in his overall findings. His original material is qualitative, based on interviews with young people. It is these data that will be focused on in evaluation here of his findings. Overall, he complements the data from these interviews with quantitative data from other sources concerning religious change in Ireland (for example Phadraig, 1974). He also examines theoretical evidence for secularisation in the Western world.

In formulating the method for his study, Brennan (2001) notes criticisms of quantitative surveys put forward by other scholars, for example that detail and nuance in responses is lost in requiring respondents to answer in precoded categories, or that there is no opportunity for dialogue between respondent and researcher. Thus, Brennan (2001) made use of detailed interviews for his original exploration of young people's lives. However,



he notes that statistics from scientific surveys are useful in demonstrating changing patterns in religious belief and practice. He therefore grounds his interviews within the context of information gained from quantitative surveys of religious belief and practice.

Brennan (2001) conducted in-depth interviews with five young people. He does not specify the ages of the young people, although the text suggests that they may be in their early twenties. Three interviews were undertaken with each participant. Brennan (2001) aimed to gain current and retrospective data concerning the young people's human, cultural, and religious experiences. Brennan (2001) does not specify how the young people participating in his study were selected. However, they all grew up within religious families with church connections. Four out of the five young people come from strongly Roman Catholic homes and backgrounds, and they all attended Roman Catholic schools.

From an examination of Brennan's (2001) data regarding the young people's human, cultural, and religious experiences, their values and the issues that are important to them, are evident. Seven value areas of importance are apparent. These are: religion and spirituality; changes in society, including technology, the media, and travel; family; friends; social concerns; area; and core values. These are examined in turn here.

Religion is the primary theme in Brennan (2001). His central topic of investigation is the decline in young people's affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church. Overall, Brennan (2001) concludes that although young people are suspicious of religious institutions, they remain open to spirituality. Brennan (2001) notes that the young people interviewed were

critical of the Roman Catholic Church, and that within the interviews the Church was largely described negatively, and did not have a positive influence in bringing meaning to the young people's lives. Yet, Brennan (2001) asserts that overall, the attitude of the young people to the Roman Catholic Church can be characterised not as enmity, but as indifference.

Brennan (2001) makes connections between the way in which young people relate to the Roman Catholic Church, and the concepts of modernity and post-modernity in society. He states that the young people's attitude of indifference to the Church suggests the influence of post-modernity, whereby the young people are at least spiritually open; rather than modernity, whereby the young people would be more hostile to religion. Thus Brennan (2001) maintains that the young people have a 'spiritual hunger' (p. 39), but remain suspicious of religious institutions.

The interviews conducted by Brennan (2001) also demonstrate that changes in society such as technology, the media, and travel are important for the young people. Brennan (2001) maintains that young people are more affected than the population in general by the 'technological revolution' (p. 55). He also asserts that young people are more passive towards, and uncritical of, values that are communicated through the media. He states that:

A major problem with the multi-media culture is that excessive, passive viewing of the visual media is congealing children's and young people's imaginations (p. 56).

However, the data provided by Brennan (2001) from his interviews do not support this. For example, when later discussing the findings from his interviews, Brennan (2001)



states that an unexpected finding is the limited extent to which popular culture and the media influenced the young people's lives during childhood and adolescence.

The young people emphasised the importance of travel in their lives. They frequently undertook travel during, and just after, time at university, and travel was also important to them as an aim in life. The young people recognised the great influence that travel had on their values, maintaining that travel especially gave them an appreciation of diversity in experiencing different people, from different backgrounds, with different ways of life.

Families were repeatedly emphasised as important by the young people interviewed by Brennan (2001), particularly through being an influence on their values. Brennan (2001) argues that the strong language used by the young people when speaking of the influence of their parents and home environment demonstrates how powerful this influence was for the young people. Brennan (2001) sees a clear connection between care and influence, stating that 'the people who care most for the rising generation will have the greatest influence on them' (p. 123).

The young people also greatly valued friendship and their friends. When discussing the friends they had during adolescence, many of the young people discussed consumption of alcohol, which often began for the young people and their friends around age 15. From this, Brennan (2001) states that:

One of the most marked changes in the contemporary Irish cultural landscape is the dramatic rise in the numbers of adolescents consuming significant amounts of alcohol (p. 105).

The young people cited peer group influence as important in relation to factors such as fashion and music. Friends and their peer group were an important part of the young people's lives during their school years, and the importance of friendship to them remained prevalent.

The young people also reported a high level of concern for the poor, oppressed, and socially deprived, and also environmental concerns. However, while the young people themselves expressed social concern, Brennan (2001) notes that none of the young people demonstrated awareness of the increasing orientation of the Roman Catholic Church towards such issues. Regarding environmental concerns, the young people expressed an appreciation of nature and a desire for the restoration of ecological balance.

Brennan (2001) also identifies their local area as important to the young people. Whether the young people grew up in a rural or urban area is of great importance to them as individuals, and affects their values. For example, one young person stated that: "I think people from rural Ireland have very different values and beliefs from people in big cities; it is like two different cultures" (Brennan, 2001, p. 108). Urbanisation was further identified as being important with regard to the young people's values. This is also emphasised by MacGreil (1996) in discussing the negative effects of urbanisation on religious practice and belief.

Brennan (2001) discusses the young people's core values. He maintains that the young people have a set of primary values which include: happiness; love; friendship; honesty;



freedom; life itself; good health; experiences of birth and death; and experiences of pain or hurt. Moreover he states that:

What gives ultimate meaning to the lives of the majority of those who participated in this study is a belief that they have a message to bring or a contribution to make in their world. (p. 126).

Brennan (2001) maintains that, overall, the 'manner in which young people experience reality is culture bound' (p. 128) and thus their ideas, values, and attitudes are primarily determined by the type of culture to which they are exposed. Additionally he argues that young people's motivation when making decisions in their lives comes from personal experiences, and that this overrides any other factor.

Brennan (2001), therefore, portrays the seven value areas described above as of primary importance in the lives of the young people in his study, particularly highlighting young people's core values, and their understanding of religion and spirituality. The strengths of Brennan's (2001) work are the ways in which he discusses these understandings of religion, spirituality, and core values, in an effort to find ways in which the Roman Catholic Church can re-engage with young people. However, there are also weaknesses with Brennan's (2001) study: first with the method of the study; and second with its overall approach.

There are five primary weaknesses with the method used by Brennan (2001). First, there is no description of how Brennan (2001) recruited the sample of young people to take part in his study. Although his study is a qualitative study and thus not generalisable, he does make some general assertions from his interview data. He would be better able to support

these assertions if the basis for his selection of participants was apparent. The second weakness with Brennan's (2001) method also concerns his sample, as a sample of only five young people is small, particularly for the kind of generalisations that he wishes to make.

The third weakness with Brennan's (2001) method relates to the ages of the young people participating in his study. Brennan (2001) does not specify the ages of the young people participating in his study, however a reading of the text suggests that they might be in their twenties. For the purposes of accuracy, the ages of the young people should be given. Furthermore, it is questioned whether it is appropriate with relation to Brennan's (2001) aims to include young people of this age in his study. In aiming to find ways in which the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland can re-engage with young people, it may have been more appropriate to involve a younger sample who had more current engagement with the Church, rather than interviewing young adults whose reflections on how things were may no longer be relevant.

The fourth weakness with Brennan's (2001) method concerns the way in which he uses data from his interviews with young people to relate to quantitative data he reports. There is no consideration of whether or not these data are comparable, and whether the data discussed relates to similar groups of people.

The fifth weakness with Brennan's (2001) method concerns the ethics of his study. There is no mention in the text of whether or not the names of the people used are their real names, or whether the names of family members or circumstances have been changed to



protect anonymity, as in Lewis (1996). There is also no mention of whether any agreement concerning anonymity or confidentiality was made with the young people. Overall, therefore, there is little sense of confidentiality and anonymity in Brennan's (2001) presentation of his interviews, and little detail is given about the way in which the interviews were structured or conducted.

Alongside weaknesses in Brennan's (2001) method, there are also two major weaknesses in his overall approach. First, a reading of Brennan's (2001) text suggests that he does not engage with the young people and their views, but rather is reporting about the young people. This further propagates a 'them' and 'us' situation, in which young people are constructed as 'the Other' (Paechter, 1998).

Second, a further difficulty with Brennan's (2001) overall approach is the assertions that he makes about young people in his introduction, some of which are later contradicted in the data he presents from his interviews. Thus Brennan (2001) appears to hold a particular view of young people that he wishes to propagate, although he does not necessarily have evidence for this. This serves to reinforce a stereotype of young people that needs to be broken down before young people will be able to re-engage with people and institutions that uphold the stereotype.

Overall, therefore, Brennan's (2001) study demonstrates some important and interesting observations concerning young people in Ireland and their experiences with relation to the Roman Catholic Church. These provide valuable data to feed into the values-map for the present study. However, weaknesses in Brennan's (2001) methodology and approach

mean that his study does not fulfill his aims. These weaknesses are important for consideration with relation to the methodology of the present study.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined four qualitative studies of young people's values, considering the data from these studies, and also their weaknesses. From this detailed review, two important conclusions can be drawn. The first conclusion concerns the weaknesses of the studies, which demonstrate the need for the current study and indicate considerations for its design. The second conclusion concerns the map of young people's values drawn from this qualitative literature review.

First, many of the weaknesses with the studies considered here relate to the methodologies or scope of the studies. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) carried out an important detailed study that is, however, limited by its age, and also in its specific geographical location. Lewis (1996) documents young people's values and views, but her study is greatly limited through its language, sample, and selective presentation, and potentially by its ethical approach. Barry (2001) particularly addresses discrimination against young people, and sets important methodological precedents in including young people in the design and work of the study, but her study is limited in terms of the sample. Brennan (2001) attempts to go some way towards bridging the gap between young people and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, but his study is also limited in terms of the sample, use of data, ethics, and overall approach.



There is therefore a need for an up-to-date study of young people's values that examines the values that are important to young people, over a wider and thus more representative sample of young people. Such a study is important particularly in light of the argument by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) that there is often divergence between academic theory and the real world of young people.

The second conclusion concerns the values-map drawn from this qualitative literature review, which, with the values-map from the quantitative literature review in the next chapter, feeds into the values-map to be assessed in the current study. For each of the qualitative studies here, a group of values is identified as most important for the young people. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) emphasise that the following values were important for the young people in their study: friendships; work; family; local area; lack of vision for the future; and discrimination and stereotyping. Lewis (1996) emphasises that the following values were important for the young people in her study: discrimination; media; technology; social concerns; school; friends; concern about sex; family; aims in life; anxiety about death; and core values. Barry (2001) emphasises that the following values were important for the young people in her study: friendship; family; school; work and employment; being in care; having children of their own; and citizenship and discrimination. Brennan (2001) emphasises that the following values were important for the young people in his study: religion and spirituality; technology, media, and travel; family; friends; social concerns; local area; and core values.

There are many similarities between the values that are important to the young people in these four studies. Thus, an overall values-map can be established for young people from

evaluation of these qualitative studies. From this qualitative literature review, the following value-areas are of particular importance to young people:

friends,

family situation,

discrimination and stereotyping,

social concerns,

core values,

changes in society including media, travel, and technology,

work,

aims in life,

school,

local area,

religion and spirituality,

worry, including about sex and death,

having children and personal responsibilities.

Having established this map of the values that are important to young people from the qualitative literature, the next chapter reviews the values expressed by young people in quantitative literature.



# **CHAPTER 3**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW: QUANTITATIVE STUDIES**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**Quantitative studies of young people's values**

*A School Questionnaire Survey*

*Young People's Social Attitudes Survey*

*Values of young people in England and Wales*

*Project Teen Canada*

**Conclusion**

## **Summary**

This chapter examines four quantitative studies of young people's values in detail. Each study is examined in terms of its method, sample, findings, and weaknesses. While these four studies document important and valuable data regarding young people's values, they also have weaknesses, and thus there is a demonstrable need for a new study examining young people's values. From the data portrayed in these four studies, this chapter establishes a values-map. This values-map from the quantitative literature is combined with the values-map from the qualitative literature, to form one values-map from the literature review which informs the present study.



## **Introduction**

The previous chapter considers qualitative portrayals of young people's values. The present chapter considers quantitative portrayals of young people's values. This consideration of quantitative data concerning young people's values forms a crucial part of the Young People's Values Project. As demonstrated in the methodology for this study in chapter one, consideration of quantitative data concerning young people's values is used to form a values-map. This is combined with the values-map from the qualitative literature review in chapter two, to produce an overall values-map from the literature review in this study. Together with the values-map formed from the focus group data, this values-map from the literature review informs the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) utilised in part two of this study.

There are many existing studies using quantitative methods to examine young people's values, giving both overviews of their values, or focusing on specific aspects of them. These include, for example, Beinart, Anderson, Lee and Utting, 2002; Gunnoe and Moore, 2002; Hawton, Rodham, Evans and Weatherall, 2002; Hunsberger, Pratt and Pancer, 2002; Alberts, Mbalo and Ackermann, 2003.

However, as demonstrated in chapter two, it is more appropriate for the needs of the present study to take a detailed, selective approach to the evaluation of previous studies, rather than an outline approach to large numbers of studies. A detailed, selective approach enables proper consideration of the values expressed in each study, and evaluation of its methodology.

Chapter two describes the criteria used for the selection of studies considered in the literature review. However, the criteria for the selection of quantitative studies differ in one respect from the criteria for the selection of qualitative studies. Differences, by nature, in participation of young people in qualitative and quantitative studies mean that small numbers of young people participate in qualitative studies and large numbers of young people participate in quantitative studies. In the qualitative literature review, the selection of studies of both 'mainstream' and marginalised groups of young people is necessary to ensure consideration of the values of a wide range of young people. However, the large numbers of randomly selected young people participating in quantitative studies mean that, by nature, these studies include young people from both 'mainstream' and marginalised groups. Therefore, the criterion for selection of qualitative studies, of including a good mix of studies of young people generally and young people from more marginalised groups, has been varied for the selection of quantitative studies. In the selection of quantitative studies, the criterion is of having a good mix of studies conducted in various settings (for example school, home), which will ensure the evaluation of the values of a wide range of 'mainstream' and more marginalised young people.

Therefore, the criteria utilised to select studies in the quantitative literature review are that the studies selected should include: a good mix of studies conducted in various settings; a good mix of older and more recent studies; and studies undertaken both within and outside the United Kingdom. These criteria have been selected for the reasons explained above and in chapter two.



Four quantitative studies have been selected for consideration. These are: Simmons and Wade (1984); Roberts and Sachdev (1996); Francis (2001); and Bibby (2001). Each study is examined in terms of its methods, sample, findings, and any weaknesses.

### **Quantitative studies of young people's values**

#### ***A School Questionnaire Survey***

Simmons and Wade (1984) undertook a questionnaire survey in schools with the aim of depicting the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of a large number of young people about important aspects of their lives. They conducted an open-ended survey and present the young people's attitudes, beliefs, and values through their own uncorrected written evidence. The questionnaire utilised by Simmons and Wade (1984) consists of only ten items, yet includes a large amount of space for response to each item. The questionnaires were administered during the summer of 1981, and 820 were completed. The young people answering the questionnaires were aged 15, and from a range of schools, in both urban and rural areas, including comprehensive, Roman Catholic comprehensive, grammar, and public schools. The young people were guaranteed complete anonymity. Simmons and Wade (1984) state that the hallmarks of most of the young people's responses were directness and honesty.

Simmons and Wade (1984) explore six aspects of the young people's values. These are: young people's overall values; ideals; preferred companions; activities and reflections when alone; aims in life; and philosophies about life. These six aspects are considered in turn here.

First, the young people's overall values are considered. Simmons and Wade (1984) identify that the young people at times espoused values which they took 'for granted' (p. 29). These are values that they probably acquired at an early age, and did not realise they espoused. For example, Simmons and Wade (1984) state that some of the young people in their sample described racism in this way. Simmons and Wade (1984) also demonstrate the young people's overall values through roles that the young people occupied, and their expected role behaviour and values. For example, some young people espoused values that came through being treated as a child by parents or teachers and thus being forced into the role of a child. Simmons and Wade (1984) further highlight the young people's plans for the future, and their strong sense of individualism.

Second, Simmons and Wade (1984) examine the young people's ideals. These were considered through a statement standing in the tradition of 'ideal person tests' (p. 39) (Hill, 1930) asking who the young people would most like to be like, as well as a statement asking about who they would least like to be like. Simmons and Wade (1984) identify that the young people's individuality and sense of self was strongly prevalent in response to the statement concerning the sort of person they would most like to be like, as nearly a fifth (19%) stated that they would most like to be like themselves. Other people of importance were families, and celebrities. Simmons and Wade (1984) further describe attributes of importance to the young people that were also evident from these statements. For example, the young people wanted to be rich, physically attractive, and popular; and to lesser extents, friendly, honest, cooperative, and self-sacrificing.



The young people's positive self-image was also clear in their descriptions of who they would least like to be like, as only 1% stated that they would least like to be like themselves. Simmons and Wade (1984) describe that the young people's statements further indicate that they did not admire politicians of the day, particularly Margaret Thatcher. They state that the young people also did not admire 'snobs and bigheads' (p. 52). Some of the young people's fears and worries also became apparent in their answers to the statement. For example some would not like to be disabled, would not like to be like a person in an 'ordinary' occupation, or, conversely, would not like to be like a person in a glamorous occupation. In terms of attributes and values that were apparent from these least ideal person statements, Simmons and Wade (1984) maintain that the young people changed their focus, in comparison with previous answers. In this area, the young people concentrated more on anti-social behaviour and less on materialistic values.

Simmons and Wade (1984) also discuss the young people's responses to statements about their preferred companions. They draw conclusions from their responses about their values. Simmons and Wade (1984) asked the young people who they are most, and least, happy to be with. Concerning who they are most happy with, a majority of the young people (54%) stated they were most happy with their friends, with their families being the next most frequent response. From this, Simmons and Wade (1984), in line with Porteous (1982), state that the young people 'accept traditional ideas of family loyalty and control' (p. 76). Following their families, girlfriends and boyfriends were the next most popular response concerning who the young people were most happy with. Simmons and Wade (1984) conclude from these statements that the young people value social values, for example friendliness and good humour, in their companions, above material values.

Similarly to their responses to who they would least like to be like, the young people surveyed by Simmons and Wade (1984) stated they were also most unhappy to be with snobs and bigheads. Many of the young people reported that they were also unhappy with teachers. Only 6% stated that they were most unhappy with their family, and of this 6%, a third are unhappiest with their sisters and brothers rather than their parents. From these statements, Simmons and Wade (1984) maintain that happiness as a value in itself is important to the young people, as many expressed a preference against being with people who are unhappy or who make them unhappy. They emphasise that friendliness, reliability, and honesty were also seen as important by the young people.

From their findings regarding the young people's most and least preferred companions, Simmons and Wade (1984) discuss the issue of a generation gap. They argue that, from their study, this is more of a myth than a reality. This further corroborates the findings of previous studies, for example Adelson (1970) and Porteous (1982). They argue that while some young people do have difficulties with their parents, they are the minority, and the majority of young people have happy relationships with their parents, and the older generation overall.

Simmons and Wade (1984) also examine young people's values through their examination of the young people's comments about their activities and reflections when they are alone. These were explored through a statement asking what the young people do when they are by themselves. Simmons and Wade (1984) categorise the young people according to their reported activities: 'the thoughtful'; 'the active'; 'the lonely and bored'; 'the active/lonely'; 'the active/thoughtful'; 'the thoughtful lonely'. In discussing 'the



thoughtful', Simmons and Wade (1984) depict the young people's thoughts, worries, and dreams. These were about, for example, nuclear war, getting married and having children, their friends and girlfriends/boyfriends, future jobs and careers, and exams. In discussing 'the active', Simmons and Wade (1984) depict activities undertaken by the young people when they were by themselves, for example, reading, watching television, playing snooker, riding their bikes, eating, looking at porn magazines, and drinking alcohol or smoking. In discussing the 'lonely and bored', Simmons and Wade (1984) describe that 11% of their sample stated that they were lonely when alone. Simmons and Wade (1984) emphasise that many of those who reported being lonely when alone 'would appear to be extraverts who have a strong need for companionship and stimulation and an equally strong fear of isolation and sensory deprivation' (p. 122). Simmons and Wade (1984) relate their findings to the model of personality espoused by Eysenck (1965) in this respect.

Simmons and Wade (1984) discuss their categories of the 'active/lonely', 'active/thoughtful', and 'thoughtful/lonely' together, highlighting that not all the young people's responses could be easily categorised into the three simple categories of thoughtful, active, or lonely. They also consider the young people's reflections when alone in more detail, through examining what matters most to the young people. Simmons and Wade (1984) depict that, family, friends, and employment were very important to the young people. However, the values that mattered most to over half of their sample related to health and personal happiness. This reflects the individualism earlier identified by Simmons and Wade (1984) among their sample.

The fifth aspect of the young people's values examined by Simmons and Wade (1984) concerns their aims in life. These were examined through two statements concerning what the young people felt was the best, or worst, thing that could happen to them. Simmons and Wade (1984) report that many of the young people in their sample stated that getting a job would be the best thing that could happen to them, in the face of rising unemployment at the time of the survey. Other responses included: passing exams; winning the pools; and being successful at sport. Many of the young people also highlighted being wealthy and powerful as important to them, as well as being healthy and happy.

Many of the young people reported that the worst thing that could happen to them would be the death of their parents. This finding by Simmons and Wade (1984) is reflected in the focus groups for the current study, presented in chapter four. Furthermore, Simmons and Wade (1984) demonstrate that the young people also greatly feared: their own disablement; death; being unemployed; and failing their exams.

The sixth aspect of the young people's values considered by Simmons and Wade (1984) concerns the young people's overall philosophies about life. These were explored through two statements regarding what the young people see as the best, and worst, aspects of life. They act as something of a summary of the values expressed by the young people in previous statements.

With relation to the best aspects of life, Simmons and Wade (1984) demonstrate that the young people saw enjoying life, in a somewhat hedonistic manner, as important. Other



best aspects of life described by the young people included: their friends, family, and sexual relationships; having freedom; and being healthy.

With relation to what they see as the worst aspects of life, Simmons and Wade (1984) demonstrate that the young people saw death, again, as one of the worst aspects of life. The young people also demonstrated their negative values regarding school, through descriptions of school as one of the worst aspects of life. Other worst aspects of life included: war; violence; unemployment; unhappiness; and old age.

Overall, therefore, from Simmons and Wade's (1984) discussion of young people's values, the following values are of importance: individualism, including hedonistic expressions of individualism; community and social values, for example friendliness; relationships, with family, friends, and the opposite sex; influence of celebrities; happiness; employment; material values; health, also expressed in fear of death and old age; and freedom. The young people also expressed some racial prejudice in their values.

However, there are also weaknesses in Simmons and Wade's (1984) survey. Two main weaknesses are identified here. First, the presentation of data in their book *I Like to Say What I Think* is unclear. The book contains a wealth of information regarding young people's values, however, it is structured according to the items in their survey. This presentation leads, at times, to repetition and confusion. Their findings would have been more accessible if arranged according to the values discerned from the survey.

Second, the methodology used by Simmons and Wade (1984) for this survey can be questioned. Expecting young people to use long written statements to explore their values effectively excluded less academically able young people from Simmons and Wade's (1984) survey. Their sample, therefore, is limited through being, to some extent, self-selecting. Studies undertaken through written questionnaires and surveys all suffer from this weakness to some degree, however it is felt that this is exacerbated by the method chosen by Simmons and Wade (1984) as it necessitated not only reading, but for the young people to respond in a longer written form. This weakness needs to be considered in the design of the HaFVI for the present study.

### *Young People's Social Attitudes Survey*

The second quantitative study of young people's values examined is the Young People's Social Attitudes Survey (Roberts and Sachdev, 1996). This survey was the first study of young people's attitudes related to the British Social Attitudes Survey, which has now been charting the attitudes of British adults for 20 years. The sample for the Young People's Social Attitudes (YPSA) Survey (Roberts and Sachdev, 1996) was drawn from all young people aged 12 to 19 years who lived in the same household as a person randomly selected to participate in the adult version of the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey (for details of adult selection see Jowell, Curtice, Park, Brook and Ahrendt, 1995). Roberts (1996a) states that of the 735 young people eligible to be interviewed for the survey, 580 (79%) were interviewed. The YPSA Survey, like the BSA Survey, was undertaken using structured interviews, in which an interviewer led the respondent through a questionnaire with pre-coded responses. Park (1996) describes the technical details of the sample and methodology. She states that an adult was often present for the



young person's interview. This was because the young people's survey was undertaken by the same interviewer conducting the adult survey, and usually immediately followed the adult interview. An adult was present for at least some of the interview in over half of the interviews undertaken for the YPSA Survey. An adult was present throughout in 35.0% of interviews and for some of the time in 22.4% of interviews. An adult was not present in 40.6% of interviews. This varied according to the age of the young person being interviewed; the younger the participant the more likely an adult would be present during their interview.

Park (1996) also describes the issues covered in the YPSA Survey. Approximately half of the questions asked in the YPSA Survey were used, with the same wording, in the BSA Survey. The other half of the questions were 'unique to the YPSA Survey and covered issues of special relevance to young people' (Park, 1996, p. 145). The subjects covered were: age of consent; judgements of right and wrong; education, including sex education and school life; crime, including fear of, personal experience of, and punishment of; gender roles and family life; racial prejudice and discrimination; political knowledge, interest, and party identity; important factors for success in life; and aims in life. Park (1996) depicts that the survey also included a number of classificatory demographic questions, for example on sex, age, religion, and current occupation, which were used alongside information gained about the household from the BSA Survey, for example socio-economic group.

Roberts and Sachdev (1996) present chapters by different authors discussing the young people's attitudes and values on seven of the issues covered in the YPSA Survey. These

are: rights, responsibilities, and the age of consent; gender roles and family life; racial prejudice and discrimination; crime and punishment; education; politics and the media; and religion and right and wrong. Each of these is considered here.

Newman (1996) examines the young people's values regarding young people's rights, responsibilities, and the age of consent. He questions whether the existing notion of childhood can be seen as oppressive to children and young people and 'constructed through the medium of adult-centric assumptions' (p. 7). He therefore questions whether children and young people can only be empowered through the destruction of our present model of childhood. However, Newman (1996) argues that the young people participating in the YPSA Survey still saw themselves as in need of parental help, and as largely accepting the basic premise that 'adult status is acquired primarily by the passage of time and that certain responsibilities, rights and individual autonomy should be granted at particular chronological stages' (p. 21). He demonstrates that the young people identified only minor domestic tasks as suitable for children and young people under the age of 14. For example, the age most commonly cited at which people should be expected to make their own bed was 10; the age most commonly cited at which people should left alone for the evening was 14; babysit a child of five, 16; drive a car, 17; and vote in a general election, 18. Newman (1996) argues that most of the young people's responses reflect current legislation, an effect common in adult surveys.

Newman (1996) analyses the age-related 'milestones' described above according to age groups within the sample. He demonstrates a clear pattern that younger groups wanted adult responsibilities at an earlier age, although older groups were beginning to assume



an adult view that responsibilities should be given at a later age. Overall, Newman (1996) concludes that the young people participating in the YPSA Survey were not very radical in demanding levels of responsibility for themselves, and were generally happy with their transition to adulthood, and the rights, rites, and responsibilities this affords.

Oakley (1996) examines the young people's values regarding gender roles and household tasks. She reports that 30% of the young people in the YPSA Survey were living in 'non-nuclear households' (p. 24), and maintains that the young people's views of the morality of differing social forms matched this 'changing panorama of family life' (p. 24). For example, 82% of females and 78% of males agreed that it is all right for a couple to live together without intending to get married. She also highlights the importance of the gender differences in the young people's responses to these items. Oakley (1996) further demonstrates gender differences in the young people's values regarding division of gender roles in the public and private spheres. She states that more of the boys (14%) than the girls (7%) agreed that men should go out to work and women should stay at home, although similar proportions of both groups (62% of girls and 61% of boys) agreed that having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent.

The YPSA Survey also examined gender roles with relation to housework. Oakley (1996) demonstrates that 'the young men ... were consistent in keeping to a traditionalist line: it was evidently more difficult for them to believe that the sexes should share the housework' (p. 28). For example, 24% of the boys, in comparison with 9% of the girls, agreed that the evening meal should be mainly made by women. Furthermore, with relation to the data discussed by Newman (1996), Oakley (1996) demonstrates that there

is a clear trend that the girls see washing up and making the bed as appropriate activities for children from a younger age than the age identified as appropriate by the boys. Oakley (1996) further depicts that these gender differences in the young people's perceptions of gender roles also apply to gender roles outside the home. For example, 54% of the boys, in comparison with 31% of the girls, agreed that being a car mechanic is more suitable for a man than a woman. Overall, Oakley (1996) concludes that, while young people are often portrayed as in revolt against parental authority, when considering gender differences, they portrayed very similar views to their parents.

The third issue considered in Roberts and Sachdev (1996) is racial prejudice and discrimination. Sachdev (1996) examines the extent and direction of the young people's values with relation to issues of race. Concerning perceived prejudice against Asian and black people, Sachdev (1996) demonstrates that just over half (51%) of the young people agreed that there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, nearly four out of ten (39%) agreed that there is a lot of discrimination against black people in the United Kingdom. The young people were asked to rate their own levels of racial prejudice. In response, 70% stated that they were not prejudiced at all. Sachdev (1996) states that the YPSA Survey further tests this through examining the young people's perceptions of interracial marriages. In response, 17% agreed that they would mind if an Asian person married into their family, and 15% agreed that they would mind if a black person married into their family.

Sachdev (1996) also considers perceived racial discrimination in the job market. He depicts that more girls than boys were likely to perceive racial discrimination against both



Asians (71% of the girls, in comparison with 64% of the boys), and West Indians (69% of the girls, in comparison with 65% of the boys). Regarding perceived racial discrimination in the judicial system, Sachdev (1996) depicts that 44% of the young people agreed that a black person is more likely than a white person to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit.

Sachdev (1996) also examines the young people's values with relation to anti-racial discrimination legislation. He demonstrates that 75% of the young people supported the law in the United Kingdom against racial discrimination. The young people appeared to be reasonably optimistic about the effects of this legislation, as just a quarter (25%) agreed that there would be more racial prejudice in Britain in five years time, in comparison with 35% who agreed there would be less, and 36% who thought it would be about the same.

The final area considered by Sachdev (1996) is the importance of race in doing well in life. He demonstrates that just 2% of the young people agreed that race was essential to do well in life, while 72% agreed that it was not important.

Overall, Sachdev (1996) maintains that the young people participating in the YPSA Survey were less prejudiced than adults, and that this gives hope for the future in Britain.

McNeish (1996) examines young people's values regarding crime, justice, and punishment. She depicts the young people's fear of crime, their experiences of crime, and their values regarding appropriate treatment of offenders. McNeish (1996) demonstrates

that 82% of the young people stated that they had experienced crime as a victim. The most prevalent way in which this had occurred was theft of or from a car belonging to them or their family; which 45% of the young people had experienced. However, less of the young people worried about becoming a victim of crime than had been a victim of crime: 62% of the young people worried about the possibility of themselves, or someone they live with, becoming the victim of crime, and 38% did not worry about this. Furthermore, 57% of the young people agreed that they felt very, or fairly safe walking alone in their area after dark.

On the issue of the fairness of the justice system, McNeish (1996) demonstrates that 'large numbers of young people view the system as unfair and discriminatory' (p. 83). Thus, 44% agreed that a black person is more likely than a white person to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit; 64% agreed that a poor person is more likely than a rich person to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit; and 26% agreed that an Irish person is more likely than a British person to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit. However, the young people were more lenient than adults in their values regarding treatment of offenders. Overall, therefore, McNeish (1996) maintains that crime is an important issue for young people, although is not necessarily of primary importance to them.

The young people's values regarding education, as the fifth issue considered in Roberts and Sachdev (1996), are examined by Hughes and Lloyd (1996). They maintain that the young people valued education as important, and took it seriously. Most of the young people agreed that parents should have an input into curriculum determination; 92%



agreed that parents should have a say in what is taught in school. Furthermore, 74% agreed that children should have a say in what is taught in school. The young people were also asked about sex education in school. Just over half (53%) agreed that all children aged 12-16 years should have sex education at school, and 37% agreed that all children aged 11 and under should have sex education at school.

Hughes and Lloyd (1996) also examine the young people's values concerning educational achievement. They depict that the young people valued educational achievement, although more of the boys (29%) than the girls (22%) agreed that education is essential for future success. While the young people valued educational achievement for the individual, they also valued educational achievement of a school. Hughes and Lloyd (1996) demonstrate that 80% of the young people agreed the publication of secondary school exam results is very, or quite, useful for parents.

Hughes and Lloyd (1996) also examine the young people's attitudes to behaviour. Bullying is shown to be an important issue for the young people, in that 88% of the respondents aged 12 to 15, the majority of those in secondary education, agreed that bullying happens to some extent. However, the young people were reasonably lenient in their views regarding the treatment of bullies: 31% agreed that bullies should be expelled from school; 26% agreed that bullies should be temporarily suspended from school; and 41% agree that bullies should remain at school, and be dealt with another way.

Overall, Hughes and Lloyd (1996) emphasise the importance placed on education by the young people, stating that their attitude to school experience is 'constructive, informative, and helpful' (p. 116).

Walker (1996) examines young people's values regarding politics and the media. Walker (1996) considers the question of whether or not young people are politically apathetic, with relation to young people's political knowledge, and where this knowledge may come from in terms of their consumption of media. He demonstrates that the young people did not have high levels of interest in politics. For example, just 26% of the young people expressed some interest in politics, 9% expressed quite a lot of interest in politics, and 3% expressed a great deal of interest in politics. However, Walker (1996) maintains that these findings do not have to be interpreted negatively; 32% of the young people agreed that they had not very much interest in politics, portraying that there was some, if small, political interest remaining.

Walker (1996) also argues that the young people did not express high levels of consumption of the mass media. He states that 45% of the young people agreed that they read a daily morning newspaper at least three times a week, while 55% disagreed. Overall, Walker (1996) maintains that 'the survey data are ambiguous' (p. 125), in that, while the young people did not read newspapers to a great extent, they did have a basic knowledge of important political facts. Walker (1996) rejects the argument that young people are taking a greater part in one issue politics. This rejection is on the grounds that taking a greater part in one issue politics requires more, not less political knowledge, and



it is unclear that young people had this higher level of political knowledge, or where it may come from.

The final issue examined in Roberts and Sachdev (1996) relates to religion, and right and wrong, as considered by Roberts (1996b). Roberts (1996b) explores the young people's attitudes to churchgoing and religious beliefs, and to some moral dilemmas. She demonstrates that the largest group of young people (45%) agreed that they believed in God now, and always have. Furthermore, 13% agreed that they believed in God now but did not previously, 17% did not believe in God but used to, and 16% did not believe in God and never had. However, over half (54%) of the young people stated that they did not belong to a specific religion; and of those professing belief in God, just 12% agreed that they went to church or a religious service once a week or more. Roberts (1996b) also demonstrates that widely reported gender differences in religious belief and attendance among adults (Greeley, 1992) were also found among young people, as girls were more positive regarding religion than boys. For example, 61% of boys, in comparison with 48% of girls, did not see themselves as belonging to a specific religion.

On the issue of right and wrong, Roberts (1996b) presents the young people's responses to a variety of moral dilemmas relating to money. She reports that the young people were more likely to keep five pounds they found lying in an empty street than to keep 100 pounds. She therefore suggests that the young people 'have a scale of 'wrongness', and that little sins are more acceptable than big ones' (p. 136).

The examination of young people's values in Roberts and Sachdev (1996) highlights a number of important value-areas for young people. However, there are weaknesses with the YPSA Survey that should also be considered. Three main weaknesses are apparent.

The first concerns sampling. The technique used to recruit participants for the YPSA Survey involved inviting all the eligible young people in a household, in which an adult had participated in the BSA Survey, to participate in the YPSA Survey. The positive aspect of this method is that it facilitated direct comparisons between the BSA and YPSA results for the same year. However, it is questionable whether this method of sampling brought about a representative sample of young people. It would be more effective, and more respectful to young people as individuals in their own right, to sample them as individuals, for example through schools, and not merely because they live in a particular adult's household. An issue of inclusion also arises, in that the young people participating in the YPSA Survey can only be those living with a parent or carer. This does not make for a representative sample, particularly at the older end of the eligible age group (12 to 19 years old), as young people living away from a parent or carer's home are excluded. The sample is also self-selecting in this respect. This may affect the findings of the survey, for example, Oakley's (1996) observation that some of the young people's values are similar to those of their parents.

The second weakness concerns the willingness of young people to participate in the survey, and the geographical situation of their participation. Two steps of compliance are needed for a young person to take part in the YPSA Survey, first from their parent or carer, and second from the young person themselves. However, a certain type of social



attitude may be associated with desire to take part in the survey. There may also be tensions between the demands of the parents on the young people, and the wishes of the young people themselves. Furthermore, if the young people's parent or carer remains present during the interview, they may not be as free to express their opinions as they may otherwise have been. However, child protection considerations mean that it would be difficult for an interviewer to ask parents or guardians to leave a room while an interview was being conducted with a young person. Some of these issues of confidentiality and respect for the young people's views could be overcome if the YPSA Survey was conducted in its own right in a school situation, and not alongside the BSA Survey.

The third weakness is the language and tone of the YPSA Survey. The language and much of the content of the survey are too complex for young people in the younger end of the age group to be addressed. Park (1996) demonstrates that approximately half of the questions used in the YPSA Survey were the same as those used in the BSA Survey. However, questions worded for adults would not necessarily be appropriate for all young people. This difficulty is exacerbated by the large age range covered by the YPSA Survey. The YPSA Survey is intended to include participants aged between 12 and 19 years old. It can be argued that this is too wide an age range, as it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to include questions that are appropriate for this whole age range.

Overall, therefore, consideration of Roberts and Sachdev (1996) demonstrates important data regarding young people's values to be considered in the values-map for the present study. However, there are also methodological concerns with this survey, which should also be considered in the present study.

### *Values of young people in England and Wales*

Francis (2001) presents findings from a values survey conducted among young people in England and Wales. Francis (2001) aimed to assemble a database including the responses of over 30,000 young people, to allow confidence to be placed in the findings, and to ensure good representation of young people from minority backgrounds. The final database contained the responses of 33,982 young people.

Francis (2001) utilises a revision of the Centymca Attitude Inventory (see Francis, 1982), which was devised to assess young people's values over 15 areas. These are: personal well-being; worries; counselling; school; work; religious beliefs; church and society; the supernatural; politics; social concerns; sexual morality; substance use; right and wrong; leisure; and the local area. As with the YPSA Survey, the Centymca Attitude Inventory also includes a number of forced-choice questions, for example on sex and age, to profile respondents' backgrounds. The Centymca Attitude Inventory is designed to be completed in school time as a written questionnaire. Findings from each of the 15 areas explored by Francis (2001) are described here.

Francis (2001) demonstrates that the young people in his sample appeared reasonably positive in their personal well-being, although they did report some depression and 'mood swings' (p. 28). For example, 56% of the young people agreed their life had a sense of purpose, and 69% found life really worth living, although 52% often felt depressed.

The young people described by Francis (2001) reported fairly high levels of worry, particularly about issues such as AIDS, and their relations with their peers. For example,



62% agreed that they were worried about getting AIDS. In addition, 52% were worried about how they got on with other people, and 35% were worried about their attractiveness to the opposite sex.

In the area of 'counselling', Francis (2001) examined who the young people found it most helpful to talk to about their problems. The young people were reluctant to discuss their problems with professionals, finding it more helpful to talk to their friends or their mother. For example, 47% stated that they would be reluctant to discuss their problems with a teacher, and 39% would be reluctant to discuss their problems with a social worker. However, 50% stated that they found it helpful to talk about their problems with their mother, and 63% agreed that they found it helpful to talk about their problems with their close friends.

Francis (2001) demonstrates that the young people were generally positive in relation to school, although they also expressed high levels of worry regarding school, and expressed only moderate respect for teachers. For example, 72% agreed that they were happy in their school, and 68% agreed that school is helping to prepare them for life. Yet, 74% of the young people reported worry about their exams at school, and under half (45%) agreed that teachers do a good job.

In the area of work, Francis (2001) depicts that the young people had high ambitions regarding their future work, and felt that it would give them a sense of identity. For example, 87% wanted to get to the top in their work when they get a job, and 77% agreed that a job gives a person a sense of purpose. However, over half (52%) of the young

people agreed that most unemployed people could have a job if they really wanted to, suggesting that they 'may hold an unrealistic view regarding the availability of job opportunities' (p. 35).

In examining the young people's religious beliefs, Francis (2001) primarily focuses on the young people's beliefs in Christian creeds. He states that on the overall question of belief in God, the young people are divided between theists, agnostics, and atheists. Larger proportions of the young people reported uncertainty about the more specific claims of Christianity. For example, 41% of the young people agreed that they believe in God, in comparison with 33% who expressed uncertainty, and 26% who did not believe in God. Yet, 42% of the young people were uncertain about whether or not Jesus really rose from the dead, and 37% were uncertain about whether or not Christianity is the only true religion.

On issues of church and society, Francis (2001) demonstrates that the young people identified a role for religion in their lives, primarily in providing rites of passage. Yet they did not want religion to encroach too greatly into their daily lives, and did not see attendance at religious services as necessary for religious affiliation. For example, 73% wanted to get married in church, and 54% wanted their children to be baptised or christened in church. However, just 8% of the young people agreed that schools should hold a religious assembly every day, and 51% agreed that they can be a Christian without going to church.



Francis (2001) identifies that the young people were uncertain regarding supernatural beliefs, although they did not reject them outright. For example, 40% expressed belief in ghosts, and a further 29% were uncertain; and 31% expressed belief that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead, and a further 33% were uncertain.

Francis (2001) demonstrates that the young people were generally negative in their values regarding conventional politics. He states that they are:

a generation of young people who are cynical about political institutions, who have comparatively little confidence in the long-established political parties and whose political views are unformed (p. 43).

For example, just 15% of the young people reported confidence in the Conservative party, and 20% reported confidence in the Labour party. Furthermore, fairly high proportions were uncertain in their views on private schools and medicine: 31% were uncertain whether or not private schools should be abolished; and 44% were uncertain whether or not private medicine should be abolished.

Within the value-area of social concerns, Francis (2001) examines the young people's values regarding an assortment of world and domestic issues, demonstrating that they expressed reasonable levels of concern about world issues, yet lower levels of concern about domestic issues. For example, 66% agreed that they were concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment, and 61% agreed that they were concerned about the poverty of the Third World. However, just 20% agreed there is too much violence on television, and 33% agreed that pornography is too readily available.

Francis (2001) reports that the young people were generally liberal in their values regarding sexual morality, although they remained conservative in their values regarding homosexuality. For example, 14% agreed that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage, 5% agreed that contraception is wrong, and 19% agreed that divorce is wrong. However, 37% agreed that homosexuality is wrong, and 24% were uncertain.

Francis (2001) assesses the young people's values regarding use of various substances. He demonstrates that the young people reflected general views in society. They were most tolerant of the use of alcohol and then tobacco, fairly tolerant of use of marijuana, and least tolerant of use of heroin and solvents. For example, 19% agreed it is wrong to become drunk, and 42% agreed it is wrong to smoke cigarettes. Just over half (51%) agreed it is wrong to use marijuana, and 74% agreed it is wrong to use heroin.

The value-area of 'right and wrong' assesses the young people's values regarding issues of law and order. Francis (2001) demonstrates that the young people were reasonably law abiding, although less so in circumstances restricting their freedom according to their age. They did not have very high respect for the work of the police. For example, only 7% of the young people agreed there is nothing wrong in shoplifting, although 42% agreed there is nothing wrong in buying alcohol under the legal age. Just over half (54%) agreed the police do a good job, although 22% were uncertain, and 24% disagreed that the police do a good job.

The young people described in Francis (2001) reported that they were generally content in how they spent their leisure time. Most did not come into conflict with their parents



over how they spent their leisure time. For example, 68% of the young people stated that they often hang about with their friends doing nothing in particular, although just 27% wished they had more to do in their leisure time. Nearly three out of ten (29%) stated that their parents did not agree with most of the things they do in their leisure time.

The final area described by Francis (2001) examines the young people's values regarding the area in which they live. He demonstrates that the young people were generally positive regarding their local area, although they felt their area did not care about them as young people. For example, 74% agreed that they like living in their area, although just 21% agreed that their area cares about its young people.

The above descriptions, therefore, demonstrate the clear profile of young people's values presented by Francis (2001). However, there are also three main weaknesses with Francis' (2001) study.

First, the Centymca Attitude Inventory utilised by Francis (2001) is based on a literature review and conversations with young people undertaken during the late 1970s (Francis, 2001), over 20 years ago. Therefore, the areas assessed in the Inventory and the language used, although somewhat revised, may be no longer relevant to young people at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This clearly demonstrates the need for the present study; to present a clear profile of young people's values as accomplished in Francis (2001), yet using an instrument that is grounded in, and thus effectively assesses, the values of young people today.

Second, there are difficulties with the layout of the Centymca Attitude Inventory. Examination of the Inventory reveals that it is comprised of text which, although well spaced out, is small, and generally inaccessible to young people of lower academic ability.

Third, the titles given by Francis (2001) to the 15 areas cause confusion. Several of the titles used for the value-areas do not actually describe the content of the value-area. For example, the area entitled 'Religious Beliefs' actually relates to Christian beliefs, and the area entitled 'Sexual Morality' includes issues such as divorce and abortion which are moral questions extending beyond the field of sexual morality.

Overall, therefore, Francis (2001) presents valuable data for incorporation in the values-map for the present study. However, the weaknesses of his study should be considered in the design of the present study.

### ***Project Teen Canada***

The final quantitative survey examined here is Bibby (2001). He describes the findings of Project Teen Canada 2000, a project surveying the values of young people across Canada, similarly to adult surveys entitled 'Project Canada'. Project Teen Canada 2000 follows on from surveys of young people's values in Canada undertaken in 1984 and 1992 (see, for example, Bibby and Posterski, 1985; 1992).

The sample for Project Teen Canada is described by Bibby (2001) thus:

A sample of about 3,600 teenagers was pursued, a figure that, if representatively selected, makes it possible to generalize to the overall high school adolescent population with a high level of accuracy (p. 327).



Bibby (2001) surveyed young people aged 15 to 19 years in schools across Canada. Full classes of students in high schools, rather than individuals, were selected to participate. The schools were selected using multi-stage stratified and cluster sampling procedures. The specific grade of the class to participate was randomly selected, and guidance counsellors at the chosen school were asked to choose a class they felt to be representative of the grade, and administer the questionnaire to this class. It was emphasised that the questionnaire was completely confidential and anonymous. Bibby (2001) states that questionnaires were returned from 156 of the 196 schools where contact had been successful, giving a response rate of 80%; and that a total of 3,501 questionnaires were useable. This sample was then weighted to ensure it was representative of Canada as a whole; adjustments were made for region, community size, and school type.

Bibby (2001) highlights four main areas of the young people's values from this questionnaire. These are: what is important to the young people; who is important to the young people; areas of particular concern; and the young people's hopes and expectations. These four areas are examined in turn.

In examining what is important to the young people, Bibby (2001) describes that his survey lists 27 characteristics, and the young people were asked to indicate how important each characteristic is to them personally. Bibby (2001) reports that the most important values to the young people were friendship and freedom, followed by being loved and having choices. These were then followed by having a comfortable life, being successful, excitement, concern for others, and family life. From the young people's evaluation of

the characteristics of importance to them, their strong sense of individualism, while highly valuing the people around them, is apparent.

Bibby (2001) examines the 'means' in life most valued by the young people, using Rokeach's (1973) concept of 'instrumental values' (Rokeach, 1973, cited by Bibby, 2001, p. 16). Bibby (2001) demonstrates that the young people saw honesty, humour, cleanliness, and intelligence as the most important 'means' in life. Bibby (2001) also demonstrates that the young people reported what they gained most enjoyment from, to which their responses included their friends, music, their own room, and their mother.

Bibby's (2001) examination of what the young people saw as important also covers personal and social concerns. Personally, Bibby (2001) states that the young people were most concerned by: pressure to do well at school; what they are going to do when they finish school; never seeming to have enough time; and lack of money. Regarding social concerns, Bibby (2001) states that the young people were most concerned by: child abuse; AIDS; violence in school; and teenage suicide. Overall, from his examination of what the young people see as important, Bibby (2001) emphasises two main points of importance; that the young people expressed strong levels of individualism, and that there were strong differences between the values of the girls and the boys.

The second main area considered by Bibby (2001) concerns who is important to the young people. Generally, Bibby (2001) emphasises the importance of other people in the young people's lives. For example, one 16 year old female states that:

"All kids need love and support from someone or something." (p. 50).



The young people reported that friendship was one of the most important values to them, and that their friends were one of their primary sources of enjoyment. A further important group was their family. Similarly to Oakley (1996), Bibby (2001) emphasises that 'today's "emerging generation" [come] from a wide variety of family structures and living arrangements' (p. 54). He demonstrates that 68% reported that they had biological parents who are married to each other, 25% had biological parents who were no longer married to each other, and 7% had one or both biological parents who have died, were not married, or described a different domestic situation. However, Bibby (2001) demonstrates that this did not appear to have had a great impact on the young people, in that those 'living with both biological parents are only slightly more likely than others to say they place *high value on family life*' (p. 59, italics in original).

Bibby (2001) further emphasises that the young people also highly valued their pets and cyberspace as important, and that these may possibly function as 'relational surrogates' (p. 61). Over half (51%) stated that they gained a high level of enjoyment from their pets, 42% stated that they gained a high level of enjoyment from the Internet, and 33% from e-mail. However, while the young people gained enjoyment from these sources, Bibby (2001) states that there is no indication that this was at the expense of other relationships with people.

The third main area considered by Bibby (2001) investigates five of the young people's concerns in more detail. These are: violence; sexuality; drugs; Canada and Canadian culture; and religion and spirituality.

Bibby (2001) describes that there is increasing concern among adults with relation to violence among young people. This appeared to be reflected among young people themselves, in that violence in schools was seen as 'very significant' by many young people in Bibby's (2001) sample. There was an important gender difference on this issue, in that more of the girls (65%) than the boys (40%) agreed that violence in schools was very serious. Other issues of violence that the young people saw as serious included: child abuse, teenage suicide, violence against women, and crime.

Regarding sexuality, Bibby (2001) reports that young people in Canada were divided almost evenly in being liberal or not in their values regarding sexual attitudes and behaviour. For example, around six out of ten young people agreed that consenting adults should be able to do what they want sexually. However, as with violence, there were gender differences in the young people's values regarding sexuality; 'males typically hold more liberal attitudes than females and are more sexually active' (p.89).

Bibby (2001) demonstrates that the young people reported that they had considerable access to drugs. For example, 77% of the young people agreed that if they wanted to use drugs, it would not be difficult to obtain them. However, he states that this reported access to drugs is not necessarily equalled by reported use. For example: 28% of the young people agreed that they smoked cigarettes monthly or more often; 20% agreed that they drank alcohol at least once a week; and 15% agreed that they used marijuana at least once a week.



Bibby (2001) describes the difficulties felt among Canadian society in general regarding their national identity. However, he demonstrates that seven out of ten young people agreed that being Canadian is important to them. However, this proportion is much smaller in Quebec (40%) than in the rest of Canada (80%). Furthermore, seven out of ten young people from throughout Canada agree that Canada should have two official languages; while 25% are concerned about the influence of US culture in Canada.

Regarding religion and spirituality, Bibby (2001) demonstrates that approximately a fifth of the young people stated that they were very involved in organised religion. However, much larger proportions affiliated themselves with a religious group than stated that they were involved in organised religion. Bibby (2001) depicts that 75% affiliated themselves with a religious group. Furthermore, 45% agreed that they might be open to religious involvement in the future, and 89% agreed that they would like a religious wedding ceremony.

The fourth main area considered by Bibby (2001) examines the young people's hopes and expectations. Overall, Bibby (2001) states that 'Canada's teens are dreaming and dreaming big' (p. 133). He describes that the young people expressed expectations for happiness, good relationships, material security, and physical security in the future. They also had high expectations in terms of education, and a career. Over six out of ten (62%) hoped to graduate from university, and nine out of ten expected to be able to get the job they want when they graduate. Six out of ten (60%) also expected that they would have the same career for life, even if they were not certain what that career would be. Large

proportions of the young people expected to have highly successful careers, and eight out of ten expected to be more financially comfortable than their parents.

The young people also expressed high hopes and expectations for their family lives. Nine out of ten expected to get married and stay with the same partner for life, and the same proportion expected to have children. Thus, while the young people portrayed tolerance towards cohabiting, as a personal preference they expected to get married and have children within the relationship of marriage. Many young people also expressed a further important hope and expectation for future frequent travel outside Canada.

Therefore, Bibby (2001) depicts important data regarding the values of young people in Canada. However, there are two main weaknesses with Bibby's (2001) study.

The first weakness regards the sample for the study. Overall, the sampling techniques utilised are appropriate, and generate a representative sample. However, the project, as described by Bibby (2001) aims to examine the values of 15 to 19 year olds. While the majority of the younger end of this sample may be at school, less of the older end of the sample will be at school, as it is possible to leave compulsory education in Canada at 18 (see for example, [www.brainyencyclopedia.com](http://www.brainyencyclopedia.com)). Thus, at least some of Bibby's (2001) sample is self-selecting, which may have an effect on, for example, the young people's expectations to gain a university education.

The second weakness concerns the content of Bibby's (2001) questionnaire. Bibby (2001) does not specify the way in which the content of the questionnaire was devised,



however, from the text it can be suggested that much of the content may have been driven by the researcher's agenda, rather than the young people's. This limits the young people's expression of their values. For example, the young people participating in this survey were asked to list how important each of a list of 27 characteristics was to them. While this exercise enables the young people to express their values within the prescribed list, it does not enable them to express what is most important to them overall.

Therefore, Bibby (2001) presents valuable data for incorporation in the values-map for the present study, particularly in providing a reliable perspective from outside the United Kingdom. However, the weaknesses identified in Bibby's (2001) study must be considered in the design and conduct of the present study.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examines in detail four quantitative studies of young people's values. From this, three areas are considered in conclusion. First, methodological considerations of importance for the present study are noted. Second, a values-map is composed from the quantitative literature reviewed here. Third, this values-map is combined with the values-map from the qualitative literature composed in the previous chapter, to give an overall values-map from the literature. This is utilised in assembling the HaFVI for the present study.

First, the four quantitative studies considered in this chapter depict important and valuable data regarding young people's values from a variety of settings. However, there are some weaknesses with these studies which should be considered when utilising the

data from the studies, and in the methodology for the present study. Simmons and Wade (1984) demonstrate the importance of clear presentation of the results of a study to ensure the data are fully utilised and accessible. Furthermore, they also demonstrate the importance of considering accessibility for young people from across the academic spectrum in the design of a quantitative instrument.

Roberts and Sachdev (1996) demonstrate some of the difficulties with the YPSA Survey. From these, it is clear that the sampling for the present study is an important consideration, so that it does not exclude young people by their age or geographical situation. Moreover, the geographical situation in which the young people participate in the study is important, so that it does not prohibit the young people from expressing their values as truthfully as possible.

The methodology utilised by Francis (2001) contains useful precedents for the present study. However, the tool used to assess young people's values in Francis (2001) is outdated. This demonstrates the pressing need for a new and more accurate tool to examine young people's values. Consideration of the Centymca Attitude Inventory used in Francis (2001) also demonstrates the importance of layout of a written quantitative instrument in ensuring it is accessible to as many young people as possible.

Bibby (2001) further demonstrates the importance of sampling to gain greatest possible inclusivity of the target group. Moreover Bibby's (2001) study demonstrates the importance of ensuring that the content of a survey is informed by young people's agenda of what is important to them, to facilitate an accurate portrayal of their values.



Overall, therefore, these studies demonstrate the need for an accurate and up-to-date examination of young people's values, that is as inclusive as possible of its target group, and ensures that the content of any quantitative inventory is driven by what young people value as important.

Second, for each of the quantitative studies reviewed here, a group of values can be discerned that are most important to the young people in the study. Simmons and Wade (1984) emphasise that the following values and issues are important to young people in their sample: individuality; friendliness; family; friends; sex, and relationships with the opposite sex; racial prejudice; influence of celebrities; happiness; employment; material values; health, including concerns about death and growing old; and freedom. Roberts and Sachdev (1996) emphasise that the following values and issues are important to young people in their sample: discrimination against young people and the rights of young people; racial prejudice; education; politics; and religion. Francis (2001) emphasises that the following values and issues are important to young people in his study: personal well-being; worries; having someone to talk to; school; work; religion and the role of the church in their lives; supernatural beliefs; politics; world social concerns; moral issues; substance use; issues of law and order; their leisure time; and the area in which they live. Bibby (2001) emphasises that the following values and issues are important to young people in his sample: friendship; freedom; being loved; having choices; material comfort; being successful; school pressure; concerns about violence, sexuality, drugs, identity, and religion; family; and hopes for the future for a career, a family of their own, and travel.

There are many similarities between these values of importance to young people from these four studies, and thus they are combined to produce a values-map for young people from these quantitative studies. This values-map states that the following areas are of particular importance to young people:

individuality including freedom,

community, through having people such as family and friends around them to love them and listen to them,

discrimination, against young people and in the form of racial prejudice,

influence of celebrities and the media,

employment,

happiness,

material comfort,

health,

education,

religion and beliefs,

politics,

substance use,

moral issues,

leisure time,

the area they live in,

aims in life.

Third, this values-map established from the quantitative literature is combined with the values-map derived from the qualitative literature in the previous chapter to give an



overall values-map from this literature review that informs the HaFVI. Therefore, from this literature review, the following values and issues are identified as important to young people:

family,

friends,

discrimination and stereotyping,

core values, of individuality including freedom, and of community including responsibility,

media, including the influence of celebrities,

aims in life, including employment, material comfort, travel, happiness, and having a family of their own,

education,

the area they live in,

religion and spirituality,

worries, including health, sex, and world concerns;

politics,

substance use,

moral issues,

leisure time, including technology as used to communicate.

Having established this map of the values that are important to young people from the literature review, the following chapter examines the focus groups conducted concurrently with this literature review. It establishes a map of the values that are important to young people from the findings of the focus groups.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE FOCUS GROUPS**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**Method**

*Establishing the focus groups*

*Analysing the findings*

**Findings**

*How young people have changed from young people 20 years ago*

*What young people would change about the world*

*Core values*

*Aims in life*

*Family*

*Relationships and friends*

*Fitting in*

*Communication*

*The media*

*Discrimination and stereotyping*

*Concerns and fears*

*School and education*

*Hobbies and social life*

*Substance use*

*Politics and war*



*Religion*

**Conclusion**

## **Summary**

This chapter describes the focus groups undertaken at the beginning of this study, as the key to gaining an understanding of the values that are important to young people. This chapter demonstrates the methodology utilised in conducting and analysing the focus groups, and describes the values expressed by the young people as important to them. The chapter concludes by compiling a values-map from the focus group findings.



## **Introduction**

Chapters two and three present an examination of existing literature to determine the picture of young people's values available from previous research. A values-map has been constructed from this literature. Although the values-map produced from the literature review informs the range of values examined in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI), this is not derived solely from the literature review, but rather, is predominantly informed by discussions with young people. These discussions; focus groups, were conducted at the beginning of the project. This chapter describes the way in which they were conducted, their findings, and draws a values-map from these findings. This values-map is used alongside the values-map drawn from the literature, to produce an overall values-map for young people, which is then operationalised in the HaFVI.

The focus groups addressed the overall question: What is important to young people today? The question related both to what the young people participating in the focus groups subjectively thought was important, and what they thought was important to their peer group as a whole. The overall question was broken down into smaller, more accessible questions for discussion in the focus groups. A range of methods was used with the young people to ascertain what they thought was important, for example, brainstorming and small group discussions, as well as discussions with the whole group.

This chapter comprises four main parts. After this introduction, the second part examines the methodology of the focus groups, in setting up and conducting the focus groups, and in analysing the data. The third part of this chapter illustrates the findings from the focus

groups. The fourth part comprises a conclusion, demonstrating the final values-map from the focus groups.

In presenting the findings from the focus groups, direct quotations are used from the transcripts of the young people's discussions. When transcribing the taped discussions, punctuation was inserted to endeavour to keep with the original sound and meaning of the young people's statements and convey this original sound and meaning to the reader. The words used by the young people have also been transcribed as they sounded, thus words appear here as enunciated by the young people. Quotes used as examples here are single spaced to differentiate them from the main body of the text, with double spacing between quotes. However, where a group of quotes is single spaced together, this indicates that the quotes are part of the same discussion in one focus group and followed on from each other.

## **Method**

### ***Establishing the focus groups***

The focus groups in the study were designed to give young people a voice (Barry, 2001), and ensure that the study is driven by the young people's agenda. Seven focus groups were conducted with pupils from school years nine and ten (aged 13 to 15). This age group was the focus for this study for two main reasons. First, previous studies (Francis and Kay, 1995; Francis, 2001) have been conducted among this age group, thus presenting possibilities for comparisons between studies. Second, it is recognised that this is a time for young people during which their values are beginning to be established



(see, for example, Coleman and Hendry, 1999), yet can also change greatly (Francis, 2001).

The focus groups were conducted in schools throughout North Wales and North West England. They were confined to these geographical areas for budgetary reasons. Six focus groups were conducted in schools, and one was conducted in a Church of England youth group.

Schools and youth groups were recruited to take part in the focus groups through personal contacts and wider mailings to teachers. The focus groups were conducted over two and a half weeks at the end of June and beginning of July 2002. Conducting the focus groups at the end of the school year ensured that minimal disruption was caused to the school timetable.

The groups took the form of a semi-structured group interview (Burman, 1994), that is, using a basic question schedule, yet allowing discussion to follow the young people's direction. Burman (1994) explains the nature of semi-structured interviews in stating that:

There is a double contrast ... here: with structured approaches, which are usually quantitative and closer to questionnaires in structuring the interviewee's responses, and with so-called unstructured approaches, which ... we regard as at best a disingenuous and sometimes a dangerous misnomer for refusing to acknowledge prior expectations or agendas. (p. 50)

The same question schedule was used in each of the focus groups. The schedule was composed of the following questions:

1. What do you think are the five most important issues for young people today?
2. What do you think young people today value most?
3. How do you think young people today have changed from young people 20 years ago?
4. What worries you?
5. What do you want to get out of your life?
6. What are the most important influences on your life?
7. Who most influences your life?
8. What's your greatest hope? What's your greatest fear?
9. If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?
10. What does 'spirituality' mean to you? What does 'religion' mean to you?

The focus groups were all mixed sex and comprised between four and 12 pupils. A medium sized group of about six pupils best facilitated discussion; this allowed space for each person to participate, but also enabled the young people to benefit from each other's ideas. The pupils participating in the focus groups were selected by their teachers, who were asked not to select young people because they held a specific viewpoint or level of intelligence. The focus groups included a good mix of young people from differing backgrounds, and differing levels of intelligence and eloquence. While qualitative research cannot be said to be generalisable, the mix of young people participating in the focus groups went some way towards ensuring that they were representative of the values of a wider group of young people. The HaFVI later tests the extent to which these values expressed by the focus group participants are reflected among a larger group.



Each focus group lasted about one hour, and the same process was used with each. At the beginning of each focus group the nature of the project was explained. Each young person participating in the focus groups received a sheet giving a written explanation of the project and the role of the focus groups within it. A similar sheet was given to teachers and youth group leaders. The anonymous nature of the young people's contributions, beyond the immediate group and the researcher, was emphasised. The young people were consulted about tape-recording their discussion. Recording the focus group discussions was central to ensuring accurate representation of the young people's values. First, recording the discussion enabled the researcher to give full concentration throughout the group discussion, rather than needing to concurrently concentrate on making notes. In addition, recording the discussions ensured that no details from the discussions were missed. Furthermore, to ensure that the focus groups were fully documented, the observations and reactions of the researcher, and evident reactions of the young people, were noted immediately following each group. In this way, the role of the researcher in the research was acknowledged, and the participants were acknowledged to a greater extent as individuals and not merely objects of study (Shah, 2001).

The next step in each focus group was the undertaking of a short interpersonal exercise. This allowed some familiarity to be gained between the participants, and between the participants and the researcher. The group was then subdivided into smaller groups and each of these smaller groups carried out a written brainstorming exercise of the issues they felt were important to them personally, and to young people collectively. The smaller groups then fed back their ideas from the brainstorming exercise to the whole group. This opened up whole group discussion. As emphasised by Barry (2001), these

brainstorming exercises both facilitated discussion of issues, and boosted concentration. Moreover, carrying out these brainstorming exercises near the beginning of each focus group allowed the young people to set the agenda for discussion. Basing the HaFVI on the values-map derived from the focus groups, as well as on the values-map derived from the literature, establishes that this study is centred on issues that are important to young people, rather than imposing the researcher's agenda. This is emphasised by Bryman (1988):

the most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its express commitment to viewing events, actions, norms, values etc from the perspective of the people who are being studied. (p. 61)

Thus it is evident that the HaFVI, which is thoroughly grounded in qualitative research, is therefore also grounded in the values of young people.

### *Analysing the findings*

Data from the focus groups are utilised in this study through their arrangement, through analysis, into a values-map. The recordings of the focus groups were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically (Burman, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Thorne, 2001).

Burman (1994) describes thematic analysis as:

a coherent way of organizing or reading some interview material in relation to specific research questions. These readings are organized under thematic headings in ways that attempt to do justice both to the elements of the research question and to the preoccupations of the interviewees (p. 57).

Burman's (1994) description indicates the way in which this analysis took place. This method of analysis was seen to be most appropriate given the existing skills of the researcher and her existing in-depth familiarity with the focus group data. In accordance with the descriptions of thematic analysis given by Burman (1994) and Thorne (2001),



the focus group transcripts were repeatedly read and re-read, and all the values and issues referred to and discussed by the young people were noted. These were then grouped according to thematic headings, which were devised in accordance with the noted values and issues. The 'elements of the research question' (Burman, 1994, p. 57) addressed were the need for a valid values-map from young people's statements and discussions. The 'preoccupations of the interviewees' (Burman, 1994, p. 57) addressed were the young people's statements of issues that are important to them and their peers, and their further discussions which revealed more of their values.

From this analysis, 14 themes emerged from the data, describing what the young people most value. These are: core values; aims in life; family; relationships and friends; fitting in; communication; discrimination and stereotyping; the media; concerns and fears; school and education; hobbies and social life; substance use; politics and war; and religion. There are also two key questions (questions three and nine in the question schedule) which give an overview of how young people view themselves and the world.

## **Findings**

These 14 themes, therefore, constitute the values-map of young people's values from the focus group discussions. The data from the focus groups are discussed in this chapter under each of these 14 headings. While portraying the findings from the focus groups, this also illuminates the way in which the values expressed in the focus groups comprise these 14 value-areas. Before examining each of these 14 areas, the young people's responses to the two overview questions are considered. These provide a good summary of, and introduction to, the values expressed by the young people in the focus groups.

### *How young people have changed from young people 20 years ago*

The young people's comparisons of young people today with young people of the same age 20 years ago demonstrates something of the way in which the young people view themselves and their peers. They consider their generation in a reasonably positive light. The young people stated that they are "more brainy" than young people 20 years ago. They felt that socially their generation had more freedom than the previous generation both in terms of attitudes to what they are 'allowed' to do in their leisure time, and in terms of increased leisure provision. They also felt that society's attitudes to young people are, in some ways, more liberal than previously. The young people in one focus group cited the example of it now being less of a social taboo, than previously, for young people to have children outside of marriage. However, it was recognised that responsibility came with this increased level of freedom:

"Got more responsibility. Coz you've got more independence so you need the responsibility."

Young people in the focus groups also cited technological advances as a way in which young people today differ from young people 20 years ago. They maintained that society has become more technologically advanced, although they identified some negative effects of increased access to technology:

"Over 50 years, it's a lot to do with TV and things like that, and celebrities, and people take after them and try things."

[TV] "You depend on things like that coz you don't know what it's like to be without it."

The young people also felt that fashion was more important to their generation than to young people 20 years ago:

"Dress smarter now."



“Brand names means lots.”

“If you haven’t got the right brand or anything then people’ll take the mick out of you.”

It was felt that this rise in the importance of fashion was related to the influence of celebrities on young people. For example, one young person stated that:

“Think about what they look like more. Because of the supermodels. Because years ago people didn’t have, like, the money to go and buy, like, lots of things.”

However, some young people in the focus groups expressed more negative attitudes about the behaviour of their generation in comparison with previously:

“Even in the last five years, since my sister was in, like, my year, everyone’s sleeping with each other...no-one used to drink, and now people are drinking *every* weekend, and smoking cannabis, smoking cigarettes, and everything.”

“They’re more badly behaved now. More vandalism around.”

Furthermore, others felt that young people do not spend as much time with their family anymore, and that “traditions have been lost”. They observed that young people today appear to be less religious, and fewer young people go to church.

Therefore, consideration of the young people’s responses to the question of how young people today differ from 20 years ago, demonstrates that the young people recognise that they and their peers may be preoccupied with things such as technology and fashion. Yet they do not necessarily view this as a negative thing; rather as a step forward for their generation. However, they are also aware of, and at times reflect in their own views, other perceptions of young people as a group that are held in society, for example, regarding behaviour.

### ***What young people would change about the world***

The second overview question from the focus groups moves on from the young people's perceptions of themselves to examine their perceptions of the world.

The young people reacted in many differing ways to the question of 'If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?'. Some of the young people were overwhelmed by the question:

"These are hard questions!"

Others related the question to their immediate world:

"That field over there. Make a big motorcross track or something ... Got fined the other week. Fifteen quid for riding me bike down a road coz got nowhere to go."

Some of the young people gave more idealistic responses to this question:

"Everyone could have an equal share of all the wealth in the world ... no-one was superior to anyone else, we're all classed as equals. Which would be really cool."

"All the bad stuff out there."

"People starving."

"Share everything out equally."

"And if people've got enough money they should share it out."

"And not spend it on stupid things like the Millennium Dome. All that money could've gone and bought food couldn't it?"

Some responses to this question were particular to current affairs at the time of the focus groups, demonstrating the impact these world events had on the young people:

"Bin Laden gets shot."

"Nicer people ... like Osama Bin Laden, change him to be all nice and, you know, lovely."



There were also responses regarding moral issues covered by the press at the time of the focus groups. For example, one young person stated that the one thing she would change about the world would be the law on assisted suicide, in response to the Diane Pretty case (Dyer, 2002). Her suggestion caused discussion among the other participants in the group, for example:

“I agree but then you get the thing that then there will be people who take advantage of that and kill people from it. It depends on the situation doesn't it.”

Lively discussion arose in many of the focus groups from the young people's responses to this question. For example, in response to the suggestion that all the “bad stuff” in the world should be removed, a discussion arose as to whether there had to be “bad stuff” in the world:

“There's always gonna be something bad isn't there.”

“The world can't be perfect can it? There's gotta be some bad things going on.”

“If the world was perfect there'd be no occupations, like. There'd be no people setting fires; firemen, no people for the police to arrest and everything. All them occupations are gone.”

One young person suggested that the death penalty should be reinstated in the United Kingdom for crimes such as murder. This provoked much discussion in his focus group, including consideration of the nature of divine intervention. For example:

“I think it [death penalty] should be brought back, but only for certain cases that are very, very strong. Like terrorism and mass murders and things like that. They say that, erm, we shouldn't be able to choose whether we can kill people, and the person that's killed those people shouldn't have the choice whether they can be killed or not.”

“Yeah but God is the only one who can choose when you die and if he wants them to die then he'll kill them. Simple as. If he doesn't want them to die he won't kill them. You've just got no right to say ‘You live, you die’.”

“The reason I don't think that is because little kids die, and people die of cancer who haven't necessarily done anything wrong.”

“What if it's the wrong person, what if you kill someone who's innocent?”

“But why should society decide who dies and who lives?”

Other religious discussions were also prompted in response to this question. One young person suggested that the one thing he would change about the world would be that:

“Ok, everyone is a Christian. If everyone is a Christian, then there’d be no need to evangelise, and, well everybody would be serving God, so all you’d be doing is you’d be coming to this earth, serving God, basically worshipping God, and then, going to heaven.”

His suggestions evoked discussion of the real nature of people’s religious profession, and purpose in life:

“People who are like Christians, I know, they’re not, they say they’re Christians and everything, but it doesn’t make you perfect does it?”

“We’re not down here for no reason are we? What I’m saying is, we’re here to serve God, and to do his work basically, and to evangelise.”

“I think there’s more to life than that, personally.”

“I think it’s unfair of God to stick us on here just to worship him.”

The young people’s responses to the question of the one thing they would change about the world facilitates insight into their perceptions of the world; demonstrating their range of responses and passion within these through their discussion. This facilitates increased understanding of their values and priorities.

Having examined these two questions which provide an overview of the young people’s values, the 14 areas arising from the focus groups are now examined, as a map of the young people’s values.

### ***Core values***

Eight core values emerged as of primary importance to the young people from their responses to the focus group questions. These are: love; freedom of choice; courage; bravery; fun; individuality; independence; and social balance. These values were



expressed in many differing ways. For example, regarding love, one young person stated:

“And that everyone would be loved. I think that’s really important though, to be loved.”

Young people in another focus group demonstrated the importance they attributed to love in this conversation:

[What would make your life happy?] “Love.”

“I don’t know, I’m scared of falling in love. I really would be.”

“To fall in love and not get hurt.”

The importance of being loved was emphasised throughout the focus group discussions, for example, through the great value the young people placed on their family and friends, and their fears of their families dying, as can be seen in later sections of this chapter.

Independence, including freedom of choice, was also seen by the young people as important:

“It’s making your own decisions and having the choice of doing whatever you want.”

“If you can’t make your own decisions then you’re living in a dictatorship, someone’s telling you what to do.”

Individuality was also seen as an important value. This was emphasised in one focus group by the disapproving description of the social situation:

“You’re either a townie, or a scally, or a mosher and you’ve gotta be and if you’re not anything then you just don’t fit in, and it’s silly really.”

Social balance was therefore emphasised by others of the young people as important.

Courage and bravery can also be seen to be important to the young people through the focus group discussions, for example:

“You respect people like the fire brigade, got the courage to carry on.”

The young people also emphasised the importance they placed on having fun, for example in going out with their friends, to cinemas, parks, and clubs, and in the more hedonistic expression of:

**“Have fun and die young.”**

### ***Aims in life***

The young people expressed differing aims and ambitions for their lives. These included both general aims, and specific aims involving, for example, career and family. Their general aims are considered first here.

The young people’s desire to make their mark on the world and be remembered was clear from the focus groups:

**“To be remembered. If no-one remembers you, what’s the ... well, not what’s the point of being there, but you wanna be remembered and do something, just something really good.”**

**“I’d like to get in the record books, for just anything ... I’d like to be remembered ... for who I am, not someone else. Not an idol or something, just who I am and who I was at the time.”**

**“To find something that changes the world completely. Like a cure for cancer, and totally wipe out AIDS and HIV and all that kinda stuff.”**

Many of the young people’s general aims in life involved getting the most out of life and making the most of time:

**“To do everything in the world before you die.”**

**“I just wanna see everywhere. Just to know that I’ve done everything I wanna do, and I’ve seen everywhere I wanna see, before I die.”**

**“Just wanna be able to say did that, did that. Just wanna be able to say ‘glad I did that’, like.”**



**“Get the best out of it. Just do all you can.”**

**“Make the most of what we’ve got.”**

**“Yeah, you’ve only got 80 years.”**

**“Just like, a sense of satisfaction, like you’ve got something out of it, you’ve not wasted your time.”**

Similarly, the young people’s general aims in life also included:

**“To succeed in life.”**

**“Be happy.”**

**“Live in harmony.”**

Having considered some of the young people’s general aims in life, their specific aims are now examined. Many of these specific aims related to work and employment:

**“A good job.”**

**“Get a really good job.”**

Some of the young people had particular careers in mind:

**“I want to be a dolphin trainer when I’m older.”**

**“Becoming a vet.”**

**“To be a rugby player. Achieve my goal.”**

**“To be able to do acting for my career.”**

For some of the young people, their work and employment aims were financially motivated:

**“Get a nice job and some money.”**

**“Good job and just enough money to secure yourself and everything.”**

**“Have a good job ... so you can enjoy life better. Coz if you have, like, money an’ ... you can enjoy it.”**

**However, for others, having money an aim in itself, for the material gains it could bring:**

**“Money. Not too much, but just enough, just so you can have a nice house.”**

**“You just like to know that you’re not struggling.”**

**“More money gives you more luxuries.”**

**“To win the lottery!”**

**“If you haven’t got money you can’t do anything.”**

**“Everything costs.”**

**Some young people went beyond association of money with material gain, to a direct link between money and happiness:**

**“To have a happy life with money and all that lot.”**

**“Money is happiness.”**

**Although others disagreed with this association:**

**“Money can’t make you, like, happy all the time. Like say you had a really really rich husband or something if he wasn’t nice then there was no point and you’d just have lots of money and not be happy.”**

**Another of the specific aims for their lives expressed by many of the young people was to have a family:**

**“Good, happy family. Like a husband like David Beckham.”**

**“Find someone you really like and have a family.”**

**“Happy family. Lots of kids running around me feet.”**

**However, others did not want a family. The young people in one focus group felt the idea of having children seemed a bit “far fetched”. Young people in other groups agreed:**



**“I don’t want a family.”**

**“And I don’t know if I’d want any kids ... I just don’t think I’d be a good mum because I’m not caring enough. I’m too selfish to have a baby. It’s not that I won’t love em as much. I’m scared that I won’t be a good mum. That’s what’ud bother me.”**

Other specific aims in life discussed by the young people included travelling. For example:

**“I’d just love to travel the world and see all the different countries and places.”**

### ***Family***

Family arose many times in the focus group discussions as particularly important for the young people. Family was frequently stated as being an important issue in the brainstorming at the beginning of the focus group discussions. Their families were seen as both a positive and negative part of the young people’s lives.

The young people identified their families as important influences on them. They felt that their families, and especially their parents, influenced their moral and religious values, and provided role models. Many of the young people felt that their parents were the most important influence on their life:

**“Coz you’re around them so much.”**

For example, one young person demonstrated being influenced by his father in terms of musical taste, and was pleased to be following in his father’s “footsteps”. However, others felt that the influence of their families and parents was negative:

**“If your mum says like, not to do something, you want to do it, don’t you?”**

**“You’re not wanna end up how they are.”**

**“I don’t wanna be like my parents, I wanna be the opposite.”**

**“Corrupt. Your parents corrupt your life.”**

One young person particularly espoused the pressure he felt from his parents:

**“I want to go into the army, but my parents want me to go to university first, but I don’t want to. My mum wants me to be more like her, go to university, get a degree, possibly another degree, but I’m nothing like her. She’s trying to make me be really clever, but I’m not that clever.”**

Pressure in families was also described in terms of pressure to live up to the precedent set by older siblings. For example:

**“My sister’s at university ... she’s dead good, and I’m, like, really naughty.”**

Families were identified by some young people as important as a source of support. For example:

**“I talk to my mum about everything. She’s open about things with me. So even though she’s my mum she’s kinda like my sister. So I think I did well with my mum.”**

However, others of the young people found difficulties in talking to their parents and older family members about their problems. For example:

**“If you say you have a problem or something to your mum and dad, they just say to you ‘Oh you’re a kid, how can you be feeling down’ or something like that. But they don’t understand it, what it’s like to be a teenager.”**

**“They think, ‘it can’t be a big problem they’re only a kid’, but it is to you innit.”**

Conversely, others again described difficulties with their parents overreacting when the young people told them they had a problem:

**“Or they take it too far. Or if you say something like ‘someone called me a name’ they think you’re being bullied and like ring the school or summat.”**  
**“Yeah, overprotective.”**



A further way in which the young people described their families was in terms of finding them embarrassing or annoying:

“They just annoy me.”

“I hate family.”

“They’re embarrassing. Seriously.”

“But you can’t live without em.”

“Can’t live without em, can’t live with em.”

“Sort of danger zone. Do not touch sort of area.”

The young people also saw their pets as an important part of their families and as of great value to them. Pets were frequently mentioned by the young people as important to them in the brainstorming at the beginning of the focus groups.

Overall, the young people recognised the huge influence that their families have on their lives, both positive and negative. Their feelings with regard to their families may be summarised in the statement of one young person in reflecting on her friend’s description of the loss of her grandmother:

“You don’t really appreciate your family until something happens.”

### ***Relationships and friends***

In the brainstorming at the beginning of the focus groups, the young people frequently stated that their friends were one of the most important aspects of their lives. The importance of friends was a recurrent theme throughout the focus groups. Many different reasons were given for the importance of friends, including the fact that they spent a lot of their time with friends, and that they could talk to them about anything:

“It’s people that I trust. I couldn’t live without my friends, I really couldn’t.”

“We all enjoy just being with our friends.”

**“Get lonely without them.”**

**“That’s really who you spend most of your time with.”**

**“You tell your friends everything, they’re like, your sort of advisers.”**

**“They’re your backbone.”**

**“If you’ve got no friends you’ve just, like, got no life.”**

Many of the young people, particularly the girls, stated that being popular and having friends was very important. The boys in one focus group, however, were not as convinced about the centrality of their friends, arguing that ultimately individuals have to make their own decisions:

**“They’re nice to have around but they don’t make an impact.”**

Yet this was the exception, and overall the young people emphasised friends as of great consequence in their lives.

Issues of peer pressure arose in the young people’s discussions of friends. The force of peer pressure was identified:

**“When one person starts something off everybody starts doing it, depending on who it is really.”**

**“I think your friends put pressure on you as well. If one of them smokes and they offer it to the others and they can’t say no.”**

**“You know it’s wrong but you might feel forced to do it to stay with your friends.”**

**“If you’re in with the wrong crowd you just end up doing something stupid.”**

The young people also saw peer pressure as a less threatening effect, in terms of their friends having an influence on them:



“If you like someone, like, they’re your friends and that, you wanna be like em, so you change to be like em.”

“Yeah, they are a big influence on my life my best friends.”

“You respect their opinions.”

In acknowledging that their friends, as well as their families, were an important influence on their lives, the young people identified that conflict arose at times between the advice of these two groups. For example, conflict arose with relation to school, with pressure from parents and teachers on one side, and from friends on the other.

The young people also emphasised the importance of relationships with girlfriends and boyfriends:

“Everyone’s just, like, obsessed.”

“At the moment, innit, most people in our year are going out with someone.”

They stated that their appearance was an important part of these relationships:

“Appearance ... it’s partly about relationships as well.”

“You have to try and look your best all the time.”

Sex was also identified as an important issue; being cited as important in the brainstorming at the beginning of the focus groups.

### *Fitting in*

In the focus group discussions, the importance of relationships and friends was closely connected with the issue of fitting in. However, the high level of prominence given to the issue of fitting in merits consideration here as a separate issue.

The young people expressed a strong need and desire to 'fit in' with their peers.

"You've got to fit into, like, a certain group."

"You're either a trend follower or a trend maker."

They also described fitting in as one of young people's main concerns. The young people in one focus group identified fitting in as the *most* important issue in their lives. In the brainstorming of things that were important to young people, they wrote fitting in down first. When questioned as to why, one young person stated:

"If you didn't fit in...then you'd have no friends."

Further, one young person stated that having fun was of great importance to her, and when questioned as to why, she demonstrated that her desire to be outgoing was related to her desire to fit in:

"You're gonna be dead boring otherwise and nobody's gonna wanna know you or hang around with you or anything".

This again demonstrated the importance of being accepted by their peers to the young people.

Moreover, as well as identifying that fitting in was important in their lives, the young people identified fashion and image; their visual appearance, as essential to whether or not they fitted in with their peers. For example:

[What do young people worry about?] "If you fit in."  
"Image."

[Why's fashion important?] "Because you want to fit in."

"Wearing the right clothes."



“Depends on what everyone else’s wearing. If there’s a shirt that everyone thinks is gip, then you probably won’t buy it, even if you like it.”

Furthermore, most of the young people accepted this judgement of each other on appearance, and felt that it would not change:

“That’s just the way things are.”

Therefore, most of the young people identified fitting in with their peers as one of their greatest concerns and most important aspects of their lives. However, their individualism was also apparent within this, for example:

“Well, fitting in, but I don’t wanna be the same as everyone else.”

### ***Communication***

Communication was particularly important for the young people in terms of communication with friends and peers. They described the ways they communicated with their friends.

The telephone was repeatedly stated to be important, and was often mentioned by the girls, for example:

“I’m always on the phone.”

“And my dad caught me the other night, I was on the phone for *three* hours.”

Mobile phones were also identified as a key method of communication. Mobiles were predominantly used for text messaging:

“And I’m addicted to text messaging.”

“Text messages, they’re the best, coz you can write anything and not get embarrassed.”

In some of the focus groups there was a split between the girls and the boys regarding their favoured methods of communication with friends. The girls preferred more remote methods of communication, for example phone and e-mail, while the boys in the focus groups were concerned about transport and being able to go and see their friends. For example, boys in some focus groups highlighted that the buses, and transport from parents, were important parts of their lives, in affecting how and when they saw and communicated with their friends.

The young people also discussed communication with relation to the Internet. Overall, they stated that they did not spend a lot of time on the Web, but that they did spend a lot of time e-mailing, and communicating with friends via Internet chat.

Therefore, the young people in the focus groups painted a picture of some of the most important communication with their friends occurring remotely, away from time in personal contact. Through remote communication, some of the young people found it easier to express themselves openly and honestly.

### *The media*

The young people highlighted the media as important in their lives in many ways. They identified the media as an important influence on their lives, for example through advertising, and the representation of celebrities. The importance of the media as entertainment was also emphasised.



The young people also described the impact of the media on their lives through its portrayal of stereotypes of young people. The issue of stereotyping is discussed in the next section of this chapter. The present section explores the young people's descriptions of the influence the media has on them.

The media was mainly represented in the young people's lives through television, and the importance of television was frequently emphasised. Television was described as an important form of entertainment, for example, one young person stated that television was important:

“Because we all watch it and we're all lazy and we like to watch it.”

Music was also seen as an important form of entertainment for the young people. For some young people viewed music was a more important part of their lives than television.

For example, one young person stated:

“I'd rather have my music than TV.”

The influence of the media on the young people was highlighted in many of the focus groups, for example:

“Loads of people are influenced by the TV. Loads.”

Some young people maintained that the media was a greater influence than their family and friends. They saw the media as influencing them in two main ways, through advertising, and through the portrayal of celebrities. However, many of the young people resented their perceived role as a target for advertisers. They felt that they are seen as “more gullible” and would buy things because of advertising:

“They think that we're stupid and that we'll buy anything.”

Furthermore, the young people stated that the media portrayal of celebrities influenced them, although again many were resentful of this. For example:

“People are under more pressure because they feel like they’ve got to be really really slim like people like Victoria Beckham otherwise people aren’t gonna like them ... because they see stereotypical people on the tele and stuff like that and listen to them on the radio and then they think ‘oh I’ve got to be like that’ and people see them as their role model.”

“Media influence again.”

Additionally, some young people discussed the influence of the actions of people on television in response to the question of the most important influence on their lives. The example was given of people and celebrities being portrayed on television smoking, and this affecting the young people who then:

“Think it’s cool.”

There were mixed feelings among the young people about celebrities and their influence:

“They’ve got everything.”

“People just wanna be like them coz they seem perfect don’t they.”

Although:

“Only see them when they’re looking perfect, not when they’ve just got up ...”

“They’re so perfect and glamorous and they’re always like, the perfect couple or whatever, rich, famous, got everything, but they’re just like Barbie dolls really.”

### *Stereotyping and discrimination*

The young people also described the media as an important issue in their lives through its depictions of negative stereotypes of young people:

“The media. They put stereotypes.”

For example, it was felt that following a bad media report regarding young people,

“They just judge you and think you’re all bad.”



The young people described that stereotypes and discrimination of young people are prevalent in society overall. Although they identified stereotyping and peer pressure within their own age group, they emphasised discrimination and stereotyping from other adults as problematic.

The young people felt that they were not treated fairly by other adults, and that assumptions were made about all young people because of the well-publicised actions of a few. They described that this affected other people's behaviour towards them:

“Everyone thinks teenagers are all bad.”

“It's like, they see you on the street, they give you a really dirty look.”

“It's like, some people, they try and help old people, and they just tell them to get lost coz they think they're robbing them or something.”

“They think you're gonna rob coz you're a teenager.”

“There's a small part of, like, teenagers that steal and whatever, they [people] just think that all teenagers are the same.”

[People think that young people are] “All stealing, druggies, smoking, stuff like that.”

These descriptions include the young people's use of the word 'teenager' with relation to their peers. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986), as demonstrated in chapter one, state that 'teenager' is a dismissive term, and the phrase 'young people' has been selected for use in the present study. While it may be argued that this should be revised in light of the young people's use of the word 'teenager', it remains inappropriate to adopt this term here because of its use by young people, due to the context of its use. It is important to consider that the young people used the term 'teenager' when describing adults' stereotyped views of them. Furthermore, consideration of the above statements

demonstrates an evident distance between the young people's use of the term 'teenager' to describe their peers as a group, and their own identification with it. There remain questions over the use of the term 'teenager' therefore, particularly in light of the young people's frequent distancing of themselves as individuals from it. As previously established, therefore, the term 'young people' is used in this study.

The young people described many examples of their personal experiences of discrimination from these stereotypes. One example given was of older people falsely accusing young people of queue jumping in the bus queue when the young people had been waiting "for hours":

"And then they swear at yer, and they're trying to set an example."

Furthermore:

"Coz they see a gang of kids on the street and they think like, 'Oh they're causing trouble', and the police come and they're like 'Come on now, move along' but you're not doing anything."

"It's your street as well."

Examples were also given of young people being followed around shops, with the assumption that they would shoplift, of other adults pushing in front of them in a shop queue, or being given the wrong change, all with the view that:

"Think you won't mind coz you're young."

The large number of examples of discrimination, and the vehemence of the young people's response to, and discussion of the concept of, stereotyping and discrimination, demonstrates the importance of this issue in their lives, and their strength of feeling regarding this issue.



The young people also discussed whether stereotypes and discrimination against young people would, or could be, changed. Some young people felt that other adults' perception of young people was right in some cases. In these cases, it was felt by some that other adults could easily help the negative actions of young people:

"Give 'em something to do. There's nothing to do. They never give us anything to do. It's rubbish. There's nothing to do. People go and bash out windows just for a menace, like."

However, most of the young people felt that while stereotypes of and discrimination against them should change, this would not actually happen:

"Set in people's minds. You're gonna end up like this whatever."

"It'd be a good thing but I don't think it'll ever happen."

### *Concerns and fears*

This section explores many of the worries expressed by the young people in the focus groups. Some of their worries, for example school or fitting in, are not described here. These areas are important for the young people in other ways in addition to causing them concern, and therefore constitute separate value-areas in this chapter.

The young people expressed many concerns and fears. The most frequently expressed fear was of death, both for themselves, and for their family and friends. For example:

"Greatest fear? Dying ... You just go."

"Dying ... Yeah if you're having fun, and then you think 'Oh my God, I'm gonna die eventually.'"

"People in the family dying that are close to you."

"I worry about death more than anything else, like death of your family."

“My sister dying before me.”

“Having to watch someone out of your family, or one of your friends, slip away, like really slowly, like deteriorate. That’s my biggest fear.”

The young people particularly focused on fear of their own death, discussing many ways in which they most feared dying:

“My fear is dying, probably, really slowly and painfully. Knowing that you’re gonna die, and no-one can cure you.”

“Being on a plane or something and you know you’re gonna die. It’s the sort of waiting.”

“A slow and painful death would be the worst, you deteriorate until what’s left of you is a vegetable.”

“It’s how you die. If it’s natural causes then that’s it, but like, if you die tomorrow.”

“Dying in a plane crash.”

“Not dying when I’m old, just dying of cancer when I’m young or something.”

“My greatest fear is someone strangling me to death.”

“Or being buried alive.”

“Not being able to breathe, say like if you’re under water or summat, or if there’s somebody like, suffocating you.”

Others, however, maintained that they were not afraid of death itself, but rather of the emotion or pain surrounding it:

“I’m not scared of dying, but the thing I’d be scared of is dying and being on bad terms with someone.”

“I’m not scared of it. I’d be more scared of getting cancer or whatever than dying by getting knocked down or whatever. It comes, don’t it, it happens to everybody, so there’s no point in thinking about it and fretting over it. It’s gonna happen anyway.”



Therefore, through their high levels of concern and fear about their own, or their families' deaths, the young people expressed fear of the unknown, and of their own powerlessness.

A further area of concern for the young people was getting old. For example, in response to the question 'What's your greatest fear?', one young person stated:

"I don't really have one. I'm invincible! [Pause] Not being funny anymore. Getting past my time. Growing old and flabby and stuff falling off."

Others also reflected this:

"Getting old. Being a biddy."

"I'm scared of growing old. I don't wanna get too old. I'd kill myself first."

[Why?] "I don't wanna depend on people and not be able to do anything."

"I don't wanna get wrinkles."

"It doesn't matter the way you look, you'll still be old."

Fear of powerlessness was also given as a reason for fear of getting old:

"If I miss out when I'm young I'm not going to be able to go back and do the same thing again."

"Try and do all you can at the moment."

They were also afraid of being lonely:

"Being lonely."

"If you're lonely and dead then it's not very good coz no-one comes to your funeral."

The young people also expressed concerns for their safety and health. For example:

"Bad health for anyone. I've been through quite a bit."

"Safety. You won't get to go out with your friends if you're not safe so ..."

As well as expressing concerns and fears relating to themselves, the young people expressed concerns about the wider world. These included issues such as war and famine, and issues brought to their attention through the media:

“I worry about things, like, that I see on the news. Not worry as in I can’t get to sleep over them, but just sometimes when I look at things and people being murdered and raped and all this stuff ...”

“It’s frightening, yeah, you worry it’s gonna happen in other countries.”

However, others argued that they were not concerned about issues such as war and famine. Whether they should be concerned about these issues evoked discussion in many focus groups, and often hinged on whether the concern immediately affected the young people:

“You know it’s never going to happen to you, so you’re really shocked when you see someone dying in a really bad way or something like that.”

“You’re really shocked, but it doesn’t really affect you coz you’re not seeing the real thing.”

“It [war, famine] happens so often, and we don’t think of it coz we don’t think it’ll happen to us, ever.”

“It does [bother you] if it is *here*, but not if it’s somewhere dead far away.”

“It would worry me if I lived in like them sort of countries, but I don’t, so it doesn’t worry me.”

“Yeah I feel sorry for them an’ that, but there’s no need for us to worry about it.”

“If something happens with like, kids the same age as you, you worry about it, but if it’s people like, far away, it doesn’t bother you.”

Some young people expressed concern regarding particular issues of current affairs. For example:

“Terrorism. Nuclear weapons and stuff.”

“War and stuff like that.”



Again, however, others refuted that they worried about these issues, because:

“You don’t know about it. And they say like there’s all these threats and everything, but you don’t know what’s going on, like.”

Some young people stated that they were concerned about the environment. This was in relation to both the present and the future:

“Our children will have to make up for the mistakes that we’ve made, because we couldn’t be bothered.”

“No-one is thinking radically to change it all so we all have to decide for ourselves.”

“It’s our responsibility and no-one does much about it.”

Alongside these larger issues raised by many of the young people, other issues that concerned them were raised by individuals. These varied greatly, for example:

“Going to prison for something I didn’t do.”

“Lifts.”

“Money. Because you won’t be able to live otherwise. Can’t get a shelter over your head. Can’t eat.”

“What the world’s going to be like, in like, seven years’ time. Traditions are being lost, I feel there’s nothing to be proud of in this country. People are not, they don’t, there’s nothing to tempt them to stay in the country. It’s a minority country, you know, priorities go to the people who aren’t English, people who aren’t straight, people who aren’t white.”

As well as expressing their concerns and fears, the young people described their responses to these feelings. For the girls particularly, these included shopping and chocolate:

“If you feel down and you go out and buy loads of clothes you feel better don’t you.”

“Girls need chocolate don’t they, you can’t live without chocolate.”

Others stated that they thought prayer could be used as a response to their concerns and fears. However, they appeared unconvinced regarding the efficacy of prayer:

“Well, we can pray and whatever, but think how many people have prayed about the situations that go on, and nothing’s happened. Not that it’s irrelevant to pray, but, I don’t know, sometimes if you worry too much about all that stuff it can get on top of you, can’t it. If you take all the world’s worries on you ...”

### ***School and education***

School and education were described as very important by the young people participating in the focus groups. For example, in response to questioning about the most important issues for young people, the young people in one focus group stated:

“Education, surely.”

“You’re going to live up to a maximum of 80, and that’s 20 years of your life.”

Education was primarily seen as important for their future:

“We need education to get a decent job when we’re older. For later on in life.”

One young person emphasised the importance to him of learning about the world practically, before continuing his aim of going to university:

“I’m definitely going to take a gap year and go to a Third World country.”

While education overall was important to the young people, school was identified as an important aspect of their daily lives. Many of the young people felt that their lives centred around school, not least because of the large amount of time they spent there.

School was also described as having an effect on their moral values:

“What they teach you. Lessons in life.”

This was highlighted in other focus groups through the young people’s emphasis on education to combat racism:

“People should be, like, educated, and then you can make your own opinion after knowing what it’s actually like.”



“It’s like race and religion. If you’re told about the religion, and what it’s like, then you can build your own opinion from that, and then sort of, educate them all, instead of making a snap decision ... you’ve gotta be able to have a choice of who you can like and who you can’t.”

However, school was not always viewed positively. One young person expressed horror at the thought of spending more time at school:

“If they say that school’s gonna go on for longer I’m just gonna die.”

The young people mainly demonstrated negativity with relation to school through worry, stress, and pressure about school work and exams. For example:

“When exams come, I worry then ... panic, stress.”

Some described their methods of coping with the pressure of exams, for example:

“You don’t wanna revise, but you want to get the best mark possible, so you’re trying to get the best amount of results on the minimum amount of work.”

Others were looking forward to a time when pressure from schoolwork and exams would be lifted:

“In a year’s time we’ll have finished our GCSEs and it won’t matter anymore.”

### ***Hobbies and social life***

The young people emphasised hobbies and social activities of importance to them. It was stated that these were an important part of their lives:

“Coz you need something to do really.”

Two main types of hobbies and social activities were described. First, activities undertaken by the young people with their friends or peers, and second, activities undertaken for themselves.

One of the most popular activities that the young people undertook with their friends was shopping, particularly for the girls. The importance of shopping as a therapeutic activity has been seen, and its importance as a social activity was also emphasised by the young people. Going to concerts was also described as an important part of their social life with friends:

“We all like going to them and they’re really good fun.”

Music generally was highlighted by the young people as an important part of their hobbies and social activities.

“I couldn’t live without my music, well, I could, I just have it on *all* the time.”

Music was an activity that they undertook both with their friends and on their own. The young people took part in music both actively and passively, for example through playing in bands, or through listening to music. Music was also important with relation to fitting in, as it, to some extent, determined which ‘group’ among their peers they fitted in to.

Other reasons were also given for the importance of music:

“It makes me concentrate.”

“Chills you out.”

“What would you do if you just went out? If you went out to a club, what would you do without music? You’d just be sitting there.”

The young people highlighted the importance of sport as a hobby. However, from the focus group discussions it is apparent that although the young people often played sport with their peers, their motivations for undertaking sport were frequently other than as a social activity:



“Sport ... keep fit an’ everything.”

[If there was no sport] “be a couch potato.”

Particular sports that were highlighted as important included motorcross and football:

“Because we’re lads, and that’s, er, what’s most important to us.”

The young people outlined many other hobbies and social activities they took part in. For example, many had a part-time job. Moreover, they stated that computers were a very important part of their lives, both for school work and leisure activities:

“Because we all have one and we use it quite a lot for homework and leisure and everything.”

The young people also described that they spent time reading, specifically mentioning magazines, and *Harry Potter* books.

Many of the young people stated that they watched television in their spare time. The importance that they placed on television was demonstrated through their assessment of part of its role in society:

“In the olden times they had, like churches as entertainment kind of. And now we’ve just got more stuff to do.”

“TV now.”

### ***Substance use***

Substance use was described as important by the young people in three main ways. First, their perceptions of the use of substances now in comparison with 20 years ago. Second, their attitudes to substance use. Third, the issue of whether use of certain substances should be legalised. These are addressed in turn here.

The young people felt that substance use was more prevalent among young people today than a generation ago. They felt that particularly smoking and use of cannabis had increased, for example:

“Everyone does weed.”

However, although they felt that the use of substances had increased among their peers, their own attitudes to substances were predominantly negative. The exception to this negative attitude was alcohol, which was mainly seen as acceptable:

“Get rid of stuff like drugs, but not alcohol.”

One way in which the young people expressed their negative attitude to substances was through their desire to change them in the world. In response to the question of the one thing they would change about the world, some of the young people stated:

“Just drugs and all that.”

“Too much drugs around, I think. Which is a bad thing”.

The young people also associated substance use with ill health. For example, young people in one focus group discussed smoking, stating that their peers commonly think that smoking is “alright”, and that disease will not happen to them, but that they do not see people dying of lung cancer. This association of substance use and ill health was further expressed in another focus group:

“Bad for your health.”

“Kill you.”

The issue of whether some drugs should be legalised was discussed in many on the focus groups. In one, the issue arose as something one young person worried about,



demonstrating the view that legalising drugs was seen as a negative action:

“The laws get more relaxed. Drugs. Like legalising everything now.”

Others in this group, however, maintained that legalising drugs would be a positive action, in taking away some of the excitement of substance use:

“I don’t know actually because ... people want to get it because they know it’s illegal so they want to get it because they shouldn’t have it.”

“It’s more of a thrill.”

“It’s the buzz.”

The discussion continued:

“Yeah but if they wanna do it they’ll do it anyway.”

“But if they kill themselves by doing it then it’s the government’s fault for legalising it.”

“Blame Blair!”

### *Politics and war*

The issues of politics, and of war and terrorism, were interconnected in the young people’s view, particularly in the political climate at the time at which the focus groups were conducted (summer 2002).

The young people were uncertain whether or not politics affected their lives. Many felt that politics was not important:

“Just don’t really think about it.”

“Young people don’t like politics and all that. Because it’s all corrupt.”

“At the moment it doesn’t, like, have really that much to do with us, until we can start voting and starting to take part in what the country does like paying taxes and stuff like that then I don’t think we can do that much about some things.”

However, others argued that politics did have an effect on their lives through the decisions that the government makes, especially with regard to terrorism:

**“It does if they make a bad one and they get the Taliban on us.”**

**“If Mr Whatever-his-name-is did something to offend Bin Laden, then he’d come and bomb, and people in London’ud die.”**

**“Tony Blair’s having a say so it could affect us anyway. It’s like Blair and erm, what’s his name, Bush, are kind of friends, so they could bomb us, or something like that, terrorism could affect us as well.”**

**Overall, the young people expressed a negative opinion of politicians:**

**“Get a decent Prime Minister. That’ud sort it out.”**

**“They’re all the same. It’s just going to be the same with everyone, coz of all this political correctness.”**

**Although there were some exceptions:**

**“I think William Hague’s cute. He’s like a tele-tubby.”**

**Specific political issues, for example immigration and the British National Party, were also raised by the young people in the focus groups. One young person stated that there were too many people entering the United Kingdom, although others opposed this idea:**

**“There are loads of people that come into the country...that just, like, wreck the country, and we’re letting them in. It stresses me out.”**

**“I just think, I don’t know about all this, but I just think the British National Party are a load of pants. I just think this country’s gonna be all the better if we let people into it.”**

**Many of the young people discussed whether young people their age should have a vote, and more of a say in political affairs. It was generally felt that the government and politicians do not listen to young people. For example:**

**“They decide about education and we can’t do anything.”**

**“Some of the young people of our age are like really really sensible and they know what they’re talking about and stuff and they have opinions and they just don’t get to say it.”**



The young people suggested two main ways in which their lack of involvement in politics could be redressed. The first was having young people serving as elected representatives:

“Like a junior government or something.”

“You should be able to elect, like, kid MPs that go to parliament for the same amount.”

The second was through young people having a vote. One young person suggested that this was the one thing she would change about the world:

“I want the vote for children.”

Others stated similarly:

“More young kids should be able to get their say.”

“Because the people that run our country are more sort of, like, the 40 to 80 category, which is sort of, old generation that have still got morals from like the 1950s, that are, girls shouldn’t have skirts that are above their ankles, and stupid things like that.”

However, while it was generally accepted that young people should have a greater voice in politics, many of the young people doubted whether this would ever happen:

“We won’t get it though. It took ages for women to have their vote.”

Some of the young people felt that their peers were not mature enough to take on the responsibility of voting:

“Yeah but there’s gotta be someone to make the decisions, if kids made the decisions they’d be stupid ones wouldn’t they? There’s always gonna be something someone don’t agree with in’t there?”

“No but kids like, well they do, but they don’t really know what they’re talking about.”

“They’d just make a joke of it.”

“There is some people that are mature enough but the majority aren’t.”

However, while they were uncertain about their peers, they had confidence in their own abilities:

*“I could vote though coz I’m mature.”*

One young person gave a pertinent explanation of her view of the situation:

*“When you’re young, you wanna be older so you can do things, but when you’re old you wanna be younger so you haven’t got the responsibility.”*

The solution was thus suggested that:

*“Should just spread it out. The young should be more responsible and the old should be less responsible.”*

### ***Religion***

Religion was important for the young people in many ways. Although there was a question about religion and spirituality at the end of the focus group question schedule, in most of the focus groups, religion was brought up by the young people in discussion before this question was raised.

One of the main issues about religion on which the young people focused was its relevance for young people today. Many of the focus group participants felt that religion was no longer important for young people in general, or for themselves:

*“Well religion is an issue but it’s not for people of our age mainly. Not any more.”*

*“People of our age group don’t really bother.”*

*“It’s not that they’re not bothered, it’s just that they don’t feel it’s like necessary, or something they must do.”*

*“Religion in general I’m not really bothered by. A person’s a person, it doesn’t matter what they believe in.”*

*“I just don’t think about it.”*



It was felt that religion is:

“Kinda dying down.”

However, others felt that some still saw religion as important in certain ways:

“When you’re young you want a social life and that, but yeah, you want summat to fall back on.”

“If bad things happen you usually want something to fall back on.”

Many young people identified religion as important in their lives and society through its political role, specifically, causing wars:

“Why did the thingies crash into the towers? Because of religion wannit?”

“Loads of people dying for no reason just because they’ve got a different religion or believe in a different God or something.”

However generally, the young people felt that their peers questioned religion, and that science now explains many problems which previously people looked to religion for an explanation of:

“We’ve got science to explain it all.”

It was also felt that families played an important role in whether or not religion was important for young people:

“Depends on how you’re brought up as well. If you’re brought up in a family that’s heavy into religion then you’re gonna be religious but if not then it won’t be as important.”

As well as discussing whether religion was important for young people overall, the young people also discussed differences in religious views between themselves and their peers. For example, one young person in the Church of England youth group felt that her religion differentiated her from her peers in terms of values:

**“A lot of my friends, they don’t go to church or anything, they’ve got very different values from me.”**

It was felt that young people impacted on each other’s religious values through peer pressure. Some argued that pressure from others prevented young people from being involved in religion:

**“People get the mickey taken out of them for going to church.”**

**“If they go ‘Oh you’re bible bashers’ that makes people like not wanna go to church and stuff.”**

However, some young people stated that peer pressure with relation to religion was now decreasing:

**“I don’t think they do though, not any more, people are starting to come round to the idea [of religion] a bit more coz people aren’t as racist as they were.”**

In addition to discussions about the nature of religious belief, the young people discussed their own religious beliefs; whether or not they believed in God. Some young people were confident about their belief in God, for example, when asked what young people value most, one young person responded:

**“God, surely.”**

However, others were confident in their belief that the traditional theistic God did not exist, a conclusion they reached from consideration of the world:

**“Why would he make people die an’ that if there was? He must be pretty evil.”**

**“If there was why are there horrible evil people that kill people, the innocent, like little kids an’ that, babies?”**

Belief in fate and superstition was also discussed, and again, a mix of views was apparent:

**“I don’t believe in any of that stuff.”**



**“I’m pretty superstitious.”**

The young people in one focus group concluded that girls were more likely to believe in fate than boys:

**“Girls do more.”**

A further issue discussed was belief in an afterlife. Some young people expressed definite disbelief in an afterlife:

**“I think when you’re dead you’re dead, there’s nothing after”,**

or felt that the idea of an afterlife was created by people to make them feel better:

**“Sounds nicer than death if you think you’re gonna come back and do what you wanna do.”**

However, others did believe in an afterlife:

**“Coz there’s stories about it and everything, and if it doesn’t exist then where do those stories come from?”**

**“I think if you’ve got unfinished business you come back”.**

Some of the young people expressed their hopes for an afterlife:

**“It’d be cool if you came back as something else.”**

**“I wanna be a rabbit.”**

**“I would be a friendly ghost actually.”**

The young people also discussed at length the relation between religion and spirituality.

Their discussions from this give an impression of their overall view of religion. Many felt that religion was more official or institutional, while spirituality was more of a feeling or relationship:

“Religion is what book you follow, and what person or being you worship, and possibly how you worship. And spirituality is, I’d say, your relationship with God.”

“Religion’s like a category. And spirituality is how you express yourself.”

“Religion’s a set way.”

“Spirituality isn’t sort of religion, it’s sort of assuming that you know that’s inside you, it’s like gut feelings that you get, it’s a sort of, you know, that summat’s gonna happen. Like a sixth-sense type thing. Like a really good feeling that you get.”

“I don’t believe in spiritual. I never get that feeling.”

“It’s like your soul.”

“Like the essence of your being.”

“When you think of spirituality you think of ghosts and things like that.”

Some expressed uncertainty in their understanding of religion and spirituality:

“They’re different things. I don’t understand either of them.”

Others felt particularly uncertain with relation to spirituality, stating that religion was more important, seeming more definable:

“There *are* religions to believe in.”

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presents findings from the focus groups which were conducted near the beginning of this study, to ground the study in the values that are important to young people.

The young people’s responses to two overview questions provide an introduction to the essence of their values and perceptions of themselves and the world. Consideration of the focus group data demonstrates that while many of the issues expressed by the young



people as important interlink, there are 14 clear areas of values that are important to the young people. These are:

core values,

aims in life,

family,

relationships and friends,

fitting in,

communication,

the media,

discrimination and stereotyping,

concerns and fears,

school and education,

hobbies and social life,

substance use,

politics and war,

religion.

These 14 value-areas constitute the values-map of areas that are important to the young people as expressed in the focus groups.

The next chapter describes how the values-maps from the literature review and the focus groups are combined, and utilised to explore in detail the values of a larger group of young people through the HaFVI.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**THE HALSALL-FRANCIS VALUES INVENTORY:**  
**DESIGN AND DISSEMINATION**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**The Values-Map**

**The Halsall-Francis Values Inventory**

*Design*

*Dissemination*

*Analysis*

**Conclusion**



## **Summary**

This chapter connects the first part of this study, investigating which value-areas are important to young people, with the second part of this study, investigating these value-areas among a wider sample of young people. The chapter derives the definitive values-map for this study through combining the values-maps from the focus groups and from the literature review. How this values-map is utilised in the Halsall-Francis' Values Inventory (HaFVI) is described, and detail is given regarding the content of the HaFVI, and the method of its dissemination and administration, and analysis.

## **Introduction**

This chapter connects the data regarding the values that are important to young people from the literature review and focus groups, presented in the previous three chapters, with the profile of young people's values presented in part two of this study. This connection is provided through two main pieces of data, regarding the values-map for this study, and the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) utilised in this study.

First, the values-map derived from the literature review, as presented in chapter three, and the values-map derived from the focus groups, as presented in chapter four, are combined, to construct the definitive values-map for this study. As can be seen from the methodology for this study in chapter one, this definitive values-map derived from the focus groups and literature review is central in this study in ensuring that the study presents a relevant portrayal of young people's values. The values-map depicted in the present chapter is crucial as the method through which the issues that are important to the young people participating in the focus groups, alongside issues identified as important from the literature review, are conveyed from the focus groups to the HaFVI. The items in section three of the HaFVI have been devised to operationalise the areas comprising the values-map, so that its scope and detail can be assessed among a wider sample of young people.

Second, the design, dissemination, and analysis of the HaFVI in this study are described.

To understand the values-profile of young people presented in part two of this study, an understanding of how this profile has been generated is necessary. Therefore, this description of the design, dissemination, and analysis of the HaFVI is essential.



## **The Values-Map**

From the literature review, the following value-areas have been identified as important to young people: family; friends; discrimination and stereotyping; core values, both individual and community focused; the media; aims in life; education; local area; religion and spirituality; worries, both personal and world; politics; substance use; moral issues; and leisure. From the focus groups, the following value-areas have been identified as important to young people: core values; aims in life; family; relationships and friends; fitting in; communication; the media; discrimination and stereotyping; concerns and fears; school and education; hobbies and social life; drugs; politics and war; and religion.

There are many common areas between these two values-maps from the literature review and focus groups. Moreover, many of the value-areas identified have more than one part. Merging the two values-maps results in a definitive values-map for this study comprising 13 value-areas, of which some have more than one part. These parts are listed after each main value-area in figure 5.1. The definitive values-map for this study is portrayed in figure 5.1:

### **Figure 5.1: Map of young people's values**

1. Core values: community, individual
2. Aims in life
3. Family
4. Friends: relationship with, communication with
5. Area
6. Worries, concerns, and fears: fears, self-esteem

7. School
8. Stereotyping and discrimination: young people, racism
9. Media
10. Spirituality and religion
11. Political issues: attitudes to politics, war and terrorism
12. Social issues
13. Substance use

How this values-map was operationalised to assess the values of a wider sample of young people in the HaFVI is now explored.

## **The Halsall-Francis Values Inventory**

### ***Design***

The HaFVI, as presented in Appendix One, comprises three main parts. The first part presents a range of forced-choice pre-coded questions about the young people's background. These questions facilitate the profile of young people presented in chapter seven, and also enable cross-tabulated comparisons of young people's values, as presented in chapter eight onwards. The forced-choice questions in part one of the HaFVI request the following information from the young people: sex; age; expected academic qualifications; type of area they live in; whether they undertake part-time work; ethnic group; leisure time activities; mobile phone use; use of Internet, television, and computer games; whether they have tattoos or piercings; the adults and any siblings they live with; parental separation, divorce, or death; whether they have children of their own; their



parents' occupations; whether they regularly care for others; gendered role models at home; and religious affiliation and practice.

The second part of the HaFVI comprises the abbreviated form of the Revised Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (JEPQR-A) (Francis, 1996). Questions regarding the young people's left- or right-handed orientation their diurnal rhythm have also been added in this part. While the young people's responses to this part of the HaFVI have not been analysed in the present study, as it is concerned with providing a profile of the young people's values, they provide useful data for future analyses.

The third part of the HaFVI comprises a wide range of short items which operationalise the values-map described in the first part of this chapter. These are assessed on a five-item Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932) with response categories ranging from *agree strongly*, through *agree*, *not certain*, *disagree*, and *disagree strongly*. The items explore the extent to which the scope and detail of the value-areas identified from the focus groups and literature review are reflected among the wider sample of young people completing the HaFVI.

The HaFVI, particularly the third part exploring the young people's values, was devised through consultation with other researchers, and through a pilot of the questionnaire among a small group of young people. The items were designed through listing all the aspects, from the focus-groups and literature review, of each value-area in the values-map. Items were developed to explore each of these. These items were refined and modified through consultation with researchers and young people.

The use of short, simple statements, particularly in part three of the HaFVI, ensures that the HaFVI is accessible to young people from as wide a range of academic abilities as possible. Furthermore, small, straightforward illustrations are used throughout the HaFVI to break up the text and make it more aesthetically accessible.

The HaFVI is designed to fit within a school lesson of approximately one hour. Obviously, the time taken by individual young people to complete the HaFVI varies; some young people are able to complete it in under 20 minutes, while others do not manage to complete it within an hour. It is recognised that the third part of the HaFVI is long, however, as this version is designed as a pilot, it was important to include many items to gain a full picture of the aspects of the value-areas that are important to the young people, and those that are not. Space was also left on the back of the HaFVI for the young people to comment on the HaFVI. These comments will be utilised in future revisions of the HaFVI.

### ***Dissemination***

A sample of 3,000 young people was pursued for this study. A sample of 3,000 would give authority to the profile of young people's values presented here, and would also be a large enough sample to facilitate evaluation of the HaFVI from the results. Ultimately 2,973 useable responses were collected.

Schools were recruited to participate in the Young People's Values Project through negotiation with individual teachers at each school. Contact with these teachers was achieved in differing ways. These included personal contacts, existing contacts of the



institution in which the researcher was working, an article in a journal for RE teachers, participants in an Education for Global Citizenship course, and 'cold calling' schools whose details had been passed on by contacts in their local area. Religious Education and Citizenship teachers were often the focus of contact as the issues raised in the HaFVI could facilitate further discussion in these lessons, and it was thus felt that completion of the HaFVI best fitted in with the curriculum of these lessons.

A letter was initially sent to teachers with a sample copy of the HaFVI inviting them to participate in the project. Non-respondents after a month were followed up with phone calls, and those responding affirmatively were sent the required number of questionnaires for all their year nine and ten pupils. Sample copies of the HaFVI were sent to 19 schools, and positive responses and participation was gained from 13 schools; a response rate from the schools overall of 68.4%. Schools from throughout England and Wales participated in this initial stage of the Young People's Values Project, and a good geographical spread was achieved, as is demonstrated in table 5.1. The sample also includes a good mix of Community, Church of England, and Roman Catholic schools, as is evident from table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.1. Composition of sample by Local Education Authority.**

LEA name	No. of pupils participating	%
Cheshire	462	15.5
Denbighshire	249	8.4
Derbyshire	519	17.5
Devon	492	16.5
Halton	303	10.2
Newcastle upon Tyne	133	4.5
Pembrokeshire	384	12.9
Shropshire	149	5.0
Surrey	96	3.2
Wrexham	186	6.3

**Table 5.2. Composition of sample by type of school.**

School type	No. of pupils participating	%
Community	2425	81.6
Church of England voluntary controlled	149	5.0
Roman Catholic voluntary aided	399	13.4

The HaFVI was administered by teachers during school time under examination conditions. The confidentiality and anonymity of their responses was emphasised to the young people, as was the fact that their individual responses would not be looked at by anyone in their school.



## ***Analysis***

On return, the young people's parents' occupations were classified according to the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (Office for National Statistics, 2000), to denote the young people's socio-economic group. The completed questionnaires were then computer coded.

The coded responses were analysed using SPSS (SPSS Inc., 1988) using the frequencies and cross tabulations routines to generate the profile of young people depicted in part two of this study.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has compiled the definitive values-map for this study, and described the way in which this values-map is operationalised in the HaFVI to assess the extent to which the scope and detail of the values-map is reflected across a wider sample of young people. The methods used to recruit schools, administer the HaFVI, and analyse the responses have also been described. This chapter thus provides a vital juncture between the first part of this study which assesses the values that are important to young people today, and the second part of this study which examines the extent and detail of the way in which these values are reflected across a wider sample of young people.

The second part of this study depicts the young people's responses to the HaFVI over each of the 13 values-areas identified. It therefore provides an accurate and up-to-date portrait of young people's values.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **THE YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**Descriptive profile of the young people**

*Essential data*

*Family background*

*Religious background*

*Leisure time*

**Conclusion**



## **Summary**

This chapter presents a description of the young people who comprise this initial sample of the Young People's Values Project. This is made up of four main sections. First, essential data regarding the young people are presented, for example, the composition of the sample according to sex, and school year. Second, data regarding the young people's family backgrounds are presented, for example, who they live with, and their parents' occupations. Third, data regarding the young people's religious backgrounds are presented, for example, their self-assigned religious affiliation, and frequency of church attendance. Fourth, data regarding the young people's leisure time are presented, for example, activities they undertake in their leisure time, and the amount of time they spend watching television.

A description of background information about the young people whose values are presented in this study is essential to contextualise their values, and to generate insight into the grounds for the values they express.

## **Introduction**

Part one of the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) contains an extensive range of questions about the young people completing it. Their responses to these questions generate an important descriptive profile of these young people. Four key sets of these data are presented in this chapter, forming a description of the young people whose values are considered in this study.

This descriptive profile of the young people whose values are presented in this study is important, and included here, for two main reasons. First, it is important to contextualise the young people's values through presenting data about who the young people are. Relating data about the young people's values alone, would mean presenting an isolated set of numbers. Therefore, this descriptive profile of the young people legitimates the data presented about young people's values through giving them background and meaning.

Second, and most importantly, a descriptive profile of the young people participating in this study must be presented to fully respect them (Reinharz, 1992). As emphasised by Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004), the common factor uniting the participants in this study is their age, and their other demographic details may be widely different.

Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004) state that:

Young people are not a homogeneous group in this society. While they are unified by the fact of their age they are differently located socially on the basis of class, gender, ethnicity, impairment and sexuality. Any serious study of the lives of young people must deal with the politics of their social place and identity (p. xiii).



This statement precisely emphasises the necessity of understanding something about the young people themselves in this study, before moving on to consider their expressions of values. This goes some way towards ensuring that the young people are respected as participants, and not merely objects of study.

The questions in the first part of the HaFVI are arranged with each question being followed by a tick-box grid of pre-coded responses. Space is also provided for the young people to write in other responses if their situation is not covered in the pre-coded responses (see Appendix One).

The areas covered in part one of the HaFVI are derived from: issues and factors that the young people in the focus groups felt were important in their lives; issues and factors of importance to young people's lives derived from the literature review; and consultation with other researchers. The exact wording of each item was decided through consultation with other researchers and young people.

The first set of data presented here is essential data about the young people, for example, their sex, or school year. The second set of data presented here is data about the young people's family background, for example, who they live with, and their parents' occupations. The third set of data presented here is data about the young people's religious background, for example, their self-assigned religious affiliation, and frequency of church attendance. The fourth set of data presented here is data about the young people's leisure time, for example, the activities they undertake in their spare time, and the amount of time they spend watching television.

The descriptive profile of young people presented here, as with the values-profile presented in this study, is not presented in direct comparison with previous profiles of young people. While the present study is grounded in previous studies through the literature review which fed into the values-map utilised in the HaFVI, as demonstrated in chapter five, the aim of the present study is not to portray comparisons between this study and previous studies. Rather, the aim of the present study is to portray data from the present study as an accurate profile of young people's values at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Therefore, comparisons between these data and previous studies are not systematically drawn in this study, but may be made later in the Young People's Values Project.

Some of the data in this chapter are portrayed in tabular form. There are many components to much of the data considered in this chapter, and it is therefore necessary to portray these data in tabular form, rather than in long, and potentially confusing, lists in the text. The titles of many of the tables in this chapter constitute the questions used in the HaFVI.

### **Descriptive profile of the young people**

#### ***Essential data***

Five main sets of essential data are presented here about the young people participating in this study. These are: sex; age measured by school year; area in which they live; expected academic qualifications; and ethnic group.



First, this sample comprises a fairly even balance of female (49.8%) and male (50.2%) young people.

Second, the age of the young people in this sample is measured according to their present school year. The present sample consists of slightly more young people in school year nine (52.7%) than in school year ten (47.3%).

Third, data concerning the kind of area in which the young people live were collected through three pre-coded responses to the question 'What kind of area do you live in?'. These responses are: rural; suburban; and urban. The largest proportion (40.2%) state that they live in a rural area, followed by 38.7% who state that they live in a suburban area, and 21.1% who state that they live in an urban area. Therefore, a large majority of the young people (78.9%) live in suburban or rural areas, and only just over a fifth of the young people (21.1%) live in urban areas.

However, the responses to this question, and feedback from pupils and teachers, suggest that the language used for these pre-coded responses is not appropriate for all the potential respondents to the HaFVI. In future editions of the HaFVI, 'rural', 'suburban', and 'urban' will be replaced with terms such as 'countryside', 'outskirts of town', and 'town or city'.

Fourth, the young people's expected academic qualifications on leaving school indicate their relative academic levels. Just 3.8% expect to have no academic qualifications on leaving school. Furthermore, 13.0% expect to gain GCSEs at grades D to G, and 53.1%

expect to gain GCSEs at grades A to C. Smaller proportions of the young people expect to leave school with A-level qualifications; 9.8% expect to gain AS levels, and 20.3% expect to gain A2 levels.

The young people are thus of mixed ability academically. While only a very small proportion of the sample (3.8%) expect that they will gain no academic qualifications on leaving school, when it is considered that this percentage represents four young people in every hundred, these figures are a cause for concern. Overall, however, the academic expectations of the young people in this sample portray a group of motivated young people.

Fifth, young people's ethnic background was assessed in the HaFVI through a question used in the 2001 United Kingdom Census: 'What is your ethnic group?'. The pre-coded responses were also based on those used in the United Kingdom 2001 Census, and are portrayed in table 6.1.

Table 6.1 demonstrates that the majority of the young people (94.3%) describe their ethnic group as white. The next largest proportion (3.2%) describe their ethnic group as mixed, while very small proportions describe themselves as from other ethnic groups. For example, 0.4% describe their ethnic group as Chinese and 0.3% describe their ethnic group as Asian-Bangladeshi. The small proportions from more diverse ethnic groups in this sample may be related to the smaller proportion in the sample living in urban areas. Therefore, this initial sample for the Young People's Values Project is heavily biased



towards young people from a white ethnic background. Any further development should concentrate on the inclusion of young people from more diverse ethnic backgrounds.

**Table 6.1. What is your ethnic group?**

Ethnic group	%
Asian-Bangladeshi	0.3
Asian-Indian	0.3
Asian-Pakistani	0.2
Any other Asian	0.2
Black-African	0.2
Black-Caribbean	0.4
Chinese	0.4
Mixed	3.2
White	94.2
White Irish	0.1
Other (not specified)	0.3

Having examined these five sets of essential data about the young people, more detail about their family backgrounds is now explored.

***Family background***

Seven sets of data about the young people's family background are now considered. These are: who the young people live with; whether or not their parents are separated or divorced; whether or not both their parents are still alive; whether the young people have any siblings living with them; whether they have a child of their own; whether their

parents are in employment; and their socio-economic group according to their parents' occupations.

First, who the young people live with is examined. This question in the HaFVI and the data here relate only to adult carers, as whether the young people live with any siblings is examined separately. The young people were offered six pre-coded responses to this question, yet many other combinations of parents and carers were given. Table 6.2 depicts the results of the six pre-coded responses and then itemises the specific responses.

**Table 6.2. Who do you live with?**

Response	%
Both natural parents	65.0
One natural parent	17.0
One natural parent and her/his partner	14.7
Grandparents	0.8
Adoptive parents	0.7
Foster parents	0.5
Other (not specified)	0.2
Other (specified)	
Each natural parent alternately	0.2
Both natural parents and grandparents	0.1
One natural parents and grandparents	0.3
One natural parent, partner, and grandparents	0.1
Aunt	0.1
Aunt and Uncle	0.1
Adult sibling	0.1



A large majority of the young people (96.7%) state that they live with both natural parents, one natural parent, or one natural parent and their partner. Only 0.2% of the young people identify themselves as living alternately with each natural parent. Therefore, it can be inferred that in the case of their parents not living together, most young people identify one parent's house as home, and the other as a place to visit.

Closely related to who the young people live with is the second set of data examined here; whether or not their parents are separated or divorced. In response to this question, over six out of ten (63.9%) of the young people state that their parents have not been separated or divorced. Over a third (34.0%) state that their parents have been separated or divorced, and 2.1% state that they do not know whether their parents have been separated or divorced.

The third set of data considered concerning the young people's family background is whether both their parents are still alive. In response to this question, 95.0% of the young people in the sample state that both their parents are still alive, 2.7% state that both their parents are not still alive, and 2.4% of the young people do not know.

The fourth set of data considered concerning the young people's family background is whether or not they have any siblings living with them. In response to this question, 88.6% state that they do, and 11.4% state that they do not.

The fifth set of data considered with relation to the young people's family background concerns whether or not the young people have a child of their own. In response to this

question, 97.5% state that they do not have a child of their own, and 2.5% state that they do have a child of their own.

The sixth set of data considered with relation to the young people's family background is whether or not their parents are in employment. In the HaFVI, questions are separately asked regarding their father (or paternal carer's) employment, and regarding their mother (or maternal carer's) employment. The responses to these questions are portrayed in table 6.3.

**Table 6.3. Does your dad have a job? Does your mum have a job?**

Response	Dad %	Mum %
No	6.6	16.4
Retired	1.4	0.3
Yes, homemaker	0.6	3.8
Yes, part-time	5.3	30.8
Yes, full-time	80.4	47.1
Don't know	5.7	1.6

A comparison of the findings in table 6.3 presents important differences between the employment situations of the female and male parents and carers of the young people in this sample. A much larger proportion of the male adults (80.4%) than the female adults (47.1%) are in full-time employment. Nearly six times more female adults (30.8%) than male adults (5.3%) are in part-time employment. Moreover, a much greater proportion of the young people see their mother or maternal carer's role as homemaker (3.8%) than see their father or paternal carer's role as homemaker (0.6%). A much greater proportion



of the female adults (16.4%) do not have a job, in comparison with the male adults (6.6%).

Thus, from the data provided by the young people in this sample, there is strong evidence that traditional employment patterns remain prevalent, and that women remain unequal in the public sphere. However, these data regarding parents' and carers' employment also demonstrate that a large proportion of the young people in this sample have parents who are employed.

Following the question of whether or not their parents are employed, the seventh set of data considered here regarding the young people's family background is their socio-economic group, according to both their father (or paternal carer's) and mother (or maternal carer's) occupation.

The socio-economic group of the young people is assessed in the following way. The HaFVI asks the young people to write in the occupation of their mother and father. As far as possible, these occupations have been coded according to the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (Office for National Statistics, 2000). These findings are portrayed in table 6.4.

Table 6.4 again depicts important differences between the employment situations of the female and male parents and carers of the young people in this sample, as described by the young people. For example, nearly three times the proportion of males than females (16.5% of males in comparison with 5.9% of females) are employed as managers and

senior officials. Furthermore, over eight times more females (11.7%) than males (1.4%) are employed in administrative and secretarial occupations, and many more females (13.1%) than males (1.9%) are employed in personal service occupations, for example as care assistants or hairdressers. These data, therefore, demonstrate that more of the males than females are employed in positions viewed in society as more important, and more females than males are employed in traditionally 'female' occupations, for example as secretaries.

**Table 6.4. Parents' or carers' occupations: social class groupings.**

Social class group	Code	Dad %	Mum %
Managers and senior officials	01	16.5	5.9
Professional occupations	02	14.6	8.6
Associate professional and technical occupations	03	9.7	11.4
Administrative and secretarial occupations	04	1.4	11.7
Skilled trades occupations	05	26.1	3.9
Personal service occupations	06	1.9	13.1
Sales and customer service occupations	07	2.0	10.6
Process, plant, and machine operatives	08	9.1	0.5
Elementary occupations	09	7.7	10.7
Not applicable	(10)	10.8	22.9

However, overall the socio-economic status of the young people in this sample is good, as a large majority of the young people have parents or carers who are employed, and large proportions of their parents or carers are employed in higher socio-economic group occupations. Of the male adults, 68.3% are employed in socio-economic grouped



occupations five or above and just 20.7% are employed in socio-economic grouped occupations six to nine. Of the female adults, 41.5% are employed in socio-economic grouped occupations five or above and 34.9% are employed in socio-economic grouped occupations six to nine. Yet, again, while this demonstrates that the young people in this sample have a comfortable socio-economic background, the findings that a much greater proportion of males than females are employed in occupations in higher socio-economic groups, and a much greater proportion of females than males are employed in occupations in lower economic groups, provide further evidence for the unequal status of women in employment.

Having examined the young people's family background with relation to these seven sets of data, the young people's religious background is now examined.

### ***Religious background***

The young people's religious background is examined through two sets of data; their self-assigned religious affiliation, and their religious practice. The young people's religious beliefs are examined in the values-profile later in this study.

First, self-assigned religious affiliation is assessed in the HaFVI through a question used in the United Kingdom 2001 Census: 'What is your religion?'. The young people were given a selection of pre-coded responses, which differ from the responses used in the England and Wales Census as they include differentiation by Christian denomination (Francis and Robbins, 2004). In addition to the pre-coded responses, the young people added responses which they felt best described their religion, as portrayed in table 6.5.

**Table 6.5. What is your religion?**

Response	%
None	42.2
Baptist	2.9
Anglican	27.3
Jehovah's Witness	0.6
Methodist	1.7
Pentecostal	0.3
Roman Catholic	15.0
Salvation Army	0.1
URC/Presbyterian	0.2
Buddhist	0.2
Hindu	0.3
Jew	0.2
Muslim	0.7
Other (not specified)	1.8
Other (specified)	
Christian	4.2
Protestant	0.3
Evangelical	0.1
Rastafarian	0.1
Wicca	0.4
Satanist	0.3
Jedi	0.7
Pagan	0.1

Table 6.5 demonstrates that a large proportion (42.2%) of the young people describe themselves as having no religious affiliation. The next largest proportion (27.3%)



describe themselves as affiliated to the Anglican Church, and the third largest proportion (15.0%) describe themselves as affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church.

Aside from these three main groups, small proportions of the young people describe themselves as belonging to a specific religious group. Yet, although it is not given as a pre-coded response, 4.2% describe themselves as Christian. This suggests that they do not want to describe themselves as of no religious affiliation, yet are not confident enough to assign themselves to one of the Christian denominations given.

However, very small proportions of the young people describe themselves as belonging to religions other than Christianity. For example, 0.7% describe themselves as Muslim and 0.2% of the sample describe themselves as Buddhist. Therefore, as with ethnic background, when extending this initial database, it is clear that it is important to focus on including more young people from diverse religious backgrounds.

The young people also describe their religious affiliation with reference to less traditional religions. For example, 0.4% describe their religion as Wicca. It can be argued, though, that this suggests the ongoing influence of television programmes such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Furthermore, 0.7% of the sample describe their religion as Jedi. This suggests the ongoing influence of the campaign in England and Wales with relation to the religious question in the 2001 Census (for example, O'Farrell, 2001).

Having examined the young people's self-assigned religious affiliation, the second set of data concerning the young people's religious background, their religious practice, is now

considered. The young people's religious practice is assessed in the HaFVI through three questions: attendance at a place of religious worship; private scripture reading; and private prayer. The HaFVI asks the question 'How often do you attend a place of religious worship?'. The responses: *never*; *at least once or twice a year*; *at least 6 times a year*; *at least once a month*; *nearly every week*, are given in a pre-coded grid. The young people's responses are portrayed in table 6.6.

**Table 6.6. How often do you attend a place of religious worship?**

Response	%
Never	59.0
At least once or twice a year	27.8
At least 6 times a year	4.2
At least once a month	3.3
Nearly every week	5.7

Table 6.6 demonstrates that most of the young people (59.0%) do not attend a place of religious worship. Furthermore, only 27.8% state that they attend a place of religious worship once or twice a year. Just 13.2% attend a place of religious worship at least six times a year or more.

The HaFVI also asks whether the young people read the scriptures by themselves. They are given the responses: *never*; *occasionally*; *at least once a month*; *at least once a week*; *nearly every day*, in a pre-coded grid, and asked to tick the appropriate box. Their responses are portrayed in table 6.7.



**Table 6.7. Do you read the scriptures by yourself?**

Response	%
Never	83.8
Occasionally	12.1
At least once a month	0.9
At least once a week	1.5
Nearly every day	1.6

Table 6.7 demonstrates that a higher proportion of the young people do not read the scriptures by themselves than do not attend a place of religious worship; 83.8% of the young people state that they never read the scriptures by themselves. Just 12.1% read the scriptures by themselves occasionally, and 4.0% read the scriptures by themselves at least once a month or more.

The HaFVI also asks whether the young people pray by themselves. They are given the responses: *never*; *occasionally*; *at least once a month*; *at least once a week*; *nearly every day*, in a pre-coded grid, and asked to tick the appropriate box. Their responses are portrayed in table 6.8.

Table 6.8 demonstrates that slightly less of the young people never pray by themselves than never read the scriptures by themselves. Thus, 72.0% of the young people state that they never pray by themselves, although nearly one in five (19.0%) of the young people state that they occasionally pray by themselves. Again, a small proportion of the sample (9.0%) state that they pray by themselves at least once a month or more.

**Table 6.8. Do you pray by yourself?**

Response	%
Never	72.0
Occasionally	19.0
At least once a month	1.6
At least once a week	2.5
Nearly every day	4.9

Thus, from tables 6.6, 6.7, and 6.8, it is apparent that the young people in the present sample do not frequently undertake religious practices. The religious practice in which they are most likely to take part is attending a place of religious worship.

Having examined these two sets of data regarding the young people's religious background, the final area of their descriptive profile, their leisure time, is now considered here.

### ***Leisure time***

Seven sets of data regarding the young people's leisure time are considered. These are: activities in which the young people participate in their leisure time; the amount of time they spend watching television, videos, or DVDs; the amount of time they spend on the Internet; the amount of time they spend playing computer games; whether or not they have a mobile phone; what they mainly use their mobile phone for; and whether or not they have a part-time job.



First, the activities in which the young people participate in their leisure time are considered. The HaFVI asks the young people to tick boxes in a pre-coded grid of activities that they undertake in their leisure time. Table 6.9 demonstrates the proportions of young people stating that they take part in the suggested leisure activities.

**Table 6.9. Young people's leisure activities.**

Activity	Participation (%)
Team sport	38.1
Individual sport	31.2
Choir	3.0
Dance	14.7
Drama	6.3
Orchestra/wind band	4.2
Rock/pop band	9.8
Reading	44.0
Watching tv/video/DVD	80.0
Playing computer games	56.4
Using Internet	57.3
Cinema	61.5
Youth club	13.7
Going to concerts	17.7
Shopping	55.7

The young people are also asked to note any other activities they undertake in their leisure time, and 17.8% noted activities in addition to those listed above. These include: hiking; horse riding; playing guitar, keyboard, flute, or drums; morris dancing; Wicca; going out with friends; babysitting; listening to music; smoking weed; air cadets, sea cadets, or

army cadets; art; martial arts; singing; going to the gym; spending time with family; boxing; getting drunk; surfing; skateboarding; going to church; jogging; yoga; being a radio presenter; playing chess; circus skills; Duke of Edinburgh award; photography; guides; scouts; ice skating; darts; snooker; going to football matches; sewing; ten pin bowling; baton twirling; roller blading; walking the dog; going to the pub; going to nightclubs; motorcross; going to the theatre; fishing; making model aeroplanes; cheerleading; game keeping; farming; go karting; archery; astronomy club; camping; and extreme sports.

From the levels of participation indicated in table 6.9, and the list of activities above, it appears that the young people undertake a wide variety of activities in their leisure time. The activities in which the greatest proportion take part are those centring on individual consumption. For example, 80.0% of the young people state that they watch television, videos, or DVDs in their leisure time, 61.5% state that they go to the cinema, and 57.3% state that they use the Internet. However, the opposite of this trend applies to sport. A greater proportion state that they take part in a team sport (38.1%) than state that they take part in an individual sport (31.2%).

The second, third, and fourth sets of data considered with relation to the young people's leisure activities concern the amount of time they spend: watching television, videos, or DVDs; on the Internet; and playing computer games. The young people are asked to fill in a grid for each of these activities, ticking a time bracket for the amount of time they spent on each of these activities last Thursday, as an 'average' day. Table 6.10 presents their responses.



**Table 6.10. How much time did you spend watching tv/videos/DVDs last Thursday?**

Time	%
None	5.6
Less than 1 hour	14.4
1 or 2 hours	41.6
3 or 4 hours	24.4
More than 4 hours	14.0

Table 6.10 demonstrates that the greatest proportion of the young people (41.6%) spent one or two hours watching television last Thursday. Nearly a quarter (24.4%) spent three or four hours watching television, and 14.0% spent more than four hours watching television. Just one in five (20.0%) spent less than an hour watching television.

Table 6.11 presents the amount of time the young people state they spent on the Internet last Thursday.

**Table 6.11. How much time did you spend on the Internet last Thursday?**

Time	%
None	45.7
Less than 1 hour	25.6
1 or 2 hours	20.9
3 or 4 hours	4.2
More than 4 hours	3.6

Table 6.11 demonstrates that a large proportion of the young people (45.7%) state that they did not spend any time on the Internet last Thursday, and a further quarter (25.6%) spent less than one hour on the Internet. Around one in five of the young people (20.9%) spent one or two hours on the Internet, and just 7.8% spent three hours or more on the Internet.

Table 6.12 presents the amount of time the young people state they spent playing computer games last Thursday.

**Table 6.12. How much time did you spend playing computer games last Thursday?**

Time	%
None	46.3
Less than 1 hour	22.7
1 or 2 hours	19.3
3 or 4 hours	6.1
More than 4 hours	5.6

From table 6.12 it is apparent that, again, a large proportion of the young people (46.3%) state that they did not spend any time playing computer games last Thursday. Close to one in five spent either less than one hour playing computer games (22.7%), or one to two hours playing computer games (19.3%). Just 11.7% spent more than three hours playing computer games last Thursday.



Therefore, two thirds of the young people spend between one and four hours watching television, videos, or DVDs on an average day. While use of the Internet and playing computer games are also popular leisure time activities, a smaller proportion of the young people spend large amounts of their time undertaking these activities.

The fifth set of data considered with relation to the young people's leisure time concerns whether or not they have a mobile phone. In response to this question in the HaFVI, 89.9% of the young people state that they do have a mobile phone, and just 10.1% state that they do not have a mobile phone.

The sixth set of data in this section is the young people's main use of their mobile phone. The young people are given a grid of suggested pre-coded responses for their main use of their mobile phone. These are listed in table 6.13 before the 'Other (not specified)' response. Other main uses have been suggested by the young people, as can be seen following the 'Other (not specified)' response in table 6.13.

Table 6.13 demonstrates that the greatest proportion of young people (37.5%) mainly use their mobile phone for both text messaging and talking with friends. The next greatest proportion (36.5%) mainly use their mobile phone for text messaging. A smaller proportion (9.8%) mainly use their mobile phone for talking with friends. From this, it is apparent that mobile phones are used predominantly among the young people for text messaging.

**Table 6.13. If you have a mobile phone, what do you mainly use it for?**

Use	%
Don't have a mobile phone	10.2
Emergencies	4.7
Talking with friends	9.8
Text messages	36.5
Other (not specified)	0.5
Other (specified)	
Talking with friends and text messages	37.5
Games	0.2
Don't use it	0.2
Everything	0.5

The final set of data considered here with relation to the young people's leisure time is whether or not the young people have a part-time job during term-time. The young people's responses to this question are presented in table 6.14.

**Table 6.14. Do you have a part-time job during term-time?**

Response	%
No	69.0
Yes, just weekends	14.8
Yes, just weekdays	5.1
Yes, weekends and weekdays	11.1

As is apparent from table 6.14, nearly seven out of ten young people (69.0%) do not have a part-time job during term-time. Concerning those who do have a part-time job during



term-time, most (14.8% of the overall sample) just work at weekends. Very few of the young people (5.1%) just work on weekdays, although over one in ten (11.1%) work on both weekends and weekdays during term-time.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presents a descriptive profile of the young people comprising the initial sample for the Young People's Values Project. This profile, according to the background information the young people gave in part one of the HaFVI, has focused on four areas: essential data; family background; religious background; and leisure time.

The descriptive profile of the young people presented here is valuable in contextualising the values-profile of the young people examined in the following chapters. This profile enables the reader to understand that, for example, the values presented here are those of nearly equal proportions of females and males, yet also are those of a very large majority of young people from a white ethnic background.

Thus this profile facilitates a greater understanding of the values-profile presented in the following chapters, and also highlights issues with this initial sample for the Young People's Values Project that can be addressed in later cohorts of this study.

Having examined, therefore, a profile of the young people whose values are depicted in this study, the values-profile itself is now examined. Before detail regarding the young people's values is presented, explanations of the layout of the following chapters, and the method and layout of analyses, are presented in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**INTRODUCTION TO THE PROFILE**  
**OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VALUES**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**Chapters**

**Factors**

**Tables**

**Conclusion**



## **Summary**

This chapter introduces the profile of young people's values. This profile is presented over the next 18 chapters, and the current chapter acts as a summary for each of these chapters together, for accuracy, and to avoid repetition. This chapter explains the format of these chapters. It describes the three factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group by which the young people's values are compared, and explains how each factor is measured. This chapter then explains the tables utilised in the chapters presenting the profile of young people's values, clarifying exactly what is shown in the tables.

## **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, a descriptive profile of the young people whose values are portrayed in this study is presented. The present chapter introduces and explains the profile of their values which is depicted in the next 18 chapters. The chapters illustrating the profile of young people's values, unlike the chapters in part one of this study, are not prefaced by a summary, as the present chapter forms a summary for each these chapters.

This chapter first describes the format of the chapters which present the profile of young people's values. Second, the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are examined, as the three factors by which young people's values are compared in this study. Third, the chapter details the tables utilised in this study. These three explanations are necessary for a full understanding of the values-profile presented in this study, and are introduced here as a summary to the following chapters for clarity and to avoid repetition.

## **Chapters**

Each of the chapters which forms part of the profile of young people's values follows the same format. The introduction to the chapter summarises the importance of the value-area through consideration its role in the focus groups, and in previous literature. The introduction to each chapter elucidates the approach being taken to the value-area, and examines how this is explored through the specific items utilised in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI).

Each of the chapters forming part of the young people's values-profile then examines their responses to the HaFVI. An overview profile of their responses to the items in the



HaFVI is presented for each value-area. Following this overview, the young people's responses are compared according to three factors about the young people, their sex, age, and socio-economic group. Through this overview and comparisons for each value-area identified, this study presents a profile, and begins an analysis, of young people's values at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Each chapter comprising part of the young people's values-profile concludes with a discussion of the young people's values-profile for the value-area examined in that chapter. The conclusion examines the extent to which the young people's responses to the HaFVI reflect those of the young people participating in the focus groups. This values-profile is also compared with depictions of young people's values in previous literature, as portrayed in the literature review in chapters two and three of this study, and more widely. Furthermore, where appropriate, the values expressed by the young people in the present study are compared with the model of personality established by Eysenck and colleagues (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1991). This is in line with previous comparisons of personality and values as depicted, for example, by Simmons and Wade (1984) and Halsall (2002).

Each chapter forming part of the young people's values-profile is driven by one set of items from the HaFVI. As seen in chapter five, the value-areas may contain more than one part, however each part will be examined in a separate chapter in this values-profile. For example, the value-area of core values contains two parts, community core values, and individual core values. Each of these two parts is explored in a separate, yet consecutive, chapter. The value-areas of: core values; friends; worries, concerns, and

fears; stereotyping and discrimination; and political issues, all contain more than one part, and each of these value-areas is explored here through more than one chapter, each chapter examining one part of the value-area. Although the value-areas and items featured in the HaFVI are seen here as distinct value-areas in coherent tables, in the HaFVI, as is apparent from Appendix One, the items and value-areas are thoroughly mixed, to gain a more accurate view of the young people's values.

### **Factors**

Young people's values are compared in this study according to the three key factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group. The importance of examining young people's values according to differing factors, and not just considering young people as a whole group, is emphasised by Phoenix (2000). She states that too often children and young people are treated in studies as 'largely undifferentiated' (p. 95). However, she argues that 'an understanding of children's and young people's agency' (p. 95) must include analyses according to differing factors about young people, as these factors 'produce specific childhoods for children positioned differently within the social formation' (p. 95).

These three factors employed here have been selected for three main reasons. First, they are part of a range of key demographic factors that are collected with regard to many groups in society. These key demographic factors frequently include: sex; age; socio-economic group; ethnic group; religious group; geographical area of residence; and educational level (see, for example, Roberts and Sachdev, 1996). Second, from this range of key demographic factors, the three factors utilised here have been selected as they are of crucial importance with relation to the values of an individual (Francis, 2001).



Further, Phoenix (2000) cites Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) and Walkerdine (1997) in demonstrating how at least gender and 'social class' affect adults' treatment of young people: 'recent research evidence demonstrates that children are differentially constructed and treated by adults on the basis of ... gender and social class' (Phoenix, 2000, p. 95).

The third main reason for the selection of these factors is that the present sample contains appropriate numbers of young people in each of the groups for these three demographic factors to merit suitable comparisons.

The first comparison made in the following chapters is of the young people's values according to their sex. Within the field of social research, a distinction is often made between the factors of sex and gender (Francis, 2001). This distinction is described, for example, by Oakley (1981) and Matthews (1982). Oakley (1981) states that 'sex refers to biological division into female and male; gender to the parallel and socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity' (p. 41). In this study, the factor of sex is used, comparing the differences in the values of those who are female, in comparison with those who are male, according to their self-designation in response to the question 'Which sex are you?' in the HaFVI.

The second comparison made in the following chapters is of the young people's values according to their age. In this study, the young people's age is measured by school year. This facilitates comparisons between older and younger young people in a well defined mode. This sample includes young people aged between 13 and 15 years old. Young people in school year nine are aged 13 to 14 years. Young people in school year ten are

aged 14 to 15 years. Comparisons of the young people's values according to their age are made through comparing the values of those who tick the box 'year nine', and those who tick the box 'year ten' in response to the question 'Which school year are you in?' in the HaFVI.

The third comparison made in the following chapters is of the young people's values according to their socio-economic group. Socio-economic group is derived from the young people's father's (or paternal carer's) full-time occupation, classified according to the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (Office for National Statistics, 2000). Father's (or paternal carer's), rather than mother's (or maternal carer's) occupation has been used to derive socio-economic group as this is the primary way in which socio-economic group has been measured in previous studies (for example, Francis, 2001), therefore facilitating comparisons between this study and previous research. Full-time occupation rather than part-time occupation has been used as this also enables greater comparability with other studies, and also presents a fairer picture of socio-economic groups within this sample, ensuring that like is being compared with like. Furthermore, as can be seen from chapter six, of the four main employment groupings of parents and carers of the young people (father full-time, mother full-time, father part-time, mother part-time), the greatest proportion (80.4%) have a father or paternal carer in full-time employment than in any of these other employment categories. Therefore, using this category to derive the young people's socio-economic group ensures that the largest proportion of young people are included in this analysis.



The *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (Office for National Statistics, 2000) specifies nine socio-economic groupings. For the present analysis these have been recategorised to form three main socio-economic groups, to ensure that the groups in this sample contain enough people to make viable comparisons, and to enable the groups to be more easily comparable and understandable. Utilising category headings from the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (Office for National Statistics, 2000), the three groups used here have been designated: 'management occupations', as the higher level of socio-economic groups; 'administrative occupations', as the intermediate level of socio-economic groups; and 'elementary occupations', as the lower level of socio-economic groups.

These three groups relate to the nine socio-economic groupings from the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000* (Office for National Statistics, 2000) in the following way. 'Management occupations' incorporates occupational classifications one (managers and senior officials), two (professional occupations), and three (associate professional occupations). 'Administrative occupations' incorporates occupational classifications four (administrative and secretarial occupations), five (skilled trades occupations), six (personal service occupations), and seven (sales and customer service occupations). 'Elementary occupations' incorporates occupational classifications eight (process, plant, and machine operatives), and nine (elementary occupations).

## **Tables**

Each table in the chapters forming part of the young people's values-profile follows one of two main formats. The first is the format for tables giving an overview of the young

people's values in a value-area. The second is the format for tables presenting comparisons of the young people's values according to the factors considered.

First, the overview tables in the values-profile present the proportions of young people in this sample who agree (Yes), are not certain (?), and disagree (No) with each item. Appendix One demonstrates that the HaFVI asks the young people to assess each statement on a five-point Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932). For greater clarity in presenting the young people's responses here, those indicating *agree* and *agree strongly* have been combined and are shown as 'Yes' in the tables. Those indicating *disagree* and *disagree strongly* have been combined and are shown as 'No' in the tables. The data collected using the HaFVI have been analysed by SPSS (SPSS Inc., 1988) using the frequencies routine, to formulate the overview findings presented.

Second, the tables presenting comparisons of young people's values according to the factors considered in this study present only the proportions of each group who agree with the item. Appendix One demonstrates that the HaFVI asks the young people to assess each statement on a five-point Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932). For greater clarity in presenting the young people's responses here, the *agree* and *agree strongly* responses have been combined and are presented in the tables. In order to calculate the Chi-square significance test between the proportions of young people who agree with each item within each group (for example, female and male), the other three categories of *disagree*, *disagree strongly*, and *not certain* were collapsed into one category representing all those who do not agree with the statement. For each of the three factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group, the data collected using the HaFVI have been analysed by SPSS (SPSS



Inc., 1988) using the cross-tabulations routine, to formulate the comparisons of young people's values presented.

Therefore, the tables comparing the young people's values according to the factors of sex, age, or socio-economic group present three main types of information. First, comparisons of the relevant groups within the factor being considered (female/male, year nine/year ten, higher/intermediate/lower socio-economic groups) are presented, giving the proportions who agree with the item. Second, Chi-square tests are presented. Third, any significant differences between the responses of the groups are presented.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has established the method used to formulate, and the format of presentation, of the young people's values-profile presented in part two of this study. Specifically, this chapter has examined the format of the chapters presenting the profile of young people's values (chapters eight to 25). It has also explored the three key factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group by which the young people's values are compared, examining the way in which these factors are formulated here. This chapter has also described and explained the tables used in the profile of young people's values.

Having established the method and format of the values-profile presented in the second part of this study, the values-profile itself can now be considered, beginning with the first part of the first, value-area, community core values.

# **CHAPTER 8**

## **CORE VALUES: COMMUNITY**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's community core values**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the first part of the value-area of core values, which is the first of 13 value-areas considered in this values-profile. The title 'core values' demonstrates that this value-area explores the young people's central values; their primary motivation and approach to life. The young people's core values can be seen from both the focus groups and literature review to be important. Data from the focus groups particularly highlight that the young people's core values fluctuate between values focused on the people around them (community values), and values focused on themselves (individual values). This tension between community and individual values among young people has been highlighted by researchers exploring the values of young people in other European countries. For example, Kuhar (2003) states that in Slovenia there has been a:

shift in ... the value system of the young from socially engaged values to individualist values of peace, self-realisation, friendship, and privacy (p. 3).

Thus, the assessment of the young people's core values in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to measure the extent to which the young people's core values are community, or individual focused.

The assessment of the young people's core values in the HaFVI consists of two main parts; community values and individual values. The young people's community core values are assessed in the present chapter, and their individual core values are assessed in the following chapter. This assessment of their community core values comprises six items. These explore their perceptions of being loved, the importance of the happiness of other people, their values regarding responsibility, and the roles of religion and ethnicity in their community core values.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's community core values, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be significant when considering the young people's values. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's community core values; examining the extent to which their core values are community focused, and the significance of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group in this value-area.

### **Profile of young people's community core values**

#### *Overview*

Table 8.1 presents an overview of the young people's community core values, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 8.1. Community core values: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
It is important to me to feel loved	83.4	12.4	4.1
My ethnicity is an important part of who I am	22.0	46.0	32.0
My religion is an important part of who I am	17.6	30.6	51.8
It is important to me to make other people happy	85.5	10.5	4.0
It is important to me to act responsibly	79.3	14.2	6.5
When someone has more independence they also have more responsibility	64.5	25.9	9.6



Table 8.1 demonstrates that the young people highly value the people around them. For example, 83.4% agree that it is important to them to feel loved, and 85.5% agree that it is important to them to make other people happy. Many also think about their individuality and independence in relation to those around them. Thus, 64.5% agree that when someone has more independence they also have more responsibility, and nearly eight out of ten (79.3%) agree that it is important to them to act responsibly.

However, the data in table 8.1 also indicate that while the young people value the people around them, and mostly consider them in their actions, they are not comfortable with external values systems affecting them. The young people thus portray a strong sense of individualism in this respect. Just 22.0% agree that their ethnicity is an important part of who they are, while 46.0% are not certain, and 32.0% disagree. Furthermore, just 17.6% of the young people agree that their religion is an important part of who they are, while over three out of ten (30.6%) are not certain, and over half (51.8%) disagree. Therefore, while the young people are not comfortable with either their ethnicity or their religion being an important part of who they are, they are more open to ethnicity than religion.

Thus the community core values of the young people in this sample are that they highly value the people around them, but from a more individual-focused motivation.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's community core values, according to their sex, is presented in table 8.2.

**Table 8.2. Community core values: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
It is important to me to feel loved	91.6	75.4	140.58	.001
My ethnicity is an important part of who I am	20.3	23.9	4.87	.05
My religion is an important part of who I am	18.3	17.0	0.84	NS
It is important to me to make other people happy	90.9	79.9	69.43	.001
It is important to me to act responsibly	82.5	76.1	17.34	.001
When someone has more independence they also have more responsibility	64.7	64.4	0.03	NS

Table 8.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's community core values. The items in table 8.2 generating differences in responses of statistical significance indicate that more of the girls than the boys have a strong sense of community core values. More of the girls (91.6%) than the boys (75.4%) agree that it is important to them to feel loved; and more of the girls (90.9%) than the boys (79.9%) agree that it is important to them to make other people happy. In addition, more of the girls (82.5%) than the boys (76.1%) agree that it is important to them to act responsibly.

However, one item generating differences in responses of statistical significance in table 8.2 does not fit with this trend. More of the boys (23.9%) than the girls (20.3%) agree that their ethnicity is an important part of who they are. Thus community core values relating to their ethnicity are of greater importance to the boys than the girls.



## *Age*

A comparison of the young people's community core values, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 8.3.

**Table 8.3. Community core values: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
It is important to me to feel loved	83.0	83.8	0.36	NS
My ethnicity is an important part of who I am	23.1	20.8	2.00	NS
My religion is an important part of who I am	18.7	16.4	2.41	NS
It is important to me to make other people happy	85.8	85.2	0.18	NS
It is important to me to act responsibly	80.0	78.4	1.12	NS
When someone has more independence they also have more responsibility	62.2	66.9	6.93	.01

Table 8.3 demonstrates that age is a factor of very small significance when considering the young people's community core values; these values are mainly consistent across the two age groups. One item in table 8.3 generates differences in responses of statistical significance, demonstrating that more year ten (66.9%) than year nine (62.2%) pupils agree that when someone has more independence they also have more responsibility.

## *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's community core values, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 8.4.

**Table 8.4. Community core values: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
It is important to me to feel loved	86.3	84.1	86.1	1.59	NS
My ethnicity is an important part of who I am	24.7	21.0	22.0	2.71	NS
My religion is an important part of who I am	20.6	14.5	16.1	9.32	.01
It is important to me to make other people happy	88.2	84.9	85.8	3.43	NS
It is important to me to act responsibly	81.5	80.5	79.4	0.71	NS
When someone has more independence they also have more responsibility	67.4	63.9	63.7	2.25	NS

Table 8.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is a factor of very small significance when considering the young people's community core values. Just one item in table 8.4 generates differences in responses of statistical significance, demonstrating that more young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that their religion is an important part of who they are. Thus, 20.6% of the young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that their religion is an important part of who they are; in comparison with 16.1% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, and 14.5% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, the young people hold a strong sense of community core values, in that they highly value the people around them. However, it is evident that these community core values arise from a more individualistic motivation among the young people. This is



demonstrated through the findings that large proportions of the young people agree that it is important to them to feel loved and to make other people happy, although lower proportions agree with items relating to responsibility. Moreover, very low proportions agree that the community affects them through their ethnicity or religion.

These findings correspond with those from previous literature. For example, while Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) demonstrate that the young people in their study portrayed a strong sense of community values and strong links to their community, Francis (2001) describes the young people in his study as

a generation of young people who are firmly committed to the work-based culture of self-sufficiency, who encourage private enterprise and often rate self-expression above social collectivity (p. 210).

Accordingly, while the young people in this study do hold strong community core values as maintained by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986), these are from the perspective of their individual good rather than concern for the collective whole, as maintained by Francis (2001). Thus, the community core values evidenced by the young people in this sample are more rooted in concern for their family and friends as community, rather than the good of society.

Of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group, sex is the factor of greatest significance when considering the young people's community core values. More of the girls than the boys hold community core values, although the exception to this trend concerns ethnicity, as more of the boys than the girls agree that ethnicity is an important part of who they are. This in some respects further corroborates the findings of Back

(2004) who emphasises the importance of cultural and ethnic groups in the lives of young men.

Having examined the young people's community core values, their individual core values are now considered, leading to an examination of the young people's overall motivation in their core values.



## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CORE VALUES: INDIVIDUAL**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Profile of young people's individual core values**

##### *Overview*

##### *Sex*

##### *Age*

##### *Socio-economic group*

#### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

Earlier studies have highlighted the extent to which young people hold strong community values, particularly through emphasis on the importance of friends and peers to young people. For example, Eppel and Eppel (1966) state of the young people in their sample that 'the quality of personal relationships is the touchstone for their assessment of their own and other people's moral standards' (p. 215). However, more recent studies (Simmons and Wade, 1984; Francis, 2001) argue that young people are now more individually motivated. Indeed, the previous chapter in this study suggests that young people's community core values spring from an individual motivation, and the focus groups demonstrated the importance of individuality and independence to young people. Therefore, this chapter examines the strength of individual core values among young people and relates these to the community core values expressed in the previous chapter, to give an overall picture of the young people's core values.

The assessment of the young people's individual core values in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) consists of one main section comprising six items. The first two items provide an overview of the young people's individual core values through examining the importance of individuality and independence to them. The other four items examine the young people's individual core values in terms of motivation, with relation to: making their own decisions; being happy; hedonism (as expressed by many of the young people in Simmons and Wade, 1984); and hedonism to the detriment of others.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's individual core values, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as



factors that may be of significance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the extent to which the young people's values are individually focused, and how this relates to their community core values. The significance of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group with relation to the young people's individual core values is also examined.

### **Profile of young people's individual core values**

#### *Overview*

Table 9.1 presents an overview of the young people's individual core values, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 9.1. Individual core values: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I like to be independent	76.0	17.1	6.9
My individuality is important to me	72.5	20.3	7.2
It is important to me to make my own decisions	91.8	6.5	1.7
The most important thing to me is to be happy	79.9	12.3	7.8
It is important to me to have fun, even if it is at the expense of others	24.9	31.4	43.7
It is important to me to live for today	77.3	17.1	5.6

Table 9.1 demonstrates that the young people have a strong sense of individual values. For example, over seven out of ten (72.5%) agree with the overt statement that their individuality is important to them. Furthermore, over three quarters (76.0%) agree that

they like to be independent, and over nine out of ten (91.8%) agree that it is important to them to make their own decisions.

Personal happiness is also very important to the young people; 79.9% agree that the most important thing to them is to be happy. Regarding individuality in the form of hedonism, nearly a quarter (24.9%) agree that it is important to them to have fun even if it is at the expense of others. Over three out of ten (31.4%) are not certain about this item, yet do not disagree with it. The more acceptable expression of hedonism, as living for today, gains the agreement of 77.3% of the young people.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's individual core values, according to sex, is presented in table 9.2.

**Table 9.2. Individual core values: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I like to be independent	81.5	70.5	48.69	.001
My individuality is important to me	75.7	69.2	14.06	.001
It is important to me to make my own decisions	92.6	91.0	2.42	NS
The most important thing to me is to be happy	85.0	75.6	32.10	.001
It is important to me to have fun, even if it is at the expense of others	21.5	28.4	18.43	.001
It is important to me to live for today	80.0	74.5	11.19	.001



Table 9.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of high significance when considering the young people's individual core values. More of the girls than the boys express a strong sense of individual core values, although this trend inverts when these are expressed as being to the detriment of others.

On the overview items, 81.5% of the girls, in comparison with 70.5% of the boys, agree that they like to be independent; and 75.7% of the girls, in comparison with 69.2% of the boys agree that their individuality is important to them. On the items examining the young people's motivation, more of the girls (85.0%) than the boys (75.6%) agree that their individual happiness is most important to them. More of the girls (80.0%), than the boys (74.5%) also agree that it is important to them to live for today.

However, the exception to this trend concerns individual core values expressed as to the detriment of others, with which more of the boys than the girls agree. Thus, 28.4% of the boys, in comparison with 21.5% of the girls, agree that it is important to them to have fun, even if it is at the expense of others.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's individual core values, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 9.3.

Table 9.3 demonstrates that age is a factor of small significance when considering the young people's individual core values with relation to the two overview items. From

these two items it is apparent that more of the year ten than the year nine pupils hold individual core values.

**Table 9.3. Individual core values: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I like to be independent	72.9	79.2	15.96	.001
My individuality is important to me	70.5	74.8	6.21	.05
It is important to me to make my own decisions	92.0	91.5	0.29	NS
The most important thing to me is to be happy	80.4	80.1	0.03	NS
It is important to me to have fun, even if it is at the expense of others	24.2	25.8	0.87	NS
It is important to me to live for today	77.4	77.3	0.01	NS

Thus, 79.2% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 72.9% of the year nine pupils, agree that they like to be independent. Moreover, 74.8% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 70.5% of the year nine pupils, agree that their individuality is important to them. However, the young people's individual core values are consistent across the majority of items in table 9.3.

### ***Socio-economic group***

A comparison of the young people's individual core values, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 9.4.

**Table 9.4. Individual core values: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I like to be independent	82.1	79.1	69.6	22.66	.001
My individuality is important to me	79.4	72.7	72.3	10.50	.01
It is important to me to make my own decisions	94.3	90.7	91.8	7.14	.05
The most important thing to me is to be happy	80.2	81.6	78.3	1.47	NS
It is important to me to have fun, even if it is at the expense of others	23.0	23.7	22.5	0.21	NS
It is important to me to live for today	80.7	79.0	77.0	1.85	NS

Table 9.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's individual core values as there are statistically significant responses from the different groups to half the items in table 9.4. More of the young people from higher socio-economic groups express strong individual core values than young people from lower, or intermediate, socio-economic groups.

Thus, 82.1% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they like to be independent, in comparison with 79.1% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 69.6% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations. This item generates differences in responses of high statistical significance. Moreover, more of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations (79.4%) than those with parents in 'administrative' (72.7%) or 'elementary' (72.3%) occupations agree that their individuality is important to them.



In addition, 94.3% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations, in comparison with 91.8% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, and 90.7% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, agree that it is important to them to make their own decisions.

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, the young people participating in the Young People's Values Project display a strong sense of individual core values. For example, over nine out of ten agree that it is important to them to make their own decisions, and nearly eight out of ten agree that the most important thing to them is to be happy. Over three quarters agree with the more hedonistic expression of individualism, that it is important to them to live for today. A smaller, but still substantial proportion, a quarter, maintain their individual core values even when phrased as to the detriment of others.

These strong individual core values expressed by the young people completing the HaFVI fit with the strong individual core values expressed by the young people in the focus groups. They demonstrated their individual core values through statements such as:

"It's making your own decisions and having the choice of doing whatever you want."

The factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are all of some significance when considering the young people's individual core values. Sex is the factor of greatest significance, and primarily more of the girls than the boys display strong individual core values. However, when individual core values are phrased as being to the detriment of

others, more of the boys than the girls agree. This fits with Eysenck's three-dimensional model of personality (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1991). The higher levels of response from the boys than the girls when individual core values are expressed to the detriment of others can be seen as demonstrating higher levels of psychoticism; tough-mindedness, among the boys than the girls. This fits with the consistent finding across cultures that boys and men record higher scores of psychoticism than girls and women (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1976; Halsall, 2005).

Socio-economic group is the factor of next greatest significance when considering the young people's individual core values. From their responses, it is evident that young people from higher socio-economic groups hold higher levels of individual core values than those from intermediate or lower socio-economic groups. It is arguable that young people from higher socio-economic groups have greater economic freedom than those from intermediate or lower socio-economic groups, enabling them to have more independence and more freedom to express their individuality.

Age is the factor of least significance when considering the young people's individual core values, yet still generates significant responses to the two overview items in table 9.3. From these, it is clear that more year ten than year nine pupils portray individual core values. This finding compounds the thesis of growing individualism among young people. Previously, Francis (2001) found some individualism among young people, and the individualism expressed by those in the present study appears to be felt even more strongly than that expressed in Francis (2001). The finding here that more year ten than

year nine young people express individual core values further suggests that individualism is growing among young people generally, and as they get older.

With relation to the young people's core values, overall, therefore, it is apparent that the core values expressed by the young people in this study are primarily individually focused. In terms of their community core values, the young people highly value the people around them, yet from an individualistic motivation. This, combined with the strong individual core values expressed by the young people, suggests that the young people's overall core values are predominantly individually focused. Thus, as stated by Francis (2001), these young people still emanate a strong identity as 'Thatcher's children' (p. 209).

Having examined the young people's core values, the next value-area in the profile to be considered in this study, their aims in life, is now explored.



## **CHAPTER 10**

### **AIMS IN LIFE**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Profile of young people's aims in life**

##### *Overview*

##### *Sex*

##### *Age*

##### *Socio-economic group*

#### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

The focus groups and literature review demonstrate that many young people have high aspirations for their future. Data from the focus groups, as shown in chapter four, emphasise that the young people hold both broad aims in life, for example wanting to make a difference to the world, and specific aims in life, for example getting a good job and having a family.

Thus the assessment of the young people's aims in life in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to examine what aspirations the young people hold, and whether these reflect the aims and aspirations expressed in the focus groups and depicted in the literature review.

The assessment of the young people's aims in life consists of one main section, comprising nine items. Each item begins with the phrase 'I would like to'. The nine items in the HaFVI examine both these types of aims in life, although the emphasis lies on specific aims in life, as this was the emphasis that arose in both the focus groups, and the literature review (Bibby, 2001).

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's aims in life, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be significant when considering the young people's values. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's aims in life; of whether the young people completing the HaFVI reflect the high aspirations of the young people in the focus

groups, and which of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant when considering the young people's values regarding their aims in life.

## Profile of young people's aims in life

### Overview

Table 10.1 presents an overview of the young people's aims in life, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 10.1. Aims in life: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I would like to get married	78.0	17.1	4.9
I would like to have children	80.7	13.8	5.4
I would like to have a successful career	95.7	2.8	1.5
I would like to have lots of money	86.9	9.0	4.0
I would like to own my own home	89.8	6.7	3.5
I would like to make a difference to the world	57.2	28.5	14.3
I would like to be famous	58.7	23.7	17.6
I would like to travel the world	79.1	13.5	7.3
I would like to experience different cultures	40.0	35.8	24.2

Table 10.1 demonstrates that the young people have high aspirations for their future, primarily focusing on having a family, a good job, and security. Their aspirations are quite traditional; arguably, the young people's aspirations expressed in table 10.1 do not differ greatly from the aspirations of previous generations.



The young people's aims in life demonstrate the individualistic nature of their values, expressed here particularly in materialistic terms. Table 10.1 demonstrates that the largest proportion of young people (95.7%) agree that they would like to have a successful career. The next largest proportion (89.8%) would like to own their own home, followed by 86.9% who would like to have lots of money. Large proportions also agree that they would like to have a family of their own, for example, 80.7% would like to have children, and 78.0% would like to get married.

The young people's specific aims in life are also demonstrated in the high proportions (79.1%) who agree that they would like to travel the world. Their motivation for this, however, is unclear, as only two fifths (40.0%) agree that they would like to experience different cultures. Over a third of the young people (35.8%) are not certain regarding whether or not they would like to experience different cultures, and nearly a quarter (24.2%) disagree that they would like to experience different cultures. These are the largest proportions of young people who are not certain or disagree with items in this table.

The smallest, but still substantial, proportions of young people agree with the broader expressions of their aims in life. Slightly more of the young people agree that they would like to be famous (58.7%) than agree that they would like to make a difference to the world (57.2%); this again emphasises the young people's individualism.

## Sex

A comparison of the young people's aims in life, according to their sex, is presented in table 10.2.

**Table 10.2. Aims in life: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I would like to get married	79.4	76.5	3.81	NS
I would like to have children	83.2	78.1	10.64	.01
I would like to have a successful career	96.5	94.8	4.69	.05
I would like to have lots of money	85.0	88.9	9.65	.01
I would like to own my own home	90.2	89.4	0.42	NS
I would like to make a difference to the world	56.9	57.4	0.09	NS
I would like to be famous	56.2	61.4	7.86	.01
I would like to travel the world	79.1	80.6	0.81	NS
I would like to experience different cultures	42.9	36.9	10.21	.01

Table 10.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's aims in life. On balance, the aims in life of the girls appear less individualistic than those of the boys. For example, significantly more of the boys (88.9%) than the girls (85.0%) agree that they would like to have lots of money; and more of the boys (61.4%) than the girls (56.2%) agree that they would like to be famous. In addition, more of the girls (42.9%) than the boys (36.9%) agree that they would like to experience different cultures. In addition, more of the girls (83.2%) than the boys (78.1%) agree that they would like to have children.

The responses in table 10.2 which go against this trend of lower levels of individualism among the girls are in response to the item 'I would like to have a successful career'. Thus, 96.5% of the girls and 94.8% of the boys agree with this item.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their aims in life, according to age measured by school year, is presented in table 10.3.

**Table 10.3. Aims in life: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I would like to get married	79.2	76.7	2.79	NS
I would like to have children	80.9	80.6	0.02	NS
I would like to have a successful career	96.1	95.2	1.37	NS
I would like to have lots of money	87.2	86.7	0.15	NS
I would like to own my own home	88.8	90.8	2.99	NS
I would like to make a difference to the world	57.8	56.5	0.43	NS
I would like to be famous	61.2	55.9	8.49	.01
I would like to travel the world	79.4	80.0	0.13	NS
I would like to experience different cultures	38.0	42.0	4.50	.05

Table 10.3 demonstrates that age, as measured by school year, is a factor of very small significance when considering the young people's values regarding their aims in life. The item generating differences of the highest statistical significance in table 10.3 concerns



being famous. Thus, 61.2% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 55.9% of the year ten pupils, agree that they would like to be famous.

The other item in table 10.3 generating differences in responses of statistical significance concerns experiencing different cultures. A larger proportion of the year ten pupils (42.0%) than the year nine pupils (38.0%) agree that they would like to experience different cultures, although very similar proportions of both groups (79.4% of year nine pupils and 80.0% of year ten pupils) agree that they would like to travel the world.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their aims in life, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 10.4.

Table 10.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is a factor of greater significance when considering the young people's aims in life than age, although it remains a factor of small significance. The items in table 10.4 generating differences in responses of statistical significance demonstrate that more young people from higher socio-economic groups have high aspirations for their lives. Furthermore, the aims in life of young people from higher socio-economic groups appear less individualistic than those of young people from intermediate and lower socio-economic groups.

The item in table 10.4 generating differences in responses of highest statistical significance concerns making a difference to the world. Thus, 62.9% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations, in comparison with 57.7% of those with parents

in 'administrative' occupations, and 49.8% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that they would like to make a difference to the world.

**Table 10.4. Aims in life: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I would like to get married	83.5	78.1	78.1	8.62	.05
I would like to have children	83.4	83.7	77.9	5.00	NS
I would like to have a successful career	97.2	95.8	96.3	2.24	NS
I would like to have lots of money	88.3	87.4	83.1	5.94	NS
I would like to own my own home	91.0	91.1	89.1	1.25	NS
I would like to make a difference to the world	62.9	57.7	49.8	15.38	.001
I would like to be famous	58.5	57.1	58.4	0.34	NS
I would like to travel the world	83.0	80.2	75.8	7.94	.05
I would like to experience different cultures	45.1	39.1	37.0	8.36	.05

Items relating to travelling the world and experiencing different cultures also generate differences in responses of statistical significance from young people in the three socio-economic groups. Thus, 83.0% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they would like to travel the world, in comparison with 80.2% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 75.8% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations. Much smaller proportions of young people from all socio-economic groups agree that they would like to experience different cultures. Thus, 45.1% of young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that they would like to experience different

cultures, in comparison with 39.1% from intermediate socio-economic groups, and 37.0% from lower socio-economic groups.

The final item in table 10.4 which generates differences in responses of statistical significance concerns marriage. Thus, 83.5% of those from higher socio-economic groups agree that they would like to get married, in comparison with 78.1% of those from both intermediate and lower socio-economic groups.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, this profile of the young people's values regarding their aims in life, as assessed by the HaFVI, demonstrates that the aims in life expressed in the focus groups are a justifiable representation of the aims in life of a wider sample of young people.

An overview of the young people's aims in life demonstrates that their aspirations are quite traditional, in that they do not differ widely from the aspirations of previous generations. This is apparent through a comparison of the findings here with findings presented by Patey (1964). Patey (1964) describes a study of school leavers undertaken by Veness (1962):

A large number have approved of ambition as a good thing ... Property and material environment have figured often in their replies ... The family was found to be so central a concern (cited by Patey, 1964, p. 25).

It is evident that the aspirations of the young people in the present study are similar to those described by Patey (1964). The aspirations of the young people here can therefore be described as traditional in their outlook.



However, while the young people's aims in life generally reflect those of previous generations, it is arguable that their specific aims in life, as portrayed in table 10.1, are highly individualistic and materialistic, perhaps more so than in previous generations. For around nine out of ten young people in this sample, their aims in life are about personal success, material security, and financial gain, that is, individualism in a highly materialistic sense.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's aims in life, demonstrating that the girls express less individualistic values regarding their aims in life than the boys. The exception to this concerns careers; the girls appear slightly more determined and competitive regarding their career than the boys. The higher levels of desire to have a successful career among the girls may be in response to the previous unequal treatment of women in the workplace (Department of Trade and Industry, Women and Equality Unit, 2003). This still affects the mothers and maternal carers of these young people, as demonstrated in chapter six, and this may affect the values expressed by the girls here.

Age is a factor of small significance when considering the young people's aims in life. Age, as measured by school year, is only significant when considering two of the areas addressed by items in table 10.3. First, age is significant when considering the young people's expression of whether or not they would like to be famous. However, while less of those in year ten than in year nine agree with this item, over half of the pupils in both year groups agree that they would like to be famous. It is suggested that the prevalence and success of television programmes such as *Pop Idol* have made fame seem more

accessible to young people today, and thus the aspiration of being famous is popular. This desire to be famous may also be an expression of the desire to be remembered expressed in the focus groups. Yet, the finding that significantly less young people in year ten than year nine agree that they would like to be famous suggests that as they get older, the young people become less idealistic about their aims in life.

Second, age is significant when considering the young people's expression of whether or not they would like to experience different cultures, in that more of the year ten than year nine pupils agree that they would like to experience different cultures. This may imply that the desire to experience different cultures is related to education, in that through increased learning about different cultures in school, more of the young people desire to experience them.

Socio-economic group is again a factor of small significance when considering the young people's aims in life, although it is of greater significance than age. Young people from higher socio-economic groups have higher aspirations for their lives than those from intermediate or lower socio-economic groups. The item for which socio-economic group is of greatest significance concerns whether the young people would like to make a difference to the world, and it is apparent that the higher the socio-economic background of the young people, the more likely they are to agree that they would like to make a difference to the world.

From this, it can be suggested that young people from higher socio-economic groups have greater opportunities resulting from their increased economic freedom, and thus greater

freedom to dream about what they might do, and the impact they might have on the world. This emphasises Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) finding that young people from more socially deprived groups have limited aims and ambitions. However, the findings presented here represent young people's situation 20 years later than those of Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986), yet young people from lower socio-economic groups still express lower aims in life. This has salient implications for policy and work regarding young people.

Having examined the young people's aims in life, their values with relation to their family are now examined.



# **CHAPTER 11**

## **FAMILY**

**Introduction**

**Profile of young people's values regarding family**

*Overview*

*Sex*

*Age*

*Socio-economic group*

**Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

The focus groups and literature review identify the value-area of family as an important part of this values-map for young people. In the focus groups and literature review, the young people referred to their families in both positive and negative ways; as support and having an influence on them, yet also not understanding them, or negatively influencing them. The importance of families for young people, in both positive and negative ways, is further emphasised by Dimmock (2004) who states that 'Clearly, the expectations of young people are going to be formed, in part ... by their own experiences of family life.' (p. 196).

Thus, the assessment of young people's family values in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to explore and examine whether the young people are primarily positive or negative regarding their families. Aspects of the way in which the young people relate to their families are also examined.

The assessment of the young people's family values in the HaFVI consists of one main section comprising nine items. The items explore the following issues: whether the young people find it helpful to talk about their problems with their parents; how much the young people appreciate their families; whether they feel their families support them; whether they feel their families influences them; and whether they feel their families disapprove of them. The HaFVI explores the young people's family values from a variety of perspectives, from which a broad picture can be gained of whether the young people value their families negatively or positively.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's family values, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be significant. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's family values; whether or not their families are positively or negatively viewed by the young people, and what, if any, significance the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group have on their family values.

## Profile of young people's family values

### *Overview*

Table 11.1 presents an overview of the young people's family values, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 11.1. Family values: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum	56.2	16.9	26.9
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad	35.4	20.2	44.4
I get on well with my family	82.1	9.2	8.7
My family are important to me	92.3	4.5	3.1
I am often embarrassed by my family	40.3	20.4	39.3
My family are supportive of me	85.8	8.5	5.7
My family disapprove of my friends	15.3	16.9	67.8
My family disapprove of what I do in my spare time	23.3	19.0	57.7
I am influenced by my family	60.0	24.6	15.4



Table 11.1 demonstrates that, overall, the young people value their families positively. Over nine out of ten (92.3%) agree that their family is important to them, and over eight of every ten (82.1%) agree that they get on well with their family. Furthermore, 85.8% agree that their family are supportive of them. Six out of ten (60.0%) agree that they are influenced by their family (60.0%), and nearly a quarter (24.6%) are unsure about this, with a small proportion (15.4%) stating that they are not influenced by their family.

Fewer of the young people agree with the negative statements regarding their family in table 11.1. Only four out of ten (40.3%) agree that they are often embarrassed by their family. A very similar proportion (39.3%) disagree that they are often embarrassed by their family. Under a quarter (23.3%) agree that their family disapprove of what they do in their spare time, and just 15.3% agree that their family disapprove of their friends.

However, the young people are not as positive regarding finding it helpful to talk about their problems with their parents. Over half (56.2%) agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum, while over a quarter (26.9%) disagree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum. Furthermore, only just over a third (35.4%) agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad, while over four out of ten (44.4%) do not find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's family values, according to their sex, is presented in table 11.2.

**Table 11.2. Family values: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum	65.2	46.8	91.73	.001
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad	29.9	40.9	37.98	.001
I get on well with my family	80.9	83.4	3.07	NS
My family are important to me	95.6	89.0	42.47	.001
I am often embarrassed by my family	40.2	40.2	0.00	NS
My family are supportive of me	86.2	85.3	0.51	NS
My family disapprove of my friends	12.9	17.7	12.86	.001
My family disapprove of what I do in my spare time	20.7	26.0	11.16	.001
I am influenced by my family	61.1	59.1	1.11	NS

Table 11.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's family values. From items in table 11.2 which generate differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that more of the girls are positive in their family values than the boys, with the exception of talking about their problems with their dad.

Thus, more of the girls (95.6%) than the boys (89.0%) agree that their family are important to them. Furthermore, more of the boys than the girls agree that their family disapprove of their friends and spare time activities. Thus, 17.7% of the boys, in comparison with 12.9% of the girls, agree that their family disapprove of their friends. In addition, 26.0% of the boys, in comparison with 20.7% of the girls agree that their family disapprove of what they do in their spare time.

However, this trend changes when considering who the young people find it helpful to talk to. More of the girls (65.2%) than the boys (46.8%) agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum. Yet more of the boys (40.9%) than the girls (29.9%) agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad. Although overall, higher proportions of both groups find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum, than with their dad.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's family values according to their age, measured by school year, is presented in table 11.3.

**Table 11.3. Family values: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum	59.5	52.6	12.80	.001
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad	35.9	34.8	0.36	NS
I get on well with my family	82.3	81.8	0.13	NS
My family are important to me	92.6	92.1	0.21	NS
I am often embarrassed by my family	41.5	38.8	2.77	NS
My family are supportive of me	86.1	85.2	0.50	NS
My family disapprove of my friends	15.9	14.5	1.16	NS
My family disapprove of what I do in my spare time	21.9	24.9	3.44	NS
I am influenced by my family	59.4	60.8	0.61	NS



Table 11.3 demonstrates that age is not a factor of real significance when considering the young people's family values. Age is only significant concerning one item in table 11.3, regarding whether or not the young people find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum. In response, 59.5% of the year nine pupils agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum, in comparison with 52.6% of the year ten pupils. The differences between the responses of the two groups to this item are highly statistically significant.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's family values, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 11.4.

It is apparent that socio-economic group is of no significance when considering the young people's family values. However, a consideration of the general trends in table 11.4 demonstrates that more young people from higher socio-economic groups are positive regarding their families, as are those from lower socio-economic groups. Yet, more young people from lower socio-economic groups also express negative values with regard to their family.

**Table 11.4. Family values: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum	58.2	57.7	61.1	1.04	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad	39.6	37.2	36.1	1.58	NS
I get on well with my family	83.4	84.1	86.2	1.48	NS
My family are important to me	93.9	92.5	94.5	1.77	NS
I am often embarrassed by my family	41.2	38.4	38.1	1.66	NS
My family are supportive of me	88.5	85.3	87.7	3.21	NS
My family disapprove of my friends	13.9	13.1	14.1	0.25	NS
My family disapprove of what I do in my spare time	22.5	22.4	23.1	0.06	NS
I am influenced by my family	65.3	60.7	62.3	3.53	NS

For example, 88.5% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations, in comparison with 87.7% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, and 85.3% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, agree that their family are supportive of them, demonstrating that those from higher socio-economic groups are more positive with regard to their families. Also, 86.2% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that they get on well with their family, in comparison with 84.1% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 83.4% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations, demonstrating that young people from lower socio-economic groups are more positive with regard to their families. Alongside this, however, 23.1% of young people with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that their family

disapprove of what they do in their spare time, in comparison with 22.5% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations, and 22.4% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, demonstrating greater negative relations between young people in lower socio-economic groups and their families. However, although these trends are clear from table 11.4, socio-economic group is not a factor of statistical significance when considering the young people's family values.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, this profile of the young people's family values, as assessed by the HaFVI, demonstrates that the young people are generally positive with relation to their families. Large proportions agree with the positive items regarding their families, for example, nine out of ten agree that their families are important to them. Much lower proportions agree with the negative expressions of family values; that they are embarrassed by their families, or that their families disapprove of what they do in their spare time.

While the young people are generally positive in their family values, they are not as positive regarding sharing their problems with their families. For example, half find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum, while a quarter definitely do not find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum. Moreover, only a third find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad, while four out of ten definitely do not find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad.

These findings suggest that while the young people are positive with regard to their families, they remain independent from their families, and this is expressed here with



relation to working out their problems. This can be argued to be beneficial for the young people, when considered in relation to Griffin's (1993) analysis of the family, as reported by Dimmock (2004). Griffin's (1993) analysis includes her view of the family as a way of 'disguising' the differences in socio-economic group, ethnic group, and sex, in terms of who might benefit from a 'normal' family. Dimmock (2004) cites Griffin's (1993) argument that:

In general it is argued that the promotion of the 'normal family' benefits white, middle aged, heterosexual, middle class males the most ... However, for some young people the idea of normal family life not only constrains choices, but, more importantly, constrains the very ways in which they think about themselves, their experiences and the choices open to them (Dimmock, 2004, pp. 192-193).

In light of this, it is argued that the young people's positivity with regard to their families as their immediate support network is beneficial, yet their retaining of independence maintains a healthy balance.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's family values, in that the girls are more positive in their family values than the boys. The exceptions to this concern finding it helpful to talk to their parents. In response to these items, more of the girls than the boys agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum, yet more of the boys than the girls agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad. This infers that the young people find it more helpful to talk about their problems with a parent of the same sex. However, it is also evident that slightly more of the boys agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum (46.8%) than their dad (40.9%). This suggests that, while the boys may be more open to talking about their problems with their dad than the girls, overall both the

girls and the boys find their mum to be the most helpful parent to talk to about their problems.

Age is a factor of small significance when considering the young people's family values; in that more of the year nine than year ten pupils agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their mum. Used in conjunction with the argument above, that the young people find their mum the most helpful parent to talk to, the finding that they relate less to their mum about their problems as they get older suggests that, as they get older, the young people become more independent from their family. With relation to the concept expounded by Griffin (1993) that family may be a constraining force for young people, the finding here that they become more independent from their family as they grow older, is positive.

Socio-economic group is not a factor of significance when considering the young people's family values. In light of Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) study emphasising that young people from lower socio-economic groups lived and interacted very closely with their family, the finding here that socio-economic group is not a significant factor when considering the young people's family values is surprising. The present study, undertaken 20 years later than Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's (1986) study, may represent societal change during these 20 years in respect of family values.

Having examined the young people's family values, their values with relation to another crucial part of their lives as described in their focus groups, their friends, are now considered.

# **CHAPTER 12**

## **FRIENDS: RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding relationships with friends**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

The focus groups and literature review highlight the value-area of friends as central to the young people's lives. While the values-map arising from the focus groups identifies friends and communication as separate value-areas, it is clear that communication is important to the young people because it connects them with their friends. Therefore, relationships with friends and communication with friends are conceptualised here as two parts of one value-area. These parts are explored separately; relationships with friends being considered in the present chapter, and communication with friends being considered in the next chapter.

The young people in the focus groups described that their friends played a pivotal role in their lives. For example, they emphasised the importance of their friends as a support network, and yet also emphasised the impact of their friends and peers in terms of peer pressure, and the need to fit in. This pivotal role of friends is also apparent in the literature. For example, Francis (2001) demonstrates that nearly two thirds (63%) of the young people in his sample agreed that they found it helpful to talk about their problems with their friends. Furthermore, Bibby (2001) demonstrates that the young people in his sample described friendship as one of their most important values.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding relationships with friends in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) examines both these positive and negative aspects of these relationships. It consists of one main section comprising eight items. The items explore whether the young people completing the HaFVI reflect the feelings expressed in the focus groups that their friends are a crucial source of support. The items

also explore whether the young people feel influenced or pressured by their friends, and whether the particular emphasis on appearance as fundamental to fitting in, as described in the focus groups, is reflected in this wider group of young people.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding relationships with friends, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's values regarding relationships with friends. It examines whether the dual roles of support and pressure ascribed to friends in the focus groups are reflected in the wider sample, and which of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant when considering the young people's values regarding relationships with friends.

### **Profile of young people's values regarding relationships with friends**

#### ***Overview***

Table 12.1. presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their relationships with friends, as assessed by the HaFVI.

Table 12.1 demonstrates that the young people participating in the Young People's Values Project are positive regarding their relationships with friends, yet also to some extent feel pressured by their friends.

For example, 94.8% of the young people agree that their friends are important to them. Just 3.5% are not certain that their friends are important to them, and only 1.7% disagree that their friends are important to them. The young people's positivity with regard to their

friends is also demonstrated through the fact that nearly two thirds (65.9%) agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their friends.

**Table 12.1. Relationships with friends: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
Sometimes I feel pressured by my friends to do things I don't want to do	36.0	19.6	44.4
It is important to me to feel part of a group	71.0	17.6	11.3
It is important to me to be fancied	39.5	32.9	27.6
My friends are important to me	94.8	3.5	1.7
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my friends	65.9	16.2	17.9
What I wear is important to make me belong	49.8	26.3	23.9
It is important to me to have designer clothes	51.1	20.5	28.4
I am influenced by my friends	53.0	26.1	21.0

Smaller, although still substantial, proportions of the young people agree that they feel pressured by their friends. Just over a third (36.0%) of the young people agree that they sometimes feel pressured by their friends to do things they do not want to do, and over four out of ten (44.0%) disagree that they sometimes feel pressured by their friends to do things they do not want to do.

However, while smaller proportions of the young people directly admit that peer pressure affects them, larger proportions demonstrate that fitting in is important to them, and thus indirectly portray the importance of peer pressure. For example, 71.0% agree that it is



important to them to feel part of a group, and 53.0% agree that they are influenced by their friends. The importance of appearance in terms of fitting in is also clear, in that nearly half (49.8%) agree that what they wear is important to make them belong, and a slightly larger proportion (51.1%) agree that it is important to them to have designer clothes.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their relationships with friends, according to their sex, is presented in table 12.2.

**Table 12.2. Relationships with friends: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Sometimes I feel pressured by my friends to do things I don't want to do	33.9	38.2	5.21	.05
It is important to me to feel part of a group	76.1	65.9	35.66	.001
It is important to me to be fancied	36.8	42.2	8.94	.01
My friends are important to me	98.2	91.5	67.13	.001
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my friends	81.3	50.3	312.69	.001
What I wear is important to make me belong	52.8	46.7	10.33	.01
It is important to me to have designer clothes	47.6	54.4	13.68	.001
I am influenced by my friends	54.7	51.2	3.34	NS

Table 12.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values concerning relationships with friends. The girls are more positive

regarding their friends than the boys, and both groups are affected by peer pressure, but in differing ways. For example, the greater positivity of the girls towards their friends is demonstrated in that more of the girls (98.2%) than the boys (91.5%) agree that their friends are important to them. Furthermore, a greater proportion of the girls (81.3%) than the boys (50.3%) agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their friends.

Peer pressure affects the girls primarily through the need to fit in, particularly in terms of appearance. Over three quarters of the girls (76.1%), in comparison with nearly two thirds of the boys (65.9%), agree that it is important to them to feel part of a group. More of the girls (52.8%) than the boys (46.7%) agree that what they wear is important to make them belong.

Peer pressure affects the boys primarily through pressure to live up to expectations. The behaviour of the boys appears to be affected more than that of the girls by peer pressure. For example, 38.2% of the boys, in comparison with 33.9% of the girls, agree that they sometimes feel pressured to do things they do not want to do. In addition, more of the boys (42.2%) than the girls (36.8%) agree that it is important to them to be fancied. Further, while more of the girls than the boys agree that what they wear is important to make them belong, more of the boys (54.4%) than the girls (47.6%) agree that it is important to them to have designer clothes.

## Age

A comparison of the young people's values regarding relationships with friends, according to age measured by school year, is presented in table 12.3.

**Table 12.3. Relationships with friends: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Sometimes I feel pressured by my friends to do things I don't want to do	36.8	35.1	0.84	NS
It is important to me to feel part of a group	70.4	71.7	0.57	NS
It is important to me to be fancied	37.2	42.0	7.11	.01
My friends are important to me	94.3	95.4	1.58	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my friends	66.2	65.3	0.23	NS
What I wear is important to make me belong	50.1	49.4	0.12	NS
It is important to me to have designer clothes	52.6	49.2	3.26	NS
I am influenced by my friends	50.9	55.3	5.48	NS

Age, measured by school year, is only a factor of significance when considering one item of the young people's values regarding their relationships with friends. Thus, more of the pupils from year ten (42.0%) than year nine (37.2%) agree that it is important to them to be fancied. This is not a surprising finding, in light of the sexual development taking place at the ages of the young people in this sample. This is both in terms of social and emotional development, and 'biological maturation which starts at the outset of puberty and continues for at least three or four years' (Coleman and Hendry, 1999, p. 98).



### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding relationships with friends, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 12.4.

**Table 12.4. Relationships with friends: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Sometimes I feel pressured by my friends to do things I don't want to do	38.0	31.6	35.1	5.90	NS
It is important to me to feel part of a group	74.3	69.5	73.5	4.26	NS
It is important to me to be fancied	40.7	41.9	39.5	0.56	NS
My friends are important to me	97.3	95.4	96.2	3.86	NS
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my friends	67.8	68.5	70.2	0.62	NS
What I wear is important to make me belong	51.3	48.4	50.3	1.15	NS
It is important to me to have designer clothes	47.5	48.6	54.1	4.36	NS
I am influenced by my friends	57.4	54.1	52.6	2.85	NS

Socio-economic group is a factor of no significance when considering the young people's values regarding relationships with friends. However, while the responses of the young people from different socio-economic groups do not generate differences of statistical significance, there are some clear trends apparent from table 12.4.

Young people from higher socio-economic groups are more likely than those from other socio-economic groups to acknowledge peer pressure. For example, 38.0% of young

people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they sometimes feel pressured by their friends to do things they do not want to do, in comparison with 35.1% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, and 31.6% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations. In addition, while more young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that their friends are important to them, more of those from lower socio-economic groups see their friends as an important source of support. Thus, 70.2% of young people with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their friends, in comparison with 68.5% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 67.8% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations. It also appears that the importance of designer clothes to the young people is inversely related to their economic status. Thus, 54.1% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that it is important to them to have designer clothes, in comparison with 48.6% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 47.5% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations.

## **Conclusion**

This profile of the young people's values regarding their relationships with friends, as assessed by the HaFVI, demonstrates that the young people are very positive concerning their friends. For example, high proportions agree that their friends are important to them, and two thirds agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with their friends. These findings from the wider sample confirm the earlier findings from the focus groups; that friends play a central role in the lives of young people.

The young people also acknowledge the impact of peer pressure on their lives. Smaller proportions of the young people directly acknowledge the impact of peer pressure, while larger proportions emphasise the importance of fitting in through feeling part of a group, and belonging through appearance. This again concurs with the focus group findings, in that the importance of fitting in was strongly emphasised in the focus groups, while peer pressure was discussed in more abstract terms, rather than with direct relation to the self. This is demonstrated by the use of “they” in the following statement from one focus group, with relation to the person saying no:

“I think your friends put pressure on you as well. If one of them smokes and they offer it to the others they can’t say no.”

Coleman and Hendry (1999) shed further light on this lack of direct reference by the young people to the impact of peer pressure to themselves. Coleman and Hendry (1999) state that the importance of peer pressure for young people is frequently overestimated by adults, as a useful explanation for the behaviour of some young people:

The notion of peer pressure remains a convenient (if simplistic) way for adults to explain anti-social behaviour. While some adolescent groups support and sustain delinquent and anti-social behaviour, their importance for most adolescents is frequently over-estimated, especially by worried parents (p. 143).

Mounts and Steinberg (1995), as cited by Coleman and Hendry (1999), discuss peer pressure in terms of similarity among young people attracting them to form friendship groups. Thus, ‘The benefits that accrue to the individual as a result of being part of such a group can result in pressures to conform to group norms’ (Coleman and Hendry, 1999, p.143).



From the findings here, and those of the focus groups and literature review, it is argued that peer pressure is important for young people, but only for smaller proportions of young people (36.0% of the present sample) does this have an impact on their behaviour. Fitting in is of great importance to young people, but primarily impacts in terms of appearance, and the need to feel part of a group. Most young people are attracted to a group with whom they already have similarities, and only a minority feel pressure from their peers to modify their behaviour.

Sex is the only factor considered here that is of significance with relation to the young people's values regarding relationships with friends. Again, the findings from this wider sample serves to confirm the focus group findings. The finding that more of the girls than the boys rely on their friends for support emphasises the consensus in one focus group that girls rely on friends more than boys, articulated by one young male:

[friends] "they're nice to have around but they don't make an impact."

This also concurs with findings from previous literature. For example, Francis (2001) demonstrates that 79% of girls, in comparison with 48% of boys, agree that they find it helpful to talk about their problems with close friends.

Sex is also significant concerning the way in which the young people describe the effects of peer pressure. Table 12.2 demonstrates that peer pressure affects the behaviour of the boys more than the behaviour of the girls. This is also highlighted by McRobbie (1991) in her discussion of the description of peer pressure in young people's magazines. McRobbie (1991) highlights the way in which stories in magazines particularly portray peer pressure as influencing the behaviour of boys. The finding in table 12.2 that more

boys than girls agree that it is important to be fancied is also elucidated by McRobbie (1991), in terms of the boys wanting to live up to the 'macho' expectations of their peers in their relations with the opposite sex.

Thus the findings of the present study and previous literature suggest the argument that peer pressure impacts on boys more in terms of pressure to live up to expectations, including of their behaviour, and impacts on girls more in terms of pressure to fit in, which is often more passively expressed, for example, through appearance. The finding that more boys than girls agree that it is important to have designer clothes fits into this argument, in that boys are more concerned with the specifics of living up to expectations of who they are and what they should own, rather than girls who are more concerned with general appearance.

Having examined the young people's values regarding their relationships with friends, the second part of the value-area of friends, communicating with friends, is now considered.

# **CHAPTER 13**

## **FRIENDS: COMMUNICATION**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding communication with friends**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

The focus groups and literature review identify that communication is important to young people, primarily in terms of keeping the young people connected with their friends. Therefore, the value-area of communication identified from the focus groups is conceptualised here as part of the value-area of friends. The term 'communication' is used to refer to remote methods of communication, for example telephones, and not face-to-face communication.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding communication with friends in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to examine the methods the young people use to communicate with their friends, and which of these are of greatest importance to the young people. The telephone (landline), mobile phone, e-mail, and Internet chat are all highlighted by the young people in the focus groups as important methods of communication. Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) also denote that in their study, some of the young people communicated with friends living further away by letter. This study explores the extent to which young people today use these methods of communication.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding communication with friends consists of one main section, comprising eight items. The first six items examine the methods the young people use to communicate with their friends, each item beginning 'I keep in touch with my friends through'. The final two items reflect recent public health concerns regarding mobile phones (Department of Health, 2000) and examine the extent to which these concerns are held by young people.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding communication with friends, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be significant. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the primary methods through which the young people communicate with their friends, and which of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant with relation their values in this area.

### Profile of young people's values regarding communication with friends

#### *Overview*

Table 13.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their communication with friends, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 13.1. Communication with friends: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I keep in touch with my friends through text messaging	81.2	5.4	13.4
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on my mobile phone	71.3	10.8	17.9
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on the phone (landline)	82.7	8.0	9.3
I keep in touch with my friends through e-mail	45.9	13.6	40.5
I keep in touch with my friends through Internet chat	36.6	12.3	51.1
I keep in touch with my friends through letters	23.8	9.3	66.9
I think people use mobile phones too much	24.3	19.1	56.6
I think mobile phones are dangerous to my health	11.8	23.7	64.4

Table 13.1 demonstrates that the primary method by which the young people communicate with their friends is talking on the phone (landline). Thus, 82.7% agree that they keep in touch with their friends through talking on the phone (landline), only 9.3% disagree, and 8.0% are not certain. A similar proportion (81.2%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through text messaging. A slightly larger proportion than previously (13.4%) disagree with this item, but less (5.4%) are not certain. Less of the young people, but still a large proportion (71.3%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through talking on their mobile phone.

The next most popular method by which the young people keep in touch with their friends is e-mail, although there is a considerable drop in the proportions communicating using computers from those communicating by telephone. Thus, 45.9% agree that they keep in touch with their friends through e-mail, and 40.5% disagree with this item. Over a third (36.6%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through Internet chat, and just over half (51.1%) disagree with this item. The least most popular way in which the young people communicate with their friends is through letters. Under a quarter (23.8%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through letters, and just over two thirds (66.9%) disagree with this item.

Table 13.1 also demonstrates that the young people hold generally positive values regarding mobile phones. Under a quarter (24.3%) agree that people use mobile phones too much, and nearly a fifth (19.1%) are not certain. Over half of the young people (56.6%) give mobile phones a vote of confidence through disagreeing that people use mobile phones too much. Less young people (11.8%) agree that mobile phones are



dangerous to their health than agree that people use mobile phones too much. Nearly two thirds (64.4%) are confident in using their mobile phone and disagree that it is dangerous to their health, while nearly a quarter (23.7%) have not yet made up their mind regarding the safety of mobile phones.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding communication with friends, according to their sex, is presented in table 13.2.

**Table 13.2. Communication with friends: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I keep in touch with my friends through text messaging	91.2	71.1	192.41	.001
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on my mobile phone	77.8	64.6	56.85	.001
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on the phone (landline)	90.3	74.9	115.35	.001
I keep in touch with my friends through e-mail	49.6	42.2	16.01	.001
I keep in touch with my friends through Internet chat	39.4	36.0	2.87	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through letters	35.0	12.3	192.93	.001
I think people use mobile phones too much	17.7	30.8	69.25	.001
I think mobile phones are dangerous to my health	9.1	14.6	21.30	.001

Table 13.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding communication with friends. More of the girls than the boys agree that they use each method of communicating with friends, and most of the differences between the two groups are of high statistical significance. For example, 91.2% of the girls, in comparison with 71.1% of the boys, agree that they keep in touch with their friends through text messaging; and 90.3% of the girls, in comparison with 74.9% of the boys, agree that they keep in touch with their friends through talking on the phone (landline). A greater proportion of the girls (35.0%) than the boys (12.3%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through letters.

The boys are also more negative than the girls with relation to mobile phones. Again, the responses to both statements regarding mobile phones generate differences of high statistical significance. Nearly twice the proportion of boys (30.8%) than girls (17.7%) agree that people use mobile phones too much. Moreover, many more of the boys (14.6%) than the girls (9.1%) agree that mobile phones are dangerous to their health.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding communication with friends, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 13.3.

Table 13.3 demonstrates that age, as measured by school year, is not a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding communication with friends. However, although the responses of the young people from different year groups do not generate differences of statistical significance, a trend is apparent from table 13.3

in that slightly more of those from year nine than year ten agree with many of the items. For example, 83.5% of year nine pupils, in comparison with 81.7% of year ten pupils, agree that they keep in touch with their friends through talking on the phone (landline); and 46.2% of year nine pupils, in comparison with 45.5% of year ten pupils, agree that they keep in touch with their friends through e-mail. However overall, the values of the young people regarding communication with friends are consistent across age, as measured by school year.

**Table 13.3. Communication with friends: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I keep in touch with my friends through text messaging	80.1	82.4	2.57	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on my mobile phone	71.7	71.0	0.16	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on the phone (landline)	83.5	81.7	1.46	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through e-mail	46.2	45.5	0.18	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through Internet chat	37.4	38.2	0.17	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through letters	24.5	23.2	0.60	NS
I think people use mobile phones too much	23.8	24.7	0.30	NS
I think mobile phones are dangerous to my health	12.5	11.2	1.30	NS



### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding communication with friends, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 13.4.

**Table 13.4. Communication with friends: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I keep in touch with my friends through text messaging	83.3	82.0	86.0	2.55	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on my mobile phone	72.0	71.6	77.7	4.28	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through talking on the phone (landline)	84.6	84.0	82.9	0.52	NS
I keep in touch with my friends through e-mail	55.7	45.5	39.2	31.59	.001
I keep in touch with my friends through Internet chat	43.1	35.2	29.4	21.98	.001
I keep in touch with my friends through letters	23.3	21.7	29.3	6.59	.05
I think people use mobile phones too much	24.9	22.0	18.7	5.67	NS
I think mobile phones are dangerous to my health	13.2	9.8	10.9	4.28	NS

Table 13.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding communication with friends. Young people from higher socio-economic groups are more likely than young people from other socio-economic groups to keep in touch with their friends through computer-based methods. Furthermore, young people from lower socio-economic groups are more likely

than young people from other socio-economic groups to keep in touch with their friends through letters.

Thus, more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups (55.7%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through e-mail, in comparison with 45.5% of those in intermediate socio-economic groups, and 39.2% of those in lower socio-economic groups. Moreover, more young people in higher socio-economic groups (43.1%) agree that they keep in touch with their friends through Internet chat, in comparison with 35.2% of those in intermediate socio-economic groups, and 29.4% of those in lower socio-economic groups.

The other item generating responses with differences of statistical significance in table 13.3 concerns communicating with friends through letters. More of the young people from lower socio-economic groups (29.3%) agree that they communicate with their friends through letters. This is in comparison with 23.3% of those in higher socio-economic groups, and 21.7% of those in intermediate socio-economic groups.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, therefore, this profile of the young people's values regarding communication with friends demonstrates that telephones, both mobile and landline, are the primary method used by the young people to communicate with their friends. Sending text messages and talking on the landline are the most favoured methods of communication with friends, as over four fifths of the young people agree that they keep in touch with their friends in this way. A slightly smaller proportion (around seven out of ten) agree

that they keep in touch with their friends through talking on their mobile phone; the cost of talking on a mobile phone may be a prohibitive factor for some.

Computer-based methods of communication with friends are not as popular with the young people, although still considerable proportions agree that they use these methods to keep in touch with their friends. E-mail is more popular than Internet chat, as over four out of ten young people keep in touch with their friends through e-mail, and over a third keep in touch with their friends through Internet chat. Bibby (2001) cites Clark (1999) who states that young people in Canada today are 'the Web generation who commune by the light of their computer monitors' (cited in Bibby, 2001, p. 299). Furthermore, Bibby (2001) argues that younger 'teenagers' spend even more time and communicate to a greater extent than their older siblings on-line, stating that 'They grew up on the Web and, thanks to the reality of tougher curfews, have more time to spend on-line' (p. 299). Findings from the present study appear to confirm Bibby's (2001) statements as substantial proportions communicate with their friends on-line. It can only be expected that these proportions will grow, as access to computers and the role and use of computers in daily life increases.

Many of the young people are confident and positive with regard to the use and safety of mobile phones. Under a quarter agree that people use mobile phones too much, and only a fifth are unsure. An even greater proportion are confident that mobile phones are not dangerous to their health. Only one out of ten agree that mobile phones are dangerous to their health, and a quarter are unsure. However, there is a lack of certainty from research regarding mobile phones, for example:



There are also significant gaps in our scientific knowledge. Because the head and nervous system are still developing into the teenage years, the expert group considered that if there are any unrecognised health risks from mobile phone use, then children and young people might be more vulnerable than adults (Department of Health, 2000).

Thus, confidence among young people regarding the safety of mobile phones may be a cause for concern.

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding communication with friends. It can be inferred that, as more of the girls than the boys agree with all of the suggested methods of communication, girls generally communicate more and make more effort to communicate with their friends than boys. The findings here again reflect those of Bibby (2001) with relation to computer-based methods of communication. Bibby (2001) states that more girls in Canada use e-mail than boys; a finding that is reflected in this study.

Socio-economic group is also a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding communication with friends. The finding that more young people from higher socio-economic groups keep in touch with their friends through on-line methods is not surprising. As demonstrated by recent figures (Gardner and Oswald, 2001) it is likely that young people from higher and intermediate socio-economic groups have greater access to the Internet in their homes, and thus it is easier for them to communicate with their friends in this way.

The finding that young people from lower socio-economic groups are more likely than those from other socio-economic groups to communicate with their friends by letter

reflects the findings of Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986). Therefore, communication in this way continues over time among young people from lower socio-economic groups. These differences in methods of communication by those from differing socio-economic groups have important policy implications with relation to equality of opportunity in a society that is increasingly computer driven.

Having examined the young people's values regarding their communication with friends, their values regarding the area in which they live are now considered.

# CHAPTER 14

## AREA

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding their area**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

The focus groups and literature review highlight that the area in which the young people live is important to them, and affects their expressions of other values of importance. For example, those living in a rural area in the focus groups emphasised the vital importance of transport in their lives, and thus their values differ from those of young people living in urban areas. Furthermore, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) emphasise the importance of their area to the young people in their study, in that the young people held a fierce sense of pride and attachment to their local area, which they term 'localism' (p. 141 ff). Young people's attachment to their area is further demonstrated by Francis (2001) in that 74% of this sample agreed that they like living in their area.

Thus, the assessment of the young people's values regarding their area in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to measure the facilities the young people feel there are in their area, and the extent to which the young people express localism; that is, a strong, even defensive, attachment to their area.

This assessment consists of one main section comprising seven items. Four items assess, first an overview of the young people's values regarding their area, and second the extent to which the young people express localism. Three items assess the facilities in the area in which the young people live; their school, public transport, and how safe they feel in their area.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their area, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic

group, as factors that may be significant with relation to their values. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's values regarding their area, and the extent to which they express localism. The conclusion also considers which of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant with relation to the young people's values regarding their area.

## Profile of young people's values regarding their area

### Overview

Table 14.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their area, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 14.1. Area: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I like the area I live in	71.1	12.4	16.5
I really feel part of the community I live in	41.5	30.2	28.2
There is enough for young people to do in my area	18.1	12.1	69.8
My school is better than the other local schools	61.5	26.0	12.4
My area is a better place to live than other areas nearby	64.6	20.1	15.2
I feel safe on the street in my area	66.5	16.2	17.3
There is good public transport in my area	50.8	19.2	30.0

Table 14.1 demonstrates that the young people are positive about the area in which they live, although they are less positive about feeling part of the community. Thus, 71.1% agree that they like the area they live in, although only 41.5% agree that they really feel part of the community they live in. Over three out of ten (30.2%) are uncertain about whether they feel part of the community they live in, and over a quarter (28.2%) disagree.

The young people express mixed values about the facilities in their area. They are positive regarding the safety of their area and their school: nearly two thirds (66.5%) agree that they feel safe on the street in their area, and over six out of ten (61.5%) agree that their school is better than the other local schools. However, they are not as positive regarding public transport and facilities for young people. While only half (50.8%) agree that there is good public transport in their area, under a fifth (18.1%) agree that there is enough for young people to do in their area. Just 12.1% are not certain concerning this item, and nearly seven out of ten (69.8%) disagree that there is enough for young people to do in their area. The young people also express a strong sense of attachment to their local area: 64.6% agree that their area is a better place to live than other areas nearby, therefore demonstrating a strong sense of localism.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their area, according to their sex, is presented in table 14.2.

Table 14.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding their area. From the items in table 14.2 generating differences



in responses of statistical significance, the boys are more positive regarding their area than the girls, and express higher levels of localism than the girls.

**Table 14.2. Area: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I like the area I live in	70.7	71.7	0.35	NS
I really feel part of the community I live in	40.1	43.1	2.72	NS
There is enough for young people to do in my area	12.9	23.5	52.94	.001
My school is better than the other local schools	58.0	65.2	15.34	.001
My area is a better place to live than other areas nearby	62.8	66.7	4.70	.05
I feel safe on the street in my area	64.0	69.2	8.91	.01
There is good public transport in my area	50.8	50.9	0.00	NS

For example, 66.7% of the boys, in comparison with 62.8% of the girls, agree that their area is a better place to live than the other areas nearby. This also extends to their school: 65.2% of the boys, in comparison with 58.0% of the girls, agree that their school is better than the other local schools. The boys are also more positive than the girls about the other facilities in their area. Thus, 69.2% of the boys, in comparison with 64.0% of the girls, agree that they feel safe on the street in their area; and nearly twice the proportion of boys (23.5%) than girls (12.9%) agree that there is enough for young people to do in their area.

## Age

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their area, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 14.3.

**Table 14.3. Area: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I like the area I live in	73.2	69.1	5.90	.05
I really feel part of the community I live in	43.3	39.5	4.50	.05
There is enough for young people to do in my area	20.4	15.9	9.23	.01
My school is better than the other local schools	59.8	63.3	3.65	NS
My area is a better place to live than other areas nearby	63.3	66.4	3.09	NS
I feel safe on the street in my area	66.9	66.0	0.26	NS
There is good public transport in my area	53.6	47.7	9.38	.01

Table 14.3 demonstrates that age, measured by school year, is a factor of some significance when considering the values of the young people about their area. More of the pupils from year nine than from year ten are positive about their area. For example, 73.2% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 69.1% of the year ten pupils, agree that they like the area they live in. This greater positivity among the year nine than year ten pupils also extends to a greater propensity to feel part of the community, although smaller proportions of both groups agree that they feel part of the community than like the area

they live in. Thus, 43.3% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 39.5% of the year ten pupils, agree that they really feel part of the community they live in.

Table 14.3 also demonstrates that more of the year nine than year ten pupils agree that their area has good facilities. For example, 53.6% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 47.7% of the year ten pupils, agree that there is good public transport in their area. Furthermore, 20.4% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 15.9% of the year ten pupils, agree that there is enough for young people to do in their area.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their area, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 14.4.

**Table 14.4. Area: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I like the area I live in	75.3	74.3	67.5	8.09	.05
I really feel part of the community I live in	42.7	44.1	43.4	0.30	NS
There is enough for young people to do in my area	17.4	18.8	19.4	0.89	NS
My school is better than the other local schools	64.0	61.8	60.3	1.56	NS
My area is a better place to live than other areas nearby	72.4	64.5	63.0	14.45	.001
I feel safe on the street in my area	72.4	66.9	65.5	7.86	.05
There is good public transport in my area	51.8	50.5	55.6	2.17	NS



Table 14.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding their area, and that there is a relation between socio-economic group, as measured by the three s groupings here, and the young people's positivity about their area. Those from higher and intermediate socio-economic groups are more positive about their area, and the safety of their area, than those from lower socio-economic groups. Young people from higher and intermediate socio-economic groups also hold a greater sense of localism than those from lower socio-economic groups.

Thus, 75.3% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations, in comparison with 74.3% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 67.5% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that they like the area they live in. Furthermore, 72.4% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they feel safe on the street in their area, in comparison with 66.9% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 65.5% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations. The young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations also express stronger localism than those in other socio-economic groups. Thus, 72.4% of young people in higher socio-economic groups agree that their area is a better place to live than other areas nearby, in comparison with 64.5% of those in intermediate socio-economic groups, and 63.0% of those in lower socio-economic groups. The differences in responses between the three groups to this item are of the highest statistical significance.

## **Conclusion**

This profile of the young people's values regarding their area, as assessed by the HaFVI, demonstrates that the young people are quite positive in their values regarding their area. The overview of the young people's values regarding their area depicts that while they are very positive regarding their area, they remain uncertain concerning whether or not they feel part of their community.

Moreover, while the young people in this sample are generally positive regarding their area and its facilities, they are negative regarding the specific provision of activities for young people in their area. Under a fifth agree that there is enough for young people to do in their area. This coheres with the findings from the focus groups. For example, one young male particularly emphasised his dissatisfaction at the lack of provision for young people in his area:

“There's nothing to do. They never give us anything to do. It's rubbish. There's nothing to do.”

This dissatisfaction with provision for young people in their area is also prominent in the literature. For example, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) describe the explanation given by one young male for why he stole a car: “I dunno ... there's nothing to do, no money, nowhere to go ... it filled the time.” (p. 24). Therefore, the present quantitative findings confirm both previous qualitative findings in this study, and findings presented in previous literature, that young people are dissatisfied with provision of activities in their local area. The fact that this remains so strongly felt among young people has important implications for policy makers.

The factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group all have some significance when considering the young people's values regarding their area. There are clear patterns in tables 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4 regarding which groups of young people are more positive regarding their area. From these it can be stated that boys from year nine and in higher socio-economic groups are most likely to feel positive regarding their area, have a strong sense of localism, and feel that their area has good facilities.

The findings that young people from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to be positive with regard to their area, agree that it is safe, and have a stronger sense of localism have important implications. These findings are not surprising, as it can be argued that young people from higher socio-economic groups will live in less socially and economically deprived areas than those from lower socio-economic groups. The 'localism' expressed by the young people from higher socio-economic groups is perhaps what they feel to be an objective response to the item 'My area is a better place to live than other areas nearby.'

However, the finding that young people from lower socio-economic groups express less of a sense of localism is in contrast to the findings of Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986). They emphasise that the young people in the lower socio-economic groups they studied expressed a deep attachment to their locality which 'springs from a familiarity with the geography of the district and a feeling of being a cherished part of a close network of relationships' (pp. 141-142). Furthermore, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) emphasise that the communities they studied were built on a basic attitude of helping others arising from the dangerous mining work on which many of the



communities were built, although the young people in their study experienced something of a clash of values between this basic attitude of their community and the cult of individualism and competitiveness they learned at school. It is therefore argued that the localism expressed by those in the present sample is different from that examined by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986). The localism in the present study, rather than being an attachment to a community and its network, may be that the young people objectively feel that their area is 'better', as demonstrated by the relation between higher socio-economic group and higher expressions of localism. The expression of localism with which high proportions of the young people in this study agree is more individualistic in focus than that described by Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986). The finding that high proportions of young people agree with this individualistic localism again demonstrates the individualised focus of much of the young people's values here, as also portrayed, for example, in their core values and aims in life.

Having examined the young people's values regarding their area, their values with relation to their worries, concerns, and fears are now considered.

# **CHAPTER 15**

## **WORRIES, CONCERNS, AND FEARS: FEARS**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding their fears**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

The value-area of worries, concerns, and fears, as explored here, comprises two main parts; first the young people's fears, explored in the present chapter, and second how these are manifested with relation to the young people's self-esteem, explored in the following chapter. The present value-area of worries, concerns, and fears explores the young people's fears relating specifically to themselves. Their concerns regarding wider world and domestic issues are explored in the value-area of social issues in chapter 24.

The assessment of the young people's fears in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised with reference to the fears expressed by the young people in the focus groups and literature review. The focus group question regarding what the young people fear led to their expression of many differing fears, particularly around fear of death. Simmons and Wade (1984) demonstrate that the young people in their sample also held a great fear of death, and this arose as one of the most frequently mentioned responses to at least two of the ten questions in their survey.

The items in the HaFVI exploring the young people's fears focus on fears that the young people hold relating to themselves and their immediate world. The assessment of the young people's fears consists of one main section comprising ten items, each beginning 'I am afraid of'. The first five items explore issues of fear related to dying, both for the young people themselves, and their family and friends. The next five items explore other issues of fear raised in the focus groups, and in the literature (for example Barling and Moore, 1990; Zimet, Bunch, Anglin, Lazebnik, Williams and Krowchuk, 1992): getting old, being lonely, failing, getting AIDS/HIV, and getting cancer.



This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their fears, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be of significance when considering the young people's values. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's values regarding their fears; to what extent the fears expressed in the focus groups are reflected among this wider sample, which of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant, and how these factors may be significant.

## Profile of young people's fears

### *Overview*

Table 15.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their fears, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 15.1. Fears: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I am afraid of dying	42.6	19.3	38.0
I am afraid of dying young	58.8	15.6	25.7
I am afraid of my family dying	80.0	10.7	9.3
I am afraid of my friends dying	63.6	19.6	16.7
I am afraid of my pet dying	40.6	19.2	40.1
I am afraid of getting old	34.4	23.0	42.6
I am afraid of being lonely	42.0	23.7	34.3
I am afraid of failing	54.5	21.5	24.0
I am afraid of getting AIDS/HIV	56.7	22.7	20.5
I am afraid of getting cancer	58.1	20.9	20.9

Table 15.1 demonstrates that the fears expressed by the young people completing the HaFVI are similar to, but do not fully reflect, the fears of the young people participating in the focus groups. The young people completing the HaFVI do not express such a high level of fear of their own death as is expressed in the focus groups, although they do express high levels of fear concerning the death of their family and friends.

For example, under half of the young people in the present sample (42.6%) are afraid of dying, while a similar proportion (38.0%) disagree that they are afraid of dying. A greater proportion (58.8%) agree that they are afraid of dying young, although still a quarter (25.7%) disagree with this item. Much larger proportions of the young people are afraid of their family or friends dying: 80.0% agree that they are afraid of their family dying, while 63.6% agree that they are afraid of their friends dying. It is interesting to note that a similar proportion are afraid of their pet dying (40.6%), as are afraid of dying themselves.

In considering other fears that the young people may hold, nearly six out of ten of the young people (58.1%) agree that they are afraid of getting cancer. A similar proportion (56.7%) agree that they are afraid of getting AIDS/HIV. Furthermore, over half (54.5%) agree that they are afraid of failing, while smaller, but still substantial proportions agree that they are afraid of being lonely (42.0%) and getting old (34.4%).

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their fears, according to their sex, is presented in table 15.2.

**Table 15.2. Fears: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am afraid of dying	48.0	37.3	33.82	.001
I am afraid of dying young	63.6	53.8	27.60	.001
I am afraid of my family dying	83.5	76.2	20.92	.001
I am afraid of my friends dying	71.8	55.1	80.98	.001
I am afraid of my pet dying	44.3	36.4	14.63	.001
I am afraid of getting old	38.6	30.3	23.05	.001
I am afraid of being lonely	46.5	37.3	24.70	.001
I am afraid of failing	59.3	49.8	27.11	.001
I am afraid of getting AIDS/HIV	57.5	55.8	0.76	NS
I am afraid of getting cancer	62.6	53.6	23.83	.001

Sex is a factor of high significance when considering the young people's values regarding their fears, in that the responses of the two groups to all the items, with the exception of one, generate differences of the highest statistical significance. The girls demonstrate higher levels of fear than the boys for each of these items.

Thus, 83.5% of the girls, in comparison with 76.2% of the boys, agree that they are afraid of their family dying; and 71.8% of the girls, in comparison with 55.1% of the boys, agree that they are afraid of their friends dying. More of the girls (48.0%) than the boys (37.3%) agree that they are afraid of dying, and greater proportions of both groups, but still more of the girls (63.6%) than the boys (53.8%) agree that they are afraid of dying young. Under half of both groups (44.3% of the girls and just 36.4% of the boys) agree that they are afraid of their pet dying.



Reasonably high proportions of both groups, but still around one out of ten more of the girls (62.6%) than the boys (53.6%) agree that they are afraid of getting cancer. Furthermore, 59.3% of the girls and 49.8% of the boys agree that they are afraid of failing, and 46.5% of the girls and 37.3% of the boys agree that they are afraid of being lonely. More of the girls (38.6%) than they boys (30.3%) also agree that they are afraid of getting old. Therefore, the girls express consistently higher levels of fear than the boys.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their fears, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 15.3.

**Table 15.3. Fears: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am afraid of dying	41.6	43.8	1.41	NS
I am afraid of dying young	58.8	58.6	0.01	NS
I am afraid of my family dying	79.1	81.0	1.39	NS
I am afraid of my friends dying	62.7	64.6	1.08	NS
I am afraid of my pet dying	42.6	38.2	4.57	.05
I am afraid of getting old	31.8	37.1	9.14	.01
I am afraid of being lonely	37.1	47.2	29.17	.001
I am afraid of failing	51.7	57.6	10.09	.01
I am afraid of getting AIDS/HIV	57.1	56.2	0.26	NS
I am afraid of getting cancer	57.6	58.7	0.40	NS

Age is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding their fears. For the majority of the items generating differences of statistical significance between the two groups, more of the year ten, than year nine pupils, express fear.

Thus, 57.6% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 51.7% of the year nine pupils, agree that they are afraid of failing. Furthermore, 47.2% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 37.1% of the year nine pupils, agree that they are afraid of being lonely; and 37.1% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 31.8% of the year nine pupils, agree that they are afraid of getting old.

The exception to this trend concerns pets dying. More (42.6%) of the year nine than year ten (38.2%) pupils agree that they are afraid of their pet dying.

### ***Socio-economic group***

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their fears, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 15.4.

From table 15.4 it is apparent that socio-economic group only has a small significance with relation to one item in table 15.4, regarding fear of family dying. More of the young people from lower socio-economic groups (83.8%) than those from higher socio-economic groups (81.2%), or intermediate socio-economic groups (77.0%), agree that they are afraid of their family dying.

**Table 15.4. Fears: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am afraid of dying	41.0	42.6	42.7	0.49	NS
I am afraid of dying young	58.4	59.0	59.3	0.08	NS
I am afraid of my family dying	81.2	77.0	83.8	6.35	.05
I am afraid of my friends dying	64.3	62.2	68.1	3.01	NS
I am afraid of my pet dying	39.8	41.0	40.8	0.24	NS
I am afraid of getting old	34.4	34.9	33.2	0.28	NS
I am afraid of being lonely	45.2	39.3	43.5	5.08	NS
I am afraid of failing	57.8	52.8	56.8	3.81	NS
I am afraid of getting AIDS/HIV	56.7	56.0	57.7	0.22	NS
I am afraid of getting cancer	58.9	55.9	56.4	1.60	NS

### Conclusion

This profile of the young people's values regarding their fears, as assessed by the HaFVI, demonstrates that the young people express reasonably high levels of fear with reference to the items here. These expressions of fear to some extent reflect the fears expressed in the focus groups.

The young people completing the HaFVI do not express such high levels of fear regarding their own mortality as are expressed in the focus groups. Fear of their own death was discussed by young people in almost all the focus groups, and thus cannot be seen as solely the product of young people feeding on each other's ideas in one focus group. It is suggested that this divergence between the force of expressions of fear of their own



death in the focus groups and the HaFVI is linked to the different methods of focus group and questionnaire. The young people may have found it easier to discuss fear of their own death in an informal, primarily supportive group of their peers, yet agreeing with such an idea on paper may make it seem more definite, and thus more difficult to express. However, the fears concerning death of family and friends expressed in the focus groups are reflected by high proportions of the young people completing the HaFVI. It is suggested that experience of fear of death of family or friends may be easier to express on paper than fear of own death as it remains slightly removed from the self.

Nearly six out of ten young people completing the HaFVI agree that they are afraid of getting cancer, reflecting the fear of this disease in modern society in the United Kingdom. However it is arguable that this fear among some young people is well founded, as recent research (Cancer Research UK, 2004) suggests that more than one in three people will develop cancer at some point in their lives.

The factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group have differing levels of significance when considering the young people's values regarding their fears. Sex is a factor of high significance in that the girls express higher levels of fear than the boys. This is in accordance with previous literature (for example, Halsall, 2002; 2005) which demonstrates that girls are more likely to express high levels of anxiety than boys. Halsall (2002; 2005) maintains that displaying anxiety is associated among young people with a feminine personality profile, and furthermore, that this is consistent with the empirical model of personality established by Eysenck and colleagues (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1991). Eysenck's model of personality associates anxiety with the higher order

dimension of personality defined as neuroticism. Moreover, Francis (1993) demonstrates the consistent finding across cultures that girls and women record higher scores of neuroticism than boys and men. The finding in the present study that the girls express higher levels of fear than the boys, concurs with the societal outworking of Eysenck's empirical model of personality, as documented in previous literature.

Many more of the girls than the boys agree that they are afraid of their friends dying. This again emphasises the greater importance placed on their friends by the girls than by the boys, as demonstrated in chapter 12.

Age is a factor of reasonable significance when considering the young people's values regarding their fears in that the year ten pupils generally express higher levels of fear than the year nine pupils. These higher levels of fear expressed by those in the older year group may be because many of the fears expressed here are more real to the year ten pupils than the year nine pupils. For example, more of the year ten pupils, than the year nine pupils, agree that they are afraid of failing, which may be linked to the greater imminence for the year ten pupils of their GCSE examinations. Furthermore, more of the year ten pupils than the year nine pupils agree that they are afraid of being lonely, which may be linked to the greater realisation of the impact of social expectations by year ten pupils. This is reflected in chapter 12 through the fact that more year ten, than year nine pupils, agree that it is important to them to be fancied.

Socio-economic group is a factor of small significance when considering the young people's values regarding their fears. The only item in table 15.4 for which socio-

economic group generates differences in responses of statistical significance concerns fear of family dying. The greater agreement of those from lower socio-economic groups with this item concurs with the findings of Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) regarding the importance of their families to young people from lower socio-economic groups.

Having examined the young people's fears as the first part of the value-area of worries, concerns, and fears, the second part of this value-area, which examines how these fears are expressed in the young people's self-esteem, is now considered.



# **CHAPTER 16**

## **WORRIES, CONCERNS, AND FEARS: SELF-ESTEEM**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's self-esteem**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

Having examined young people's fears relating to themselves in the previous chapter, the present chapter examines the second part of the value-area of worries, concerns, and fears in examining how the young people's fears and worries about themselves manifest themselves in terms of the young people's self-esteem.

Rosenberg (1965) emphasises this connection between anxiety and self-esteem among young people, and this demonstrates the importance of examining the young people's self-esteem within the value-area of worries, concerns, and fears. The issue was also highlighted in the focus groups, for example, the young people discussed their coping strategies for when they are concerned with relation to themselves. They also discussed and expressed anxiety about the great importance placed on being judged by their peers, for example, on their appearance. Thus, self-esteem can be conceptualised here as portrayed through the confidence the young people have in themselves, and the levels of anxiety they feel about themselves.

Self-esteem is also seen as an important issue for young people in the previous literature. For example, Francis (2001) demonstrates that only one out of eight (13%) of the young people in his sample feel they are not worth much as a person.

The assessment of the young people's self-esteem in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to examine whether young people's self-esteem, as expressed through their levels of depression and purpose in life, can be said to be generally positive

or negative. The assessment of young people's self-esteem in the HaFVI also examines whether the young people's actions may be affected by low self-esteem.

The assessment of the young people's self-esteem in the HaFVI consists of one main section comprising six items. Two items measure the young people's self-esteem as positive or negative. The first item assesses the confidence they have in themselves through examining their sense of purpose in life, as measured by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1969), and stated by Francis (2001) to 'provide a key to motivation and meaning-making' (p. 27). The second item assesses the levels of anxiety the young people feel through examining whether they often feel depressed.

Alongside these two items giving an indication of whether the young people's self-esteem is positive or negative, the HaFVI also includes four items examining the young people's consideration of practical expressions of low self-esteem. Thus, the HaFVI examines whether they sometimes eat more, or stop eating, to alleviate negative feelings, and less directly examines whether the young people have sometimes considered hurting themselves, or taking their own life.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's levels of self-esteem and considered expressions of negative self-esteem, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be significant. The chapter concludes by examining whether the young people's self-esteem can be said to be generally positive or negative, and their levels of considered expression of low self-



esteem. The significance of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group is examined.

## Profile of young people's self-esteem

### Overview

Table 16.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their self-esteem, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 16.1. Self-esteem: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I sometimes eat to make myself feel better	41.2	17.7	41.1
I sometimes stop eating to make myself feel better	17.7	18.4	63.9
I have sometimes considered deliberately hurting myself	29.0	14.6	56.4
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	25.3	15.8	58.9
I often feel depressed	36.4	18.8	44.8
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	52.4	34.1	13.5

Table 16.1 demonstrates that the young people are reasonably positive in their expressions of self-esteem, although there remain substantial proportions who are uncertain. For example, just over half (52.4%) agree that they feel their life has a sense of purpose, yet over a third (34.1%) are not certain whether they feel their life has a sense of purpose, and one out of eight (13.5%) disagree that their life has a sense of purpose. Moreover, while a substantial proportion of the young people (44.8%) disagree that they often feel

depressed, there remains over half who agree that they often feel depressed (36.4%) or who are not certain how they feel (18.8%).

A considerable proportion of the young people (41.2%) agree that they sometimes eat to make themselves feel better, while nearly the same proportion (41.1%) disagree with this item. However, a much smaller proportion of the young people (17.7%) agree that they sometimes stop eating to make themselves feel better, while 63.9% disagree with this item. Greater proportions of the young people agree that they have sometimes considered deliberately hurting themselves or taking their own lives, than agree that they sometimes stop eating. Nearly one out of three young people (29.0%) agree that they have sometimes considered deliberately hurting themselves, alongside 14.6% who are not certain, and just over half (56.4%) who disagree. In addition, just over a quarter (25.3%) have sometimes considered taking their own lives, in comparison with 15.8% who are not certain, and 58.9% who disagree that they have sometimes considered taking their own lives.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their self-esteem, according to their sex, is presented in table 16.2.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding their self-esteem. From the responses to items in table 16.2 that generate differences of statistical significance, it is apparent that more of the girls than the boys express low levels of self-esteem, and that more of the girls than the boys agree that they sometimes

consider actions with relation to low self-esteem. Thus, 41.9% of the girls, in comparison with 31.0% of the boys, agree that they often feel depressed; these responses generate differences of the highest statistical differences.

**Table 16.2. Self-esteem: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I sometimes eat to make myself feel better	50.7	31.3	106.42	.001
I sometimes stop eating to make myself feel better	22.9	12.2	51.34	.001
I have sometimes considered deliberately hurting myself	31.6	26.1	9.37	.01
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	27.2	23.3	5.80	.05
I often feel depressed	41.9	31.0	37.85	.001
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	51.6	53.3	0.72	NS

The biggest differences between the responses of the girls and boys arise in response to the items relating to food. Over half of the girls (50.7%), in comparison with 31.3% of the boys, agree that they sometimes eat to make themselves feel better. Moreover, nearly twice the proportion of girls (22.9%) than boys (12.2%) agree that they sometimes stop eating to make themselves feel better.

Much greater proportions of the girls than the boys agree that they have sometimes considered deliberately hurting themselves, or taking their own life. Thus, 31.6% of the girls, in comparison with 26.1% of the boys, agree that they have sometimes considered



deliberately hurting themselves; and 27.2% of the girls, in comparison with 23.3% of the boys, agree that they have sometimes considered taking their own life. Thus the girls express more negativity in their self-esteem than the boys, and express a greater propensity to act on this.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their self-esteem, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 16.3.

**Table 16.3. Self-esteem: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I sometimes eat to make myself feel better	40.6	41.9	0.44	NS
I sometimes stop eating to make myself feel better	17.3	17.9	0.14	NS
I have sometimes considered deliberately hurting myself	27.5	30.6	2.94	NS
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	25.1	25.5	0.08	NS
I often feel depressed	34.5	38.5	5.15	.05
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	53.6	51.2	1.55	NS

Age is a factor of very small significance when considering the young people's values regarding their self-esteem. Age generates significant differences in responses to just one item in table 16.3, in that more of the year ten (38.5%) than year nine (34.5%) pupils agree that they often feel depressed. Overall, it is apparent from table 16.3 that there is

consistency across the two age groups in the young people's values regarding their self-esteem.

***Socio-economic group***

A comparison of the young people's values regarding their self-esteem, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 16.4.

**Table 16.4. Self-esteem: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I sometimes eat to make myself feel better	44.0	39.2	40.4	3.63	NS
I sometimes stop eating to make myself feel better	15.9	18.1	17.0	1.15	NS
I have sometimes considered deliberately hurting myself	27.9	27.7	29.4	0.31	NS
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	22.5	23.4	25.5	1.15	NS
I often feel depressed	36.5	31.6	34.0	3.80	NS
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	59.2	54.6	47.8	12.62	.01

Socio-economic group is of very small significance when considering the young people's values regarding their self-esteem. Socio-economic group generates significant differences in responses to just one item in table 16.4, in that more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups (59.2%) agree that they feel their life has a sense of purpose than young people from intermediate (54.6%), or lower (47.8%) socio-economic groups.

## **Conclusion**

The values of the young people completing the HaFVI regarding their self-esteem, are mixed, and also give some cause for concern. Table 16.1 demonstrates that the young people give mixed responses to the two items assessing whether their self-esteem is predominantly positive or negative; high or low. For example, over half agree that they feel their life has a sense of purpose, although conversely, over half do not disagree that they often feel depressed.

These mixed responses regarding their positive or negative self-esteem are reflected in the young people's considered expressions of low self-esteem in their actions. For example, two fifths agree that they sometimes eat to make themselves feel better, while over a third do not disagree that they sometimes stop eating to make themselves feel better.

Some of the findings in table 16.1 that give the greatest cause for concern relate to the proportions of young people who have considered hurting themselves or taking their own life. Nearly three out of ten agree that they have sometimes considered deliberately hurting themselves, and a quarter agree that they have sometimes considered taking their own life. This is slightly less than the 27% reported by Francis (2001) who agree that they have sometimes considered taking their own life, however it remains a substantial proportion of the sample here. Francis' (2001) statement regarding the young people in his sample that 'Here is a generation of people who accept as normal a high level of suicidal ideation among their peers' (p. 210) appears to be reflected among the present



sample of the next generation of young people. These are figures, particularly when noting the numbers of individuals they represent, that must be a cause for concern.

Sex is a factor of high significance when considering the young people's values regarding their self-esteem. More of the girls than the boys express negative sentiments, thus displaying lower levels of self-esteem, and more of the girls than the boys agree that they have considered expressing this negative, or low self-esteem.

These findings of the girls' higher levels of negative feelings about themselves, are in line with the findings of Francis (2001), in which more of the girls than the boys agree that they often feel depressed. However, less of both the girls and boys in this study agree that they often feel depressed than the girls and boys depicted by Francis (2001). Thus, 41.9% of the girls here agree that they often feel depressed, in comparison with 60% of the girls in Francis (2001), and 31.0% of the boys here agree that they often feel depressed, in comparison with 45% of the boys in Francis (2001). While this decline is favourable, the proportions of girls and boys in the present sample agreeing that they often feel depressed remain substantial.

The findings here, that the girls are more negative in their expressions of self-esteem than the boys, are also consistent with the findings of Block and Robins (1993). In their portrayal of a longitudinal study of levels of self-esteem among young people, Block and Robins (1993) note that there are likely to be more girls in a group whose self-esteem levels decrease over time, and more boys in a group whose self-esteem levels increase

over time. This is consistent with the finding here that girls have lower levels of self-esteem than boys.

Age is not a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding their self-esteem. This finding, that overall the young people's values regarding their self-esteem are consistent across the age groups, is consistent with, and extends the findings of, previous literature, for example Alsaker and Olweus (1992), as cited by Coleman and Hendry (1999). From their study, Alsaker and Olweus (1992) portray that there was stability in the young people's self-esteem across shorter periods of time, for example one year, but that there was change in the young people's self-esteem across longer periods of time, for example three years. The finding here that there is consistency in the young people's values regarding self-esteem across the period of two years can be seen to be consistent with Alsaker and Olweus' (1992) findings of consistency across shorter periods of time, and extends their findings as depicted by Coleman and Hendry (1999) through categorising two years into their 'shorter' period of time.

Socio-economic group is only significant regarding the young people's responses to one item here. There is an apparent relation between the socio-economic groupings and the young people's levels of self-esteem expressed through their feelings of purpose in life. Those from higher socio-economic groups express more sense of purpose in life, followed by those in intermediate, and then lower, socio-economic groups.

This finding that young people in higher socio-economic groups have higher levels of self-esteem is consistent with the finding of Francis and Jones (1996) among 16 year olds

that young people in higher social classes record higher levels of self-esteem on the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967). Furthermore, it is not surprising that more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups feel that their life has a sense of purpose, in that it is probable that young people in these socio-economic groups have greater opportunities in their lives.

Having examined the young people's values regarding their self-esteem as the second of two parts examining the young people's worries, concerns, and fears, the next value-area of the young people's values regarding school is now considered.



## **CHAPTER 17**

### **SCHOOL**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Profile of young people's values regarding school**

##### *Overview*

##### *Sex*

##### *Age*

##### *Socio-economic group*

#### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

From the focus groups and literature review, it is apparent that the value-area of school is of great importance in the young people's lives. The young people spend a high proportion of their time at school, as demonstrated by the title of Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston and Smith's (1979) research: *Fifteen Thousand Hours*, cited by Francis (2001). The large amount of time the young people spend at school is something of an indicator of the consequential role it plays in their lives. The young people in the focus groups viewed education as important, particularly in terms of getting a good job. They also described that school is a cause of concern to them, for example in terms of exam pressure. The existing literature concerning young people's values about school also reflects these findings. For example, Barry (2001) highlights school as one of seven key themes of importance to the young people participating in her research.

The items in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) exploring the young people's values about school reflect the importance of school to the young people through examining the ways in which school may affect the young people. The assessment of their values regarding school consists of one main section comprising 11 items. The items explore whether the young people are generally positive or negative regarding school, through examining their assessment of: bullying; school and their friends; exam pressure; RE and Citizenship lessons; the relevance of subjects taught at school to work and higher education; teachers; and truancy.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding school, followed by an examination of these values according to their sex, age, and socio-

economic group, as factors that may be of significance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's overall values regarding school, and how the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant with relation to these values.

## Profile of young people's values regarding school

### Overview

Table 17.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding school, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 17.1. School: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I am concerned about being bullied at school	34.1	23.2	42.7
My school is good at dealing with bullies	27.3	29.4	43.3
School is important to me because I meet my friends there	73.4	16.3	10.2
I am concerned about my exams at school	75.7	12.3	12.0
I think RE should be taught in school	31.1	22.0	46.9
I think citizenship should be taught in school	31.2	45.3	23.5
School is helping to prepare me for life	75.8	14.3	9.9
What I learn in school will help me get a good job	87.2	7.9	4.9
What I learn in school will help me get into university	80.5	11.6	7.9
I think teachers do a good job	44.9	30.0	25.1
I think it is wrong to skive off school (play truant)	48.7	23.7	27.6



The young people are fairly positive about school, although high proportions are also worried about school. The young people's positivity regarding school is demonstrated, for example, through the high proportions who agree that the teaching they receive in school is of benefit to their future. For example, 87.2% agree that what they learn in school will help them get a good job, and 80.5% agree that what they learn in school will help them get into university. Furthermore, just over three quarters (75.8%) agree that school is helping to prepare them for life. However, this positivity slips concerning the young people's opinion of teachers, as under half (44.9%) agree that teachers do a good job. Yet, just over a quarter (25.1%) actively disagree that teachers do a good job, and three out of ten (30.0%) are not certain. In addition, nearly half (48.7%) agree that it is wrong to skive off school, although over a quarter (27.6%) disagree that it is wrong to skive off school.

School is also important for the young people because of the social contacts it provides. Nearly three quarters (73.4%) agree that school is important to them because they meet their friends there. Their peers also have an impact on the young people through bullying at school. Over a third (34.1%) are concerned about being bullied at school, and a further 23.2% are not certain on this item. Under half (42.7%) disagree that they are concerned about being bullied at school. The young people are not confident in their school's ability to deal with bullies; under three out of ten (27.3%) agree that their school is good at dealing with bullies, while over four out of ten (43.3%) disagree that their school is good at dealing with bullies.

A further important concern for the young people with relation to school is pressure from exams. Over three quarters (75.7%) are concerned about their exams at school, and a further 12.3% are uncertain. Just 12.0% do not feel concerned about their exams at school.

Table 17.1 also demonstrates that the young people are uncertain regarding the roles of Citizenship and RE in their education. Under a third agree that both RE (31.1%) and Citizenship (31.2%) should be taught in school. Yet, the young people are slightly less negative regarding Citizenship than RE. Thus, 46.9% disagree that RE should be taught in school, and 22.0% are not certain; whereas 23.5% disagree that Citizenship should be taught in school, and 45.3% are not certain.

### ***Sex***

A comparison of the young people's values regarding school, according to their sex, is presented in table 17.2.

Sex is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding school. From the items in table 17.2 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that the girls are more positive regarding school than the boys, but that the girls are also more concerned about school issues than the boys. For example, more of the girls (47.7%) than the boys (42.2%) agree that teachers do a good job; and more of the girls (88.5%) than the boys (85.9%) agree that what they learn in school will help them get a good job. This greater positivity among the girls also extends

to the place of Religious Education in school. More of the girls (36.7%) than the boys (25.2%) agree that RE should be taught in school.

**Table 17.2. School: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am concerned about being bullied at school	38.4	29.5	22.68	.001
My school is good at dealing with bullies	25.2	29.6	6.84	.01
School is important to me because I meet my friends there	74.3	72.6	0.97	NS
I am concerned about my exams at school	80.5	70.5	35.22	.001
I think RE should be taught in school	36.7	25.2	39.23	.001
I think citizenship should be taught in school	31.5	30.9	0.12	NS
School is helping to prepare me for life	76.1	75.4	0.18	NS
What I learn in school will help me get a good job	88.5	85.9	4.46	.05
What I learn in school will help me get into university	82.0	79.0	3.78	NS
I think teachers do a good job	47.7	42.2	9.00	.01
I think it is wrong to skive off school (play truant)	48.8	48.7	0.00	NS

The greater levels of concern among the girls than among boys relate both to exams, and to bullying. Ten percent more of the girls (80.5%) than the boys (70.5%) are concerned about their exams at school. Additionally, more of the girls (38.4%) than the boys (29.5%) are concerned about being bullied at school. Both of these items generate differences in responses of the highest statistical significance. The greater levels of



concern among the girls about bullying at school are also reflected in their opinion of their schools' abilities to deal with bullies. Less of the girls (25.2%) than the boys (29.6%) are confident that their school is good at dealing with bullies.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding school, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 17.3.

**Table 17.3. School: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am concerned about being bullied at school	35.8	32.2	3.61	NS
My school is good at dealing with bullies	27.8	26.7	0.40	NS
School is important to me because I meet my friends there	72.4	74.6	1.73	NS
I am concerned about my exams at school	74.6	76.8	1.81	NS
I think RE should be taught in school	32.2	29.9	1.49	NS
I think citizenship should be taught in school	33.2	28.6	7.20	.01
School is helping to prepare me for life	77.8	73.4	7.15	.01
What I learn in school will help me get a good job	88.5	85.7	5.11	.05
What I learn in school will help me get into university	82.2	78.7	5.14	.05
I think teachers do a good job	43.7	46.3	2.04	NS
I think it is wrong to skive off school (play truant)	51.0	46.2	6.19	.05

Age is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding school, in that the year nine pupils are more positive than the year ten pupils about school and their education.

For example, higher proportions of the year nine pupils (51.0%) than the year ten pupils (46.2%) agree that it is wrong to skive off school. The year nine pupils are also more positive about what they learn in school and its relevance for their lives. More of the year nine pupils (77.8%) than the year ten pupils (73.4%) agree that school is helping to prepare them for life. In addition, 88.5% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 85.7% of the year ten pupils, agree that what they learn in school will help them get a good job; and 82.2% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 78.7% of the year ten pupils, agree that what they learn in school will help them get into university.

The year nine pupils also express greater positivity than the year ten pupils towards specific aspects of the curriculum. More of the year nine pupils (33.2%) than the year ten pupils (28.6%) agree that Citizenship should be taught in school.

### ***Socio-economic group***

A comparison of the young people's values regarding school, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 17.4.

Socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding school. From the items in table 17.4 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is clear that those from higher socio-economic

groups are the most positive in their values regarding school. There appears to be a relation between the young people's judgments regarding the relevance of education, and the level of their socio-economic group.

**Table 17.4. School: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am concerned about being bullied at school	33.9	31.7	35.5	1.37	NS
My school is good at dealing with bullies	26.1	27.8	29.3	1.29	NS
School is important to me because I meet my friends there	79.6	71.8	74.2	12.29	.01
I am concerned about my exams at school	79.1	74.9	78.1	3.40	NS
I think RE should be taught in school	33.0	30.2	30.0	1.53	NS
I think citizenship should be taught in school	32.1	30.4	31.1	0.50	NS
School is helping to prepare me for life	80.1	76.2	75.0	4.63	NS
What I learn in school will help me get a good job	91.4	87.6	87.4	7.22	.05
What I learn in school will help me get into university	88.0	78.1	76.6	32.21	.001
I think teachers do a good job	49.4	44.0	48.5	4.33	NS
I think it is wrong to skive off school	52.7	46.6	50.5	4.96	NS

More of the young people from higher socio-economic groups (88.0%) agree that what they learn in school will help them get into university. This is in comparison with 78.1% of those from intermediate socio-economic groups, and 76.6% of those from lower socio-



economic groups. In addition, more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups (91.4%) agree that what they learn in school will help them get a good job. This is in comparison with 87.6% of those from intermediate socio-economic groups, and 87.4% of those from lower socio-economic groups.

This pattern changes, however, with relation to the other item in table 17.4 generating differences in responses of statistical significance. The young people from higher socio-economic groups remain the most positive with relation to this item, those from lower socio-economic groups are the next most positive, and those from intermediate socio-economic groups are the least positive. Thus, 79.6% of those from higher socio-economic groups agree that school is important to them because they meet their friends there, in comparison with 74.2% of those from lower socio-economic groups, and 71.8% of those from intermediate socio-economic groups.

## **Conclusion**

This profile of the young people's values regarding school, as assessed by the HaFVI, demonstrates that the young people are positive regarding many aspects of school. They are very positive regarding the relevance of what they learn in school to their future. This positivity among the young people concerning the relevance of their school curriculum to their lives is in contrast to the findings of Barry (2001). Barry (2001) states that the young people in her sample felt that the subjects they covered at school were irrelevant to their lives, badly taught, and boring. Therefore, the positivity of the young people in this study regarding the relevance of their school subjects, is affirming for those working in education.

The young people in the present sample, however, are more doubtful regarding the issue of bullying. Over a third are concerned about being bullied at school, and only around a quarter agree that their school is good at dealing with bullies. In addition, more of the young people in the present sample (34.1%) than the young people in Francis (2001) (28%) agree that they are concerned about being bullied at school. This increase in the proportion of young people who are concerned about bullying sheds doubt on the efficacy of strategies used by schools to tackle bullying.

Sex, age, and socio-economic group are all significant factors when considering the young people's values regarding school, although socio-economic group is less significant than sex or age. The girls are more positive in their values about school than the boys, yet at the same time the girls are more worried about school issues than the boys. These findings confirm those of previous literature. It is well documented that girls are more positive regarding school than boys, for example by Fitt (1956), Richmond (1985), Darom and Rich (1988), and Francis (1992). Furthermore, recent studies comparing the values of girls and boys have found that while girls are more positive than boys regarding school, girls still portray higher levels of anxiety regarding school than boys (Halsall, 2002; Halsall, 2005). It is also apparent from this study that more of the girls than the boys agree that RE should be taught in school. This reflects the well-documented finding that girls and women are more positive with relation to religion than boys and men (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997).

The significance of age as a factor when considering the young people's values regarding school is of comparable magnitude to sex. The year nine pupils are more positive than

the year ten pupils regarding school attendance, specific lessons in school, and the relevance of what they learn in school to their lives. The greater negativity of the year ten pupils than year nine pupils regarding these issues can be seen as a cause for concern. The year ten pupils have started courses towards the public examinations of GCSE, yet are more negative than the year nine pupils, who have not yet started these courses, regarding the relevance of what they are learning for their lives. It is also concerning that less of the year ten pupils than year nine pupils in this sample agree that it is wrong to play truant, even though they are undertaking courses towards important examinations.

Socio-economic group is also a significant factor in considering the young people's values regarding school, although slightly less so than sex or age. Overall, those from higher socio-economic groups are more positive in their values regarding school than those from lower or intermediate socio-economic groups. It is well documented in qualitative studies (for example, Reay, Davies, David and Ball, 2001; Archer and Yamashita, 2003) that young people from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to have a more positive attitude towards education and school. Thus the findings from this study confirm these qualitative findings, albeit in a wider and differing area.

It may be suggested that young people from higher socio-economic groups are more positive regarding school because they have greater prospects of utilising the opportunities afforded to them through education. For example, Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004) citing Schoon, McCulloch, Joshi, Wiggins and Bynner (2001) suggest that 'the expansion in higher education has benefited the 'not so bright middle classes'



rather than industrious working class youth' (Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker, 2004, p. xiv).

Therefore, it may be suggested that our society is structured such, that those from higher socio-economic groups have an additional advantage over those from lower socio-economic groups, in that their background facilitates their being able to make more of the perhaps already greater opportunities available to them. This is emphasised by Reay (in press). In describing transitions between schools of young people in two predominantly 'working class' London boroughs, she states that:

it is so much harder for them within the current educational system to translate more than a fraction of their creativity into the kind of educational achievement needed to enter and compete in the current stake-holder society (Reay, in press).

This, therefore, further highlights the disparity between higher and lower socio-economic grouped young people in relation to education and opportunity, as indicated in this study. This finding has important consequences for the concept of equality of opportunity in modern society.

Having examined the young people's values regarding school, the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination is now considered.

**CHAPTER 18**  
**STEREOTYPING AND DISCRIMINATION:**  
**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Introduction**

**Profile of young people's values regarding discrimination against young people**

*Overview*

*Sex*

*Age*

*Socio-economic group*

**Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

This chapter and the next describe two parts of the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination that are clearly important to young people. This is demonstrated through their prominence in both the focus group discussions and previous literature (as indicated below and in chapter 19). Discrimination against young people, as the first part of the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination, is explored in the present chapter, and racism, as the second part of this value-area, is explored in the next chapter.

The young people in the focus groups emphasised discrimination against them, and stereotyping of them as a group, as an issue of considerable impact in their lives. Many gave descriptions of the way in which they felt they had been discriminated against by adults. For example:

“It’s like, some people, they try and help old people, and they just like tell them to get lost coz they think they’re robbing them or something.”

Discrimination and stereotyping of young people is also highlighted as an important issue for young people in previous literature, as demonstrated in chapters two and three. For example, Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) state that the marginal status of young people in society is crucial to understanding the lives of the young people presented in their study. Moreover, Lewis (1996) demonstrates the views of young people in her study that young people were discriminated against by both their peers, and adults such as teachers, due to factors by which they can be easily categorised, for example the way they dressed. Lewis (1996) describes the view of one young male that young people were a remaining group in society that can still be discriminated against:



“There’s nobody out there defending teenagers. There’s nobody in Congress or the state legislature or the city council, there’s no organisations” (p. 88).

The assessment of young people’s values regarding discrimination against young people in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to explore the extent to which this strong feeling of discrimination and stereotyping against young people is reflected among a wider sample of young people. The assessment of the young people’s values regarding discrimination against young people consists of one main section comprising five items. These items explore whether the young people feel they are discriminated against, and if so, how this discrimination is shown by adults. The items also explore the extent to which they feel the media portrays stereotypes of young people.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people’s values regarding discrimination against young people, followed by an examination of these values according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be of significance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people’s values regarding discrimination against young people; whether the young people in this wider sample reflect the strong feeling of those in the focus groups that they are discriminated against, and which of the factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group are significant when considering the young people’s values in this area.

## **Profile of young people’s values regarding discrimination against young people**

### ***Overview***

Table 18.1 presents an overview of the young people’s values regarding discrimination against young people, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 18.1. Discrimination against young people: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
Adults do not respect young people	48.9	24.1	27.0
Adults do not take young people seriously	61.4	21.4	17.2
Adults do not listen to young people	65.5	14.8	19.7
Young people are discriminated against	44.3	44.1	11.6
The media makes young people look bad	55.4	31.4	13.1

The young people completing the HaFVI do not feel as strongly that they are discriminated against as the young people participating in the focus groups. Thus, under half (44.3%) agree that young people are discriminated against. However, a very similar proportion (44.1%) are not certain whether or not young people are discriminated against, and only a small proportion, just over one out of ten (11.6%), feel they can disagree that young people are discriminated against.

While under half agree that young people are discriminated against, greater proportions agree that young people encounter aspects of discrimination. Thus, 65.5% agree that adults do not listen to young people, and 61.4% agree that adults do not take young people seriously. However, when slightly stronger language is used, less of the young people agree; 48.9% agree that adults do not respect young people.

The young people also express quite strong feelings about the portrayal of themselves and their peers by the media. Over half (55.4%) agree that the media makes young people look bad, and a further three out of ten (31.4%) are uncertain about the media portrayal

of young people. Just over one out of eight (13.1%) disagree that the media makes young people look bad.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people, according to their sex, is presented in table 18.2.

**Table 18.2. Discrimination against young people: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Adults do not respect young people	44.0	53.9	27.75	.001
Adults do not take young people seriously	43.9	45.6	0.73	NS
Adults do not listen to young people	62.7	68.4	10.58	.01
Young people are discriminated against	41.2	47.6	11.53	.001
The media makes young people look bad	50.1	61.1	31.58	.001

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people. More of the boys (47.6%) than the girls (41.2%) agree that young people are discriminated against. In addition, more of the boys than the girls agree that young people have encountered aspects of discrimination, and the boys remain happier with this idea than the girls even when stronger language is used. For example, more of the boys (53.9%) than the girls (44.0%) agree that adults do not respect



young people; and more of the boys (68.4%) than the girls (62.7%) agree that adults do not listen to young people.

These differences between the responses of the girls and the boys in their values regarding discrimination against young people persist when considering how young people are portrayed in the media. Thus, over ten percent more of the boys (61.1%) than the girls (50.1%) agree that the media makes young people look bad.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 18.3.

**Table 18.3. Discrimination against young people: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Adults do not respect young people	47.4	50.3	2.37	NS
Adults do not take young people seriously	60.6	62.3	0.80	NS
Adults do not listen to young people	65.6	65.2	0.05	NS
Young people are discriminated against	41.3	47.5	10.66	.01
The media makes young people look bad	52.8	58.3	7.98	.01

Table 18.3 demonstrates that age is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people. From the items in

table 18.3 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that more of the year ten pupils than the year nine pupils agree that young people are discriminated against and are portrayed badly in the media. Thus, 47.5% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 41.3% of the year nine pupils, agree that young people are discriminated against. Moreover, 58.3% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 52.8% of the year nine pupils, agree that the media makes young people look bad.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 18.4.

**Table 18.4. Discrimination against young people: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Adults do not respect young people	49.2	47.4	42.3	4.51	NS
Adults do not take young people seriously	60.9	61.6	56.9	1.97	NS
Adults do not listen to young people	66.5	65.4	60.2	4.28	NS
Young people are discriminated against	50.1	40.7	41.0	15.05	.001
The media makes young people look bad	58.7	53.3	51.8	6.01	.05

Socio-economic group is a factor of similar significance to age when considering the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people. From the items in table 18.4 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that

more young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that young people are discriminated against than those from lower or intermediate socio-economic groups. Thus, just over half (50.1%) of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that young people are discriminated against. This is in comparison with 41.0% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, and 40.7% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations. In addition, more of the young people (58.7%) with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that the media makes young people look bad. This is in comparison with 53.3% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 51.8% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the young people completing the HaFVI feel that young people are discriminated against and are stereotyped in the media, although they do not express this as strongly as those participating in the focus groups. Substantial proportions of the young people here agree that adults do not listen to young people, and that adults do not take young people seriously. For example, only a fifth agree that adults do listen to young people. However, when more forceful language such as 'respect' and 'discrimination' is used, less of the young people agree with the items. Thus, it can be maintained that the young people are more likely to agree that they encounter aspects of discrimination, than they are to embrace the term itself.

This, perhaps gradual, recognition of discrimination against themselves by the young people concurs with some of the existing literature. As is apparent in chapter one, some previous literature relating to young people and their values can be said to be



discriminatory against young people. However, this is being recognised and challenged by some scholars, for example Griffin (2004) states that:

One of the key features of academic (and non-academic) representations of youth is the widespread construction of youth in general, and specific groups of young people in particular, as 'problems' (p. 10).

Thus, it is hoped that this developing identification of discrimination against young people by both young people themselves, and in the literature, will create recognition of the need to, and evolve into, measures to challenge the problem.

The factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group all have some significance when considering the young people's values regarding discrimination against young people, although sex has the greatest significance with relation to young people's values in this area.

It is apparent that more of the boys than the girls agree that young people are discriminated against, and that young people are portrayed badly in the media. In response to this finding, it may be argued that more of the boys than the girls have experienced discrimination, thus leading more of the boys than the girls to maintain that young people in general are discriminated against. Work (for example, Reay, 2002) is currently being undertaken regarding white male masculinities, emphasising the difficulties that many young, white, particularly 'working class' males experience (this is relevant here as the vast majority of the present sample are of white ethnicity). Thus, the findings of the present study, that more of the boys than the girls feel that they are discriminated against by both adults and the media, confirm at a basic level the struggles

of young males with relation to their identity, and its portrayal and reception, in society today.

Age is less significant than sex as a factor with relation to the young people's values concerning discrimination against young people, although it remains of significance. More young people from year ten than year nine agree that young people are discriminated against, and that young people are portrayed badly in the media. Again, in response to this finding, it may be suggested that more young people from year ten than year nine have experienced discrimination. The older pupils from year ten will often be physically taller than the younger pupils from year nine (Coleman and Hendry, 1999) and thus possibly more intimidating to adults and other groups, who then may be more likely to discriminate against them in the ways described, for example, in the focus groups.

Having examined the young people's values in this first part of the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination, their values in the next part of this value-area, racism, are now considered.

# **CHAPTER 19**

## **STEREOTYPING AND DISCRIMINATION: RACISM**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding racism**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the second part of the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination; racism. Bhattacharyya and Gabriel (2004) utilise Anthias and Yuval-Davis' (1992) definition of racism: 'racism refers generally to the idea and practices of inferiority and subordination and to the structuring of social relations between groups defined in racial terms' (Bhattacharyya and Gabriel, 2004, p. 61). This is accepted as a working definition here.

In the focus groups conducted at the beginning of this study, racism was highlighted by the young people as an issue they believed needed to be tackled. Some described education as a good way to tackle racism. From this, it is apparent that while racism may not have been an issue from which the young people in the focus groups felt they suffered directly, they did emphasise its importance to them. Racism is therefore identified as an important issue for this study.

Racism is also highlighted as an issue of importance for young people in the literature. In the literature review, discrimination, particularly racism, can be seen to have a clear effect on the lives of the young people (see, for example, Lewis, 1996). Moreover, Bhattacharyya and Gabriel (2004) emphasise racial discrimination among, and of, young people. They describe something of the effects of racism on young people, with relation to, for example, family, education, employment, and policy and protest. Thus the importance of racism as an issue of importance for young people with relation to many other areas is strongly emphasised.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding racism in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised to measure the extent to which the young people themselves hold racially prejudiced views, alongside examining their perceptions of the existence of racism in the United Kingdom.

This assessment of the young people's values regarding racism consists of one main section comprising six items. The first three items explore the extent to which the young people in this sample hold racist views themselves. Within this, the first two items test whether they believe people from all ethnic groups are equal, and whether they should work together. The third item explores this more emotively by asking whether they believe there are too many 'foreign' people in the United Kingdom. The next three items examine the young people's perceptions of levels of racism in the United Kingdom, with relation to Asian people, black people, and white people. The language, and capitalisation, of Asian, but not black, or white, in this chapter echoes that used by Bhattacharyya and Gabriel (2004), and also in common usage. The term 'ethnic' group has been used here in line with its use in part one of the HaFVI, and is used in accordance with its use in the 2001 Census in England and Wales (White, 2002).

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding racism, followed by an examination of these values according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the extent to which the young people hold racially prejudiced views, and their perceptions of the levels of racism in the United Kingdom. The factors of sex and socio-economic group are seen to be

significant when considering the young people's values regarding racism, and the significance of these is also discussed.

### Profile of young people's values regarding racism

Table 19.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding racism, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 19.1. Racism: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
People of all ethnic groups should be equal	74.4	18.8	6.8
It is important for people of different ethnic groups to work together	67.1	25.0	7.9
There are too many foreign people in the UK	40.9	26.3	32.8
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people	47.9	35.6	16.5
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against black people	60.5	22.2	17.3
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against white people	12.1	33.6	54.3

It is apparent from table 19.1 that the young people in this sample are not highly racist in their values. For example, nearly three quarters (74.4%) of the young people agree that people of all ethnic groups should be equal. In addition, 67.1% agree that it is important for people of different ethnic groups to work together. However, some racial prejudice is apparent among the young people in that just over four out of ten (40.9%) agree that there are too many foreign people in the United Kingdom, and a further quarter (26.3%)



are not certain. Only 32.8% disagree that there are too many foreign people in the United Kingdom.

The final three statements in table 19.1 demonstrate the young people's perceptions of racism in the United Kingdom. It is evident that they feel that black people are the group who are most discriminated against from the three indicated. Thus, 60.5% agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against black people, and a further 22.2% are not certain. In comparison, less (47.9%) agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people, although more (35.6%) are not certain. Similar proportions of the young people definitely disagree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against black (17.3%) or Asian (16.5%) people. Much smaller proportions agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against white people. Just under one out of eight young people (12.1%) agree that there is a lot of discrimination against white people, and a third (33.6%) are not certain. Over half (54.3%) definitely disagree that there is a lot of discrimination against white people in the United Kingdom.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding racism, according to their sex, is presented in table 19.2.

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding racism. From the items in table 19.2 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that less of the girls in this sample hold racist views than the boys. For

example, more of the girls (78.1%) than the boys (70.7%) agree that people of all ethnic groups should be equal; and less of the girls (31.0%) than the boys (51.2%) agree that there are too many foreign people in the United Kingdom. The differences between the responses of these groups to these items are of high statistical significance.

**Table 19.2. Racism: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
People of all ethnic groups should be equal	78.1	70.7	20.84	.001
It is important for people of different ethnic groups to be equal	68.5	65.7	2.47	NS
There are too many foreign people in the UK	31.0	51.2	113.38	.001
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people	45.4	50.5	6.67	.01
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against black people	62.3	58.8	3.87	.05
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against white people	8.4	15.9	35.35	.001

However, the comparisons of the girls' and boys' values are more mixed when examining their perceptions of racism in the United Kingdom. Nearly twice the proportion of boys (15.9%) than girls (8.4%) agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against white people, the differences in these responses again being of high statistical significance. In line with this pattern, more of the boys (50.5%) than the girls (45.4%) agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against Asian

people. However, slightly more of the girls (62.3%) than the boys (58.8%) agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against black people.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding racism, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 19.3.

**Table 19.3. Racism: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
People of all ethnic groups should be equal	73.2	75.6	2.16	NS
It is important for people of different ethnic groups to work together	66.8	67.4	0.12	NS
There are too many foreign people in the UK	40.9	40.9	0.00	NS
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people	48.0	47.9	0.00	NS
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against black people	63.0	57.6	9.26	.01
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against white people	11.9	12.0	0.00	NS

Table 19.3 demonstrates that age, measured by school year, is a factor of very small significance when considering the young people's values regarding racism. The only item for which the differences in responses between the two age groups generate statistical significance concerns discrimination against black people in the United Kingdom. Thus,



more of those in year nine (63.0%) than year ten (57.6%) agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against black people. However, overall, the young people's values regarding racism are consistent across these two age groups.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding racism, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 19.4.

**Table 19.4. Racism: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
People of all ethnic groups should be equal	80.1	73.7	76.4	8.76	.05
It is important for people of different ethnic groups to work together	72.6	68.0	65.9	6.25	.05
There are too many foreign people in the UK	38.7	43.1	39.3	2.80	NS
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people	54.0	43.6	42.0	19.39	.001
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against black people	61.4	58.9	60.7	0.97	NS
In the UK there is a lot of discrimination against white people	10.4	11.7	13.3	1.97	NS

Socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding racism. From the items in table 19.4 generating differences of statistical significance, it is apparent that less of the young people from higher socio-

economic groups hold values that may be viewed as racially prejudiced, than those from lower or intermediate socio-economic groups. Thus, more of the young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations (80.1%) agree that people of all ethnic groups should be equal. This is in comparison with 76.4% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, and 73.7% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations. In addition, more of the young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations (72.6%) agree that it is important for people of different ethnic groups to work together. This is in comparison with 68.0% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 65.9% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

It is also evident that more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups than those from intermediate or lower socio-economic groups agree that there is discrimination against Asian people in the United Kingdom. Thus, 54.0% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against Asian people. This is in comparison with 43.6% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 42.0% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

## **Conclusion**

The young people completing the HaFVI do not hold values that are highly racially prejudiced, although there is some racism present in their expression of values here. For example, while three quarters of the young people agree that people of all ethnic groups should be equal, still two fifths agree that there are too many foreign people in the United Kingdom. Just a third definitely disagree that there are too many foreign people in the

United Kingdom. This animosity among many of the young people regarding 'foreign' people in the United Kingdom is a cause for concern.

It is apparent that more of the young people agree that black people are discriminated against than agree that Asian people are discriminated against. This differs from the previous finding of Sachdev (1996) that more of the young people participating in the YPSA Survey felt that there was discrimination against Asian people in the United Kingdom, than felt that there was discrimination against black people. Similarly, Back (2004) argues from his research in South London among young males, that white young males were more accepting of black young males than they were of Oriental young males; that Oriental young males were 'castigated within a kind of Orientalist discourse and are attacked and excluded' (p. 37). From this, Back (2004) maintains that 'particular minorities are designated as being 'hard' and assertive [black], while others are designated as being 'soft' and vulnerable [Vietnamese]' (p. 37). With relation to the attitudes of the young people in this study, it can be argued that, if this perception of people from black ethnic groups as 'hard' persists, it appears to have the opposite effect among the values of the young people here than was the case among those participating in Back's (2004) research. Here, the designation of black people as 'hard' and assertive leads to the perception of them as more, not less discriminated against, perhaps in an effort to contain any challenge perceived to arise from this assertiveness to the dominant white culture. It is therefore important for the findings of Sachdev (1996) and Back (2004) to be further examined among a wider group of young people.



Around one out of eight of the young people agree that in the United Kingdom there is a lot of discrimination against white people, and a further third are unsure regarding discrimination against white people in the United Kingdom. Thus, there appears to be some level of agreement among the predominantly white young people completing the HaFVI with the statement of one young male in the focus groups:

“Traditions are being lost, I feel there’s nothing to be proud of in this country. People are not, they don’t, there’s nothing to tempt them to stay in the country. It’s a minority country, you know, priorities go to the people who aren’t English, people who aren’t straight, people who aren’t white.”

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people’s values regarding racism. It is apparent that less of the girls than the boys in this sample hold values that may be described as racially prejudiced. This finding fits with that of Francis (2001) who finds that:

young women to be considerably less racist in their attitudes in comparison with young men: they are much less likely than young men to maintain that there are too many black people living in their country or that immigration into Britain should be restricted (p. 103).

In this respect, therefore, the findings of the present sample confirm those from previous studies.

The responses of the girls and boys are mixed in their perceptions of discrimination against differing groups. More of the boys than the girls agree that there is discrimination against both white and Asian people in the United Kingdom, while more of the girls than the boys agree that there is discrimination against black people in the United Kingdom. The finding that more of the (mainly white) boys in this sample agree that there is discrimination against white people in the United Kingdom may be related to the higher

levels of racism among the boys described above. Moreover, the higher levels of agreement among the (mainly white) girls in this sample that there is discrimination against black people in the United Kingdom may be related to the lower levels of racism among the girls.

Socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the values of the young people regarding racism. It is evident that less young people from higher socio-economic groups, than those from lower or intermediate socio-economic groups hold values that may be said to be racially prejudiced. Furthermore, in line with this, more young people from higher socio-economic groups than those from lower or intermediate socio-economic groups recognise discrimination against Asian people in the United Kingdom. This finding is again consistent with the finding in Francis (2001) that less young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that there are too many black people in this country. This finding here is also consistent with recent political events, wherein political parties such as the British National Party have gained success in more economically deprived areas in the North West of England (see, for example, Meek, 2003).

This examination of the young people's values regarding racism completes the examination here of the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination, and thus the next value-area of media is now considered.

## **CHAPTER 20**

### **MEDIA**

**Introduction**

**Profile of young people's values regarding media**

*Overview*

*Sex*

*Age*

*Socio-economic group*

**Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

In the focus groups, the media arose as an important issue in the young people's lives in two main ways. First, the young people identified that the media plays an important role in their lives in influencing their values and attitudes, both through advertising and through its portrayal of celebrities. Second, the young people identified the media as important in their lives through their consumption of the media, particularly television and music, as entertainment.

The importance of the media to the young people can also be seen in previous literature. Francis (2001) examines the relation between the amount of television watched by young people and their values across a wide spectrum of value-areas. From his analysis, Francis (2001) concludes that:

The data make it clear that there are significant differences across all 15 areas between young television addicts and those young people who watch less television (p. 200).

Other studies have illustrated the importance of the media through television to young people in demonstrating that watching television is one of the most common spare-time activities for young people (Fogelman, 1976; Furnham and Gunter, 1983). This finding is further confirmed in the present study, in that, as can be seen from chapter six, 80.0% of the young people agree that they watch television in their spare time, and watching television is thus the most popular spare time activity for the young people.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding the media in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised with reference to this fundamental role played by the media in the lives of the young people. The items in the HaFVI assess the

extent to which the young people consume the media, through television and music, and the extent to which they feel the media impacts on them, through television advertising, music, and the portrayal of celebrities. The assessment of the young people's values regarding the media consists of one main section comprising eight items. Four items measure the extent to which the young people consume the media, measuring the importance of television and music to their lives. Four items measure the extent to which the young people perceive the media impacts on them, with relation to: music and whether it reflects or influences their values; television advertising; and celebrities.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding the media, followed by an examination of these values according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group, as factors that may be significant when considering their values. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of the media in the young people's lives, examining the extent to which the young people reflect the finding from previous studies that the media is central to their lives, and the impact the young people feel the media has on them.

## **Profile of young people's values regarding media**

### ***Overview***

Table 20.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding media, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 20.1. Media: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I am influenced by celebrities	38.6	26.3	35.1
I want to look like a celebrity	32.1	24.8	43.1
I cannot imagine life without tv	56.4	18.5	25.1
I cannot imagine life without my music	60.4	17.1	22.4
I sometimes buy things because I've seen them advertised on tv	61.0	18.5	20.6
The music I listen to is important to me	72.8	15.6	11.6
The music I listen to influences my mood	70.1	16.4	13.5
The music I listen to reflects what I think	59.7	22.4	17.9

Table 20.1 demonstrates that the young people express high levels of consumption of the media. Just over six out of ten (60.4%) agree with the strongly worded item 'I cannot imagine life without my music'. Furthermore, over half (56.4%) agree that they cannot imagine life without tv. The importance of music to the young people is further emphasised through the finding that 72.8% agree that the music they listen to is important to them.

Therefore, the young people are high consumers of the media in the forms of television and music. They also accede that the media in these forms has an important impact on them. Thus, 61.0% agree that they sometimes buy things because they have seen them advertised on television. With relation to music, while a high proportion (59.7%) agree that the music they listen to reflects what they think, even more (70.1%) agree that the



music they listen to influences their mood. However, the young people feel that celebrities do not have such an important impact on them. Just 38.6% agree that they are influenced by celebrities. When exploring more of the real, rather than perceived, impact of celebrities on young people, a similar picture arises; just 32.1% agree that they want to look like a celebrity.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding the media, according to their sex, is presented in table 20.2.

**Table 20.2. Media: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am influenced by celebrities	43.0	34.1	23.55	.001
I want to look like a celebrity	40.3	23.6	92.66	.001
I cannot imagine life without tv	54.0	58.9	7.12	.01
I cannot imagine life without my music	67.3	53.1	55.17	.001
I sometimes buy things because I've seen them advertised on tv	58.8	63.1	5.81	.05
The music I listen to is important to me	75.0	70.5	7.08	.01
The music I listen to influences my mood	72.2	68.1	5.95	.05
The music I listen to reflects what I think	61.1	58.2	2.28	NS

Table 20.2 demonstrates that sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding the media. From the items in table 20.2 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that, overall, more of the girls than the boys agree that the media has an impact on them. Yet, there are distinct differences in the aspects of the media by which the girls and boys feel they are affected, and which are important in their lives.

More of the girls than the boys agree that celebrities have an effect on them. Thus, 43.0% of the girls, in comparison with 34.1% of the boys, agree that they are influenced by celebrities, and 40.3% of the girls, in comparison with 23.6% of the boys, agree that they want to look like a celebrity. In addition, more of the girls than the boys agree that music is important to them and has an influence on them. Thus, three quarters of the girls (75.0%), in comparison with 70.5% of the boys, agree that the music they listen to is important to them. Further, more of the girls (72.2%) than the boys (68.1%) agree that the music they listen to influences their mood; and more of the girls (67.3%) than the boys (53.1%) agree that they cannot imagine life without their music.

However, although more of the girls than the boys agree that the media through celebrities and music is important to them and has an influence on them, more of the boys than the girls agree that the media through television is important to them and has an influence on them. Thus, more of the boys (58.9%) than the girls (54.0%) agree that they cannot imagine life without television. In addition, more of the boys (63.1%) than the girls (58.8%) agree that they sometimes buy things because they have seen them advertised on television.

## Age

A comparison of the young people's values regarding the media, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 20.3.

**Table 20.3. Media: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am influenced by celebrities	40.3	37.0	3.16	NS
I want to look like a celebrity	33.8	30.2	4.34	.05
I cannot imagine life without tv	56.8	55.9	0.23	NS
I cannot imagine life without my music	58.5	62.4	3.95	.05
I sometimes buy things because I've seen them advertised on tv	62.5	59.3	3.13	NS
The music I listen to is important to me	70.8	74.8	5.68	.05
The music I listen to influences my mood	67.9	72.7	8.20	.01
The music I listen to reflects what I think	58.1	61.1	2.47	NS

While age is not as significant a factor as sex when considering the young people's values regarding the media, it is still a factor of some significance. The items in table 20.3 generating differences in responses of statistical significance give rise to two main points. First, more of the year nine pupils than the year ten pupils are influenced by celebrities. Thus, 33.8% of the year nine pupils, in comparison with 30.2% of the year ten pupils, agree that they want to look like a celebrity.



Second, more of the year ten pupils than the year nine pupils agree that their music is important to them, and that they are influenced by their music. Thus, 62.4% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 58.5% of the year nine pupils, agree with the strongly worded item that they cannot imagine life without their music. Moreover, 74.8% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 70.8% of the year nine pupils, agree that the music they listen to is important to them. More of the year ten pupils than the year nine pupils also agree that music influences them. In addition, more of the year ten pupils (72.7%) than the year nine pupils (67.9%) agree that the music they listen to influences their mood.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding the media, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 20.4.

Table 20.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is not a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding the media. However, a general trend is apparent from table 20.4, in that more of the young people from lower socio-economic groups agree that the media is important to them, and acknowledge its effect on their lives, than those from higher, or intermediate, socio-economic groups.

For example, 34.8% of young people with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that they want to look like a celebrity, in comparison with 31.7% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 31.1% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations. In addition, more of the young people with parents in 'elementary'

occupations (62.7%) agree that they sometimes buy things because they have seen them advertised on television, in comparison with 62.3% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 60.5% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations.

**Table 20.4. Media: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I am influenced by celebrities	38.6	37.8	40.1	0.49	NS
I want to look like a celebrity	31.1	31.7	34.8	1.47	NS
I cannot imagine life without tv	53.8	55.0	57.3	1.19	NS
I cannot imagine life without my music	60.1	60.8	62.2	0.38	NS
I sometimes buy things because I've seen them advertised on tv	60.5	62.3	62.7	0.80	NS
The music I listen to is important to me	74.2	72.5	70.3	1.81	NS
The music I listen to influences my mood	73.5	69.8	66.9	5.87	NS
The music I listen to reflects what I think	59.2	61.8	62.5	1.45	NS

The exception to this trend in table 20.4 concerns the media as expressed through music. More of the young people from higher socio-economic groups than those from lower, or intermediate, socio-economic groups, agree that music is important to them, and recognise the influence of music on their lives. Thus, 74.2% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations, in comparison with 72.5% of those with parents in

'administrative' occupations, and 70.3% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations, agree that the music they listen to is important to them. Further, more of the young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations (73.5%) agree that the music they listen to influences their mood, in comparison with 69.8% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 66.9% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

However, while these trends are evident from table 20.4, overall, the young people's values are consistent across the socio-economic groups with relation to the media.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, the young people completing the HaFVI are high consumers of the media, particularly in the forms of television and music. Furthermore, for many of the young people, media in the form of music is of greater importance to them than media in the form of television. This is demonstrated by the finding that over seven out of ten agree that the music they listen to is important to them, and over six out of ten agree that they cannot imagine life without their music, while just over five out of ten agree that they cannot imagine life without television. However, although music appears to be of slightly greater importance to the young people, television remains a very salient part of their lives.

Large proportions of the young people also recognise and acknowledge the effect that television and music have on them. For example, seven out of ten agree that the music



they listen to influences their mood, and over six out of ten agree that they sometimes buy things because they have seen them advertised on television.

Thus, the young people agree that music and television are important to them, and recognise the effect that these forms of media, and advertising, have on them. Griffin (1993), in her discussion of consumption and freedom among young people, emphasises the dual function of young people as 'a particularly malleable and vulnerable group *and* as an unusually defiant, knowing and fickle audience' (p. 138). The consumption of media, yet acknowledgment of its influence on them, by the young people here, further confirms Griffin's (1993) observation.

However, while many of the young people recognise the effect of music and television on them, and their importance in their lives, much smaller proportions agree that the media's portrayal of celebrities is important to them, or impacts their lives. Under four out of ten agree that they are influenced by celebrities, and under a third agree that they want to look like a celebrity. The smaller proportion agreeing that they want to look like a celebrity suggests that, with relation to appearance at least, the young people's own assessment of celebrities not having a great influence in their lives is reasonably accurate.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding the media, in that more of the girls than the boys in this sample recognise the impact the media has on them, and the importance of the media in their lives. There are also clearly defined sex differences in the aspects of the media acknowledged by the young people as important to them and as influencing them. More of the girls than the boys agree that

music and celebrities are important to them and influence them; while more of boys than the girls agree that television is important to them and influences them.

Age is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values concerning the media. The two principal differences between the two age groups are that more of the year nine than the year ten pupils agree that they want to look like a celebrity, and that more of the year ten than the year nine pupils agree that music is important to them. From this, it can be suggested that the young people are less likely to employ the media and its influence to impress their peers, and more likely to use it to express themselves, as they become older.

Having examined the young people's values regarding the media, the next value-area of spirituality and religion is now considered.

## **CHAPTER 21**

### **SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION**

**Introduction**

**Profile of young people's values regarding spirituality and religion**

*Overview*

*Sex*

*Age*

*Socio-economic group*

**Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

The value-area of spirituality and religion has many differing aspects, as can be seen through the differing aspects arising in the focus groups and literature review. For example, in the focus groups the young people described the many differing understandings they hold of both religion and spirituality. The literature review presented earlier in this study also illustrates the importance of spirituality and religion in the lives of young people. For example, Brennan (2001) depicts that, although the young people participating in his study were no longer fully participating in religious institutions, their upbringing within families affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland appeared to effect their values, and they remained open to spirituality. Therefore, the value-area of spirituality and religion can be seen to be important to the young people through both the focus groups and the literature review.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) considered here consists of one main section comprising eight items. Three of the items assess the young people's general attitude to religion, including one item similar to those found in the Quest Scale (Batson and Schoenrade, 1991a; 1991b). These items assess the young people's certainty regarding religion, and facilitate an accurate demonstration of their values in this area. Three items examine the young people's values with relation to spiritual and religious identities and labels. The three labels and identities considered are: religious; spiritual; and superstitious. The final two items explore the young people's perceptions of the religious outlook of their families and friends. These items are utilised in the HaFVI to gain further insight into possible influences on the young people's spiritual and religious values.

Furthermore, it is considered that in presenting their perceptions of their friends' religious values, the young people may in fact portray something of their own spiritual and religious beliefs. Commenting on the values and behaviour of their friends removes possible inclination among the young people to 'fake good' about themselves, and, as demonstrated by Mounts and Steinberg (1995), the young people's values and behaviour are likely to closely reflect those of their friends. Thus, asking the young people to describe the values and behaviour of their friends may depict their own values and behaviour through closely reflecting their values and behaviour yet removing the need to paint themselves in a positive light.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values with relation to spirituality and religion, followed by an examination of these according to the young people's sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion, demonstrating their predominant uncertainty in this value-area, and also the significance of sex when considering the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion.

### **Profile of young people's values regarding spirituality and religion**

#### ***Overview***

Table 21.1 presents an overview of the young people's regarding spirituality and religion, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 21.1. Spirituality and religion: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I think religion is irrelevant to my life	35.9	34.4	29.8
I think religion has been replaced by science	34.3	38.0	27.7
Most of my friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives	53.3	31.3	15.5
My family thinks religion is important	16.9	25.1	58.0
I am a religious person	15.6	20.0	64.4
I am a spiritual person	19.6	31.2	49.2
I am a superstitious person	32.9	28.6	38.5
I haven't made up my mind about religion yet	27.8	29.6	42.6

Table 21.1 demonstrates that the young people express mixed values with relation to themselves and spirituality and religion, although they resist religious and spiritual labels for themselves and are less positive about the religious values of their family and friends. Thus, only just over a third (35.9%) agree that religion is irrelevant to their life, and a similar proportion (34.3%) agree that religion has been replaced by science. However, similar proportions of the young people agree and are not certain in response to these items. Just over a third (34.4%) are not certain whether or not religion is irrelevant to their lives, and 38.0% are not certain whether or not religion has been replaced by science. Thus, smaller proportions definitely disagree with these statements; 29.8% disagree that religion is irrelevant to their lives, and 27.7% disagree that religion has been replaced by science.



The young people are more clearly negative regarding religious labels for themselves. The largest proportion are positive regarding the label 'superstitious'; nearly a third (32.9%) agree that they are a superstitious person. The next largest proportion are positive regarding the label 'spiritual'; 19.6% agree that they are a spiritual person. The smallest proportion are positive regarding the label 'religious'; 15.6% that they are a religious person.

A mixed picture also arises when examining the young people's certainty in their religious views. A relatively small proportion of the young people (27.8%) agree that they have not made up their mind about religion yet. However, a similar proportion (29.6%) are not certain whether or not they have made up their mind about religion yet. Over four out of ten (42.6%) disagree that they have not made up their mind about religion yet, and thus feel they have made up their mind about religion.

While the young people's assessment of their own religious views leaves room for uncertainty, their assessment of their families' and friends' religious views is again more clearly negative. Over half (53.3%) agree that most of their friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives, while just 15.5% disagree with this item. Moreover, just 16.9% agree that their family thinks religion is important, while 58.0% disagree that their family thinks religion is important.

### **Sex**

A comparison of the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion, according to their sex, is presented in table 21.2.

**Table 21.2. Spirituality and religion: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I think religion is irrelevant to my life	28.9	43.3	56.40	.001
I think religion has been replaced by science	26.4	42.6	80.57	.001
Most of my friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives	48.2	58.7	29.53	.001
My family thinks religion is important	16.3	17.5	0.55	NS
I am a religious person	15.5	15.6	0.01	NS
I am a spiritual person	22.9	16.2	21.03	.001
I am a superstitious person	40.1	25.4	64.85	.001
I haven't made up my mind about religion yet	28.6	26.9	1.07	NS

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion. From the items in table 21.2 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that the girls are more positive than the boys about spirituality and religion for both themselves and their friends. Thus, less of the girls (28.9%) than the boys (43.3%) agree that religion is irrelevant to their life; and less of the girls (26.4%) than the boys (42.6%) agree that religion has been replaced by science. Furthermore, less of the girls (48.2%) than the boys (58.7%) agree that most of their friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives.

This greater positivity among the girls is also reflected in their values with relation to spiritual and religious labels. Thus, more of the girls (22.9%) than the boys (16.2%) agree

that they are a spiritual person; and more of the girls (40.1%) than the boys (25.4%) agree that they are a superstitious person.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion, according to their age measured by school year, is portrayed in table 21.3.

**Table 21.3. Spirituality and religion: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I think religion is irrelevant to my life	35.4	36.3	0.24	NS
I think religion has been replaced by science	31.8	37.0	8.31	.01
Most of my friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives	50.5	56.3	8.67	.01
My family thinks religion is important	17.2	16.3	0.30	NS
I am a religious person	15.9	15.2	0.20	NS
I am a spiritual person	19.8	19.2	0.17	NS
I am a superstitious person	31.9	34.2	1.67	NS
I haven't made up my mind about religion yet	27.0	28.8	1.17	NS

Age is a factor of limited significance when considering the young people's values with relation to spirituality and religion, in that the year ten pupils are more negative regarding religion than the year nine pupils. Thus, a higher proportion of the year ten pupils (37.0%) than the year nine pupils (31.8%) agree that religion has been replaced by science. More of the year ten than year nine pupils also perceive that their friends are



negative regarding religion. Thus, 56.3% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 50.5% of the year nine pupils, agree that most of their friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives.

However, only two of the items in table 21.3 generate differences in responses of statistical significance, and it is evident that overall there is much consistency in the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion across the two age groups here.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 21.4.

**Table 21.4. Spirituality and religion: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I think religion is irrelevant to my life	38.7	35.0	37.5	1.89	NS
I think religion has been replaced by science	34.9	33.6	33.1	0.45	NS
Most of my friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives	59.0	51.7	50.2	10.59	.01
My family thinks religion is important	19.6	15.4	16.5	4.67	NS
I am a religious person	17.3	15.9	12.1	4.40	NS
I am a spiritual person	20.1	17.8	18.9	1.25	NS
I am a superstitious person	33.9	33.0	29.5	1.94	NS
I haven't made up my mind about religion yet	31.1	25.2	24.0	9.32	.01

Socio-economic group is a factor of limited significance when considering the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion. Yet from the items in table 21.4 that generate differences in responses of statistical significance, there is a clear relation between socio-economic group and the young people's values in this area. The young people from higher socio-economic groups are more negative in their assessment of their friends' religious values, and have a greater level of uncertainty regarding their own spiritual and religious values. Those from intermediate socio-economic groups have the next highest levels of negativity and uncertainty regarding religion, and those from lower socio-economic groups have the lowest levels of negativity and uncertainty regarding religion.

More of the young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations (59.0%) agree that most of their friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives. This is in comparison with 51.7% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 50.2% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations. Furthermore, 31.1% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they have not made up their mind about religion yet. This is in comparison with 25.2% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 24.0% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the young people are uncertain in their values regarding spirituality and religion. The overview of their values in this area demonstrates that they are reasonably positive regarding their own spiritual and religious values, for example, only just over a third agree that religion is irrelevant to their lives. However, the young people quite strongly

resist religious or spiritual labels for themselves, and, of the three labels suggested, the label gaining the highest level of acceptance is the more generally accepted label in society of being 'superstitious'.

The young people are more negative in their perceptions of the religious values and beliefs of their families and friends. If these are accurate reflections, then the negative spiritual and religious values of their family may be a strong influence on the young people. Furthermore, as stated in the Introduction to this value-area, the assessment of the young people's perceptions of their friends' values goes some way towards assessing the actual values of the young people themselves. Thus, the finding here that over half agree that most of their friends think religion is irrelevant to their lives may indicate greater negativity within the young people's spiritual and religious values.

However, these findings concerning the young people's spiritual and religious values cannot be said to be bad news for churches and religious institutions. The overwhelming impression is of uncertainty rather than negativity among the young people regarding their spiritual and religious values, thus leaving space for the churches and religious institutions to positively work with young people. Previous research, for example Halsall (in press), demonstrates that affiliation with religious institutions is significant when considering young people's values.

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion in that the girls are more positive than the boys with relation to spirituality and religion. This is evidenced through the findings that less of the girls than



the boys agree with negatively worded statements concerning religion both for themselves and their friends, and more of the girls than the boys agree that they are a spiritual or superstitious person.

This finding regarding superstitious and spiritual labels fits with the data from the focus groups. The young people in one focus group emphasised the idea that girls are more likely to believe in fate and superstition than boys. Therefore, the data from the focus groups can be seen to be a suitable portrayal of the values of a wider group of young people in this area.

The finding that girls are more positive than boys in their values regarding spirituality and religion also confirms findings from previous literature. For example, with reference to young people aged 13 to 15 years, Francis (2001) states that 'young women hold a higher level of religious belief in comparison with young men' (p. 100). The fact that women are more likely to be positive regarding religion than men is widely documented among other samples. For example, Greeley (1992) demonstrates clear sex differences in religious beliefs from the British Social Attitudes Survey, describing that in terms of religious affiliation, belief, practice, and experience, women are more religious than men. Furthermore, Roberts (1996b), in analysing data from the Young People's Social Attitudes Survey, also portrays that young women were more positive with relation to belonging to a religious group, and believing in God, than young men. Therefore, the findings presented here further confirm the well-established trend of greater religiosity among females than among males.

Having examined the young people's values regarding spirituality and religion, their values with relation to political issues are now considered.

## **CHAPTER 22**

### **POLITICAL ISSUES: ATTITUDE TO POLITICS**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Profile of young people's values regarding attitude to politics**

##### *Overview*

##### *Sex*

##### *Age*

##### *Socio-economic group*

#### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

There is a fundamental question among youth researchers as to whether politics is important to young people, or whether young people are apathetic about politics, and feel that it does not have an impact on their lives. The findings from the focus groups undertaken at the beginning of this study demonstrate that, overall, the young people participating in the focus groups considered that politics is important in their lives. Furthermore, they identified war and terrorism as fundamentally part of politics as it affects their lives.

Therefore, the value-area of political issues in this study has two main parts. The first part examines the young people's overall attitudes to politics, including consideration of whether the young people are politically apathetic. The second part examines the young people's values with relation to war and terrorism, which they see as an integral part of politics in today's political climate. These two parts are considered separately in this, and the following, chapters.

Consideration of data from the focus groups illustrates that within the young people's discussions of political issues, the issues of apathy, suspicion of politicians, and some anxiety regarding the state of the United Kingdom are evident. Furthermore, many of the young people in the focus groups felt that young people should have a voice in political issues through being able to vote.

The question of political apathy among young people has been widely considered in previous literature. For example, Walker (1996) maintains that the young people

participating in the YPSA Survey did not participate fully in politics, as they did not partake of media which would enable them to inform their political consciousness. Francis (2001) states about the young people in his sample that they were: 'cynical about political institutions ... have comparatively little confidence in the long-established political parties and whose political views are often unformed' (p. 43). However, scholars such as Roker, Player and Coleman (1999) maintain that young people today are not politically apathetic, but rather that their political activity needs to be understood within a wider conception of political activity, outside of the bounds of political parties and traditional institutions. Thus, from the focus groups and literature review it is apparent that politics, particularly concerning the question of political apathy among young people, is an issue of great importance.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding their attitude to politics in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has been devised with particular reference to the pivotal issue of the young people's apathy concerning politics. The assessment consists of one main section comprising five items. These items explore: the young people's general attitude to politics; their attitude to politicians; their attitude to the United Kingdom; whether they are politically apathetic; and whether they wish to take a greater part in politics through gaining a vote for young people.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their attitude to politics, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's attitudes to politics, demonstrating that the young people are disillusioned regarding politics, yet

still retain hope for their involvement in it. Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's attitudes to politics, and the comparison of the young people's values regarding attitude to politics according to their sex is therefore examined.

### **Profile of young people's values regarding attitude to politics**

#### ***Overview***

Table 22.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding their attitude to politics, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 22.1. Attitude to politics: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
Politics is irrelevant to my life	31.2	39.1	29.7
I think politicians do a good job	13.7	39.3	47.0
There is nothing to be proud of in the UK	17.9	24.1	57.9
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	45.6	24.9	29.4
I think young people should have a vote	63.5	21.3	15.2

Table 22.1 demonstrates that the young people are uncertain and somewhat disillusioned in their attitude to politics, yet retain positivity in their ambition to participate in the political process. They are negative in their attitude to politicians, yet are positive in their attitudes to the United Kingdom.



Therefore, under a third (31.2%) of the young people agree that politics is irrelevant to their lives, although nearly four out of ten (39.1%) are not certain regarding the role of politics in their lives. The young people also display a reasonably high level of disillusionment regarding the political system as it currently stands; 45.6% agree that there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems, and nearly a quarter (24.9%) are uncertain. However, the young people remain positive in their aspiration to take part in the political process; 63.5% agree that young people should have a vote, and a further 21.3% are uncertain. Just 15.2% disagree that young people should have a vote.

However, although the young people are positive with relation to wanting to take part in the political process, they have a low level of faith in politicians. Just 13.7% agree that politicians do a good job, nearly four out of ten (39.3%) are not certain, and 47.0% disagree that politicians do a good job. Yet the young people are positive in their attitude to the United Kingdom. Just 17.9% agree that there is nothing to be proud of in the United Kingdom, a quarter (24.1%) are not certain, and 57.9% disagree that there is nothing to be proud of in the United Kingdom.

### **Sex**

A comparison of the young people's values regarding attitude to politics, according to their sex, is presented in table 22.2.

Sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding attitude to politics. From the items generating differences in responses of statistical significance in table 22.2, it is apparent that the boys are more negative and more apathetic in their

attitude to politics than the girls, but that the girls are more negative than the boys in their attitudes to politicians.

**Table 22.2. Attitude to politics: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Politics is irrelevant to my life	26.7	35.5	26.43	.001
I think politicians do a good job	10.6	17.0	23.59	.001
There is nothing to be proud of in the UK	14.8	21.1	17.61	.001
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	42.5	48.7	10.97	.001
I think young people should have a vote	63.9	63.2	0.14	NS

Thus, 35.5% of the boys, in comparison with 26.7% of the girls, agree that politics is irrelevant to their life. The boys' greater apathy is also demonstrated through the fact that more of the boys (48.7%) than the girls (42.5%) agree that there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems. This greater negativity and apathy among the boys also extends to their attitudes towards the United Kingdom: more of the boys (21.1%) than the girls (14.8%) agree that there is nothing to be proud of in the United Kingdom. However, the boys are more positive than the girls regarding politicians in that 17.0% of the boys, in comparison with just 10.6% of the girls, agree that politicians do a good job.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding attitude to politics, according to age measured by school year, is presented in table 22.3.

**Table 22.3. Attitude to politics: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Politics is irrelevant to my life	31.4	30.8	0.12	NS
I think politicians do a good job	15.0	12.4	3.77	NS
There is nothing to be proud of in the UK	17.0	18.6	1.17	NS
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	45.3	46.0	0.14	NS
I think young people should have a vote	66.9	59.7	16.44	.001

Table 22.3 demonstrates that age is a factor of limited significance when considering the young people's values concerning attitude to politics. The only item which generates differences in responses of statistical significance concerns young people having a vote. More of those in year nine (66.9%) than year ten (59.7%) agree that young people should have a vote. However, overall, the young people's values regarding attitude to politics are consistent across the two age groups here.

### ***Socio-economic group***

A comparison of the young people's values regarding attitude to politics, according to socio-economic group, is presented in table 22.4.

Socio-economic group is a factor of limited significance when considering the young people's values concerning attitude to politics. Just two items in the table generate differences in responses of statistical significance. From these, it is apparent that young people from higher socio-economic groups are more positive than those from lower, or



intermediate, socio-economic groups regarding politicians, and that those from higher socio-economic groups are less apathetic and more positive regarding their ability to make an impact on the world.

**Table 22.4. Attitude to politics: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Politics is irrelevant to my life	30.5	32.5	35.4	2.67	NS
I think politicians do a good job	15.9	12.0	11.1	6.58	.05
There is nothing to be proud of in the UK	14.8	16.8	19.0	3.00	NS
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	40.3	44.0	48.6	7.17	.05
I think young people should have a vote	63.9	63.2	66.5	1.03	NS

More (15.9%) of the young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that politicians do a good job, in comparison with 12.0% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 11.1% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations. Furthermore, 40.3% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations, agree that there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems, in comparison with 44.0% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 48.6% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

## **Conclusion**

The young people in this sample are predominantly uncertain in their attitudes to politics at present, although they remain positive in their ambition to participate in politics. They are also reasonably disillusioned regarding the impact they can have on the world, for example, over four out of ten agree that there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems. This disillusionment is further evident when the young people's responses to this item are compared with those depicted in Francis (2001). Francis (2001) portrays that just a quarter (25%) of the young people in his sample agree that there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems, in comparison with 30% who are not certain, and 45% who disagree. Thus, the proportion of young people here (45.6%) agreeing with this item demonstrates a considerable rise in the proportion who agree there is nothing they can do to help solve the world's problems, depicting an apparent rise in disillusionment among the young people.

However, while considerable proportions of the young people express disillusionment, large proportions agree that young people should be able to participate in the political process through having a vote. In this respect, the findings among this wider sample confirm the issues raised as important in the focus groups. A further important finding concerns the negativity expressed by the young people regarding politicians; just 13.7% agree that politicians do a good job.

Therefore, three main findings can be summarised regarding the young people's attitudes to politics. These are: first, increasing disillusionment about their ability to have an impact in the current political climate; second, ambition to be able to participate in the

political process; and third, negativity with relation to politicians. Thus, it can be concluded that the young people are not politically apathetic, but rather embittered by politics, leading them to have little faith in their ability to have an effect on the world's problems. From this, it can be suggested that their disillusionment with their power through political processes may arise from their negativity regarding politicians. The young people are not politically apathetic. This is demonstrated through their aspiration to participate in the political process. Yet, the factor strongly identified here by the young people as negative regarding politics, is politicians. Therefore it is suggested that the young people's willingness to participate in the political process demonstrates their overall positive attitude towards it. Therefore, their uncertainty towards it must be related to their only certain negativity expressed in this area, relating to politicians.

This negativity with relation to politicians was suggested by the young people in the focus groups, and strongly ratified by the young people completing the HaFVI. Therefore, the findings from the wider sample serve to further confirm findings from the focus groups. For example, one young male in the focus groups showed his negativity with relation to politicians through the statement that:

“They're all the same. It's just going to be the same with everyone.”

Yet, although they demonstrate negativity with relation to politicians, overall the young people's faith in participatory democracy as a process, and lack of apathy, are demonstrated through their strong desire for young people to have a vote.

Recent political events, as depicted, for example by Pleyers (2003), further illustrate the lack of political apathy among young people. However, in the United Kingdom,



politicians' failure to take notice of these protests by young people will arguably further disillusion many young people with relation to the political process, and may lead to increased apathy among young people. Hackett (2004) argues for engagement with young people in a similar vein with relation to social policy affecting young people:

A more positive and inclusive approach would take a critical look at how public policy has problematised young people and redress this by a direct engagement with young people themselves (p. 76).

The picture concerning young people's values in their attitudes to politics arising here is therefore complicated. Yet ultimately, it is argued from these data that young people are politically disillusioned rather than politically apathetic, and that this disillusionment arises from their perceptions of politicians. They retain their faith in participatory democracy and wish to participate in it. The literature also demonstrates that young people are expressing their strong feelings on individual issues through protests (Roker, Player and Coleman, 1999; Pleyers, 2003) and participation in the voluntary sector (Roker, Player and Coleman, 1999; Hackett, 2004). This is an issue that should be further investigated in the next stage of the Young People's Values Project, as described in chapter one, in more depth.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding their attitudes to politics, in that boys are more negative and more apathetic in their attitude to politics than girls, but girls are more negative than boys in their attitudes to politicians.

The factors of age and socio-economic group are not of such significance when considering the young people's attitudes to politics, yet remain as of interest here. More

of the young people from year nine than from year ten agree that young people should have a vote. This serves to further emphasise the findings of Newman (1996). He finds that younger young people want more adult responsibilities, although older young people are beginning to hold views more like those of adults. This is reflected by those completing the HaFVI concerning the desire of young people to have a vote. More of the younger young people, the year nine pupils, want greater adult responsibilities in wanting to be able to vote. Yet, the older young people, the year ten pupils, are beginning to look more like adults in their values, in that less of the year ten pupils think that young people should have a vote. Therefore, the findings here bear out the findings from previous literature in this respect.

The factor of socio-economic group is of small significance when considering the young people's values regarding their attitudes to politics. It is apparent that those from higher socio-economic groups are less disillusioned regarding politics, yet also more positive regarding politicians. It is suggested that the lower levels of apathy among those from higher socio-economic groups may be connected to the greater economic freedom they experience. As these young people have higher levels of opportunity, they feel that they have greater possibilities to make a difference to the problems of the world. Similarly to the advantages experienced by those from higher socio-economic groups regarding their aims in life and values concerning school, the lower levels of disillusionment among these young people should again be a cause for concern. This is because those from lower socio-economic groups, who have objectively less societal advantages, are more likely to hold an attitude of disillusionment. A society in which such interconnections occur needs to examine its basic structures.

Having examined the young people's values regarding attitudes to politics, the second part of the value-area political issues; war and terrorism, is now considered.



## **CHAPTER 23**

# **POLITICAL ISSUES: WAR AND TERRORISM**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding war and terrorism**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

This chapter examines the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, as the second part of the value-area of political issues. From the focus group discussions, it is apparent that the issue of war and terrorism is interconnected with the issue of politics for the young people. For example, the young people highlighted politics as having an effect on their lives through politicians' decisions concerning war and terrorism:

“Tony's Blair's having a say so it could affect us anyway. It's like Blair and erm, what's his name, Bush, are kind of friends, so they could bomb us, or something like that, terrorism could affect us as well.”

Therefore, as the young people conceived of war and terrorism as interconnected with politics, it is conceptualised here as part of the value-area of political issues.

The issue of war and terrorism has come into particular prominence in recent years, following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and the ensuing 'War on Terror' (see, for example, Wright, 2004). The prominence given to these issues by politicians and the media, has affected the young people, as demonstrated, for example, through the focus group discussions, and war and terrorism is therefore an issue of importance to be considered in this study. Moreover, it is important to examine young people's attitudes to war and terrorism at the present time, to provide a reference point against which to map the changing values of young people in this value-area as societal and political events unfold.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding war and terrorism in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) is designed to examine three main aspects of the young people's values in this area. These are: their prevalent approach to war and terrorism;

whether or not the values of the young people in the wider sample reflect the concerns of those in the focus groups; and the extent to which they fear aspects of war and terrorism. This assessment consists of one main section, comprising seven items. The items explore: whether the young people think either war or terrorism is wrong; whether they perceive either war or terrorism as sometimes justified; and the extent to which they feel threatened by nuclear war, chemical and biological war, or terrorism.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, followed by an examination of these values according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's attitudes to war and terrorism. Sex is demonstrated to be a significant factor when considering the young people's values in this area, and possible explanations for the differences in responses of girls and boys are explored.

### **Profile of young people's values regarding war and terrorism**

#### ***Overview***

Table 23.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, as assessed by the HaFVI.

Table 23.1 demonstrates that the young people overall are opposed to both war and terrorism, although much smaller proportions agree that war and terrorism are justified at times. Reasonable proportions also agree that they feel threatened by the risks of nuclear war, chemical and biological war, and terrorism.



**Table 23.1. War and terrorism: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
War is wrong	62.7	18.3	19.0
Terrorism is wrong	78.1	12.8	9.1
War is sometimes justified	33.3	42.4	24.3
Terrorism is sometimes justified	21.9	44.2	33.9
I feel threatened by the risk of nuclear war	45.8	27.3	26.9
I feel threatened by the risk of chemical and biological war	44.8	29.0	26.2
I feel threatened by the risk of terrorism	41.8	29.5	28.8

The highest proportion of young people (78.1%) agree that terrorism is wrong. Slightly less, but still a high proportion (62.7%) agree that war is wrong. However, sizable proportions agree that war and terrorism are sometimes justified. In line with their previous greater negativity towards terrorism than war, less (21.9%) of the young people agree that terrorism is sometimes justified, than agree that war is sometimes justified (33.3%).

All of the possible threats in table 23.1 generate agreement responses from over four out of ten of the young people. The highest proportion (45.8%) agree that they feel threatened by nuclear war. Yet over a quarter both are not certain (27.3%) and disagree (26.9%) that they feel threatened by the risk of nuclear war. The next largest proportion (44.8%) agree that they feel threatened by the risk of chemical and biological war. However, nearly three out of ten (29.0%) are not certain whether they feel threatened by the risk of

chemical and biological war, and over a quarter (26.2%) disagree. Less of the young people, but still a considerable proportion (41.8%) agree that they feel threatened by the risk of terrorism. Again, nearly three out of ten are not certain (29.5%), and 28.8% disagree, that they feel threatened by the risk of terrorism. Therefore, while considerable proportions of the young people agree that they feel threatened by these suggested possible threats, there remains a greater proportion of young people who are uncertain, or disagree.

**Sex**

A comparison of the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, according to their sex, is presented in table 23.2.

**Table 23.2. War and terrorism: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
War is wrong	74.4	51.2	170.63	.001
Terrorism is wrong	83.0	73.1	40.51	.001
War is sometimes justified	21.5	45.9	172.38	.001
Terrorism is sometimes justified	14.9	28.9	81.33	.001
I feel threatened by the risk of nuclear war	49.0	42.7	11.59	.001
I feel threatened by the risk of chemical and biological war	43.9	45.6	0.73	NS
I feel threatened by the risk of terrorism	43.6	39.7	4.18	.05

Table 23.2 demonstrates that sex is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding war and terrorism. More of the girls than the boys agree that both war and terrorism are wrong, and more of the boys than the girls agree that both war and terrorism are sometimes justified. In addition, more of the girls than the boys feel threatened by nuclear war, and by terrorism. Therefore, the girls in this sample are more negative in their values regarding war and terrorism overall than the boys.

Thus, 83.0% of the girls, in comparison with 73.1% of the boys, agree that terrorism is wrong; and 74.4% of the girls, in comparison with 51.2% of the boys, agree that war is wrong. Both of these items generate differences in responses of high statistical significance, strongly demonstrating the more negative attitudes of the girls than the boys to war and terrorism. Further, more of the boys (45.9%) than the girls (21.5%) agree that war is sometimes justified; and more of the boys (28.9%) than the girls (14.9%) agree that terrorism is sometimes justified. Again, these items generate differences in responses of high statistical significance.

This greater negativity among the girls is further portrayed in their higher levels of agreement that aspects of both war and terrorism are a threat. Thus, 49.0% of the girls, in comparison with 42.7% of the boys, agree that they feel threatened by the risk of nuclear war. Moreover, 43.6% of the girls, in comparison with 39.7% of the boys, agree that they feel threatened by the risk of terrorism.



## Age

A comparison of the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 23.3.

**Table 23.3. War and terrorism: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
War is wrong	63.4	61.9	0.69	NS
Terrorism is wrong	79.2	76.9	2.06	NS
War is sometimes justified	32.0	34.9	2.52	NS
Terrorism is sometimes justified	23.5	20.2	4.48	.05
I feel threatened by the risk of nuclear war	47.5	43.9	3.84	NS
I feel threatened by the risk of chemical and biological war	46.9	42.2	5.99	.05
I feel threatened by the risk of terrorism	43.0	40.3	1.94	NS

Age is a factor of small significance when considering the young people's values regarding war and terrorism. From the items in table 23.3 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that more of the year nine (23.5%) than year ten (20.2%) pupils agree that terrorism is sometimes justified. Further, more of the year nine (46.9%) than year ten (42.2%) pupils agree that they feel threatened by the risk of chemical and biological war.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 23.4.

**Table 23.4. War and terrorism: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
War is wrong	60.5	62.1	69.4	8.44	.05
Terrorism is wrong	80.3	79.2	80.7	0.42	NS
War is sometimes justified	38.6	33.0	30.0	8.63	.05
Terrorism is sometimes justified	23.2	21.8	18.0	3.66	NS
I feel threatened by the risk of nuclear war	45.3	44.3	45.7	0.21	NS
I feel threatened by the risk of chemical and biological war	45.2	45.1	45.7	0.03	NS
I feel threatened by the risk of terrorism	79.4	72.7	72.3	10.50	.01

Socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding war and terrorism. From the items in table 23.4 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that there is a relation between socio-economic group, and the young people's positivity towards war, and perception of terrorism as a threat. The young people in higher socio-economic groups are most positive regarding war, followed by those in intermediate socio-economic groups, and those in lower socio-economic groups.

Thus, 69.4% of young people with parents in 'elementary' occupations agree that war is wrong, in comparison with 62.1% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 60.5% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations. Moreover, 38.6% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that war is sometimes justified, in comparison with 33.0% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 30.0% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

In addition, more young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that they feel threatened by terrorism, than young people from intermediate, or lower socio-economic groups. Thus, 79.4% of young people with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they feel threatened by the risk of terrorism, in comparison with 72.7% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 72.3% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, the young people are largely negative in their values towards war and terrorism, yet are slightly more negative in their values concerning terrorism than regarding war. Nearly eight out of ten agree that terrorism is wrong, yet over six out of ten agree that war is wrong, and only a third of the young people agree that war is sometimes justified. With relation to the present 'War on Terror' and the ideas driving it, it is apparent that while the young people do not agree with terrorist acts, they do not necessarily agree that war is the best method with which to tackle terrorism.



Just over a fifth of the young people agree that terrorism is sometimes justified. This is a small, yet substantial proportion of the young people. Further qualitative research is now needed to examine the young people's reasons for agreeing that terrorism is sometimes justified.

Furthermore, over two fifths of the young people agree that they feel threatened by the risks of nuclear war, chemical and biological war, and terrorism. In the current political climate, it is surprising that the proportions agreeing with these items are not higher. Two possible explanations can be suggested for this. First, it may be that the young people are being complacent regarding real threats that affect them. Alternatively, it may be that although the media and other agencies maintain that there are high levels of fear regarding these threats in society, people do not actually feel high levels of fear.

Sex is a factor of high significance when considering the young people's values regarding war and terrorism. The girls are more likely than the boys to agree that war and terrorism are wrong, less likely to agree that war and terrorism are sometimes justified, and more likely to feel threatened by the risks of nuclear war and terrorism.

These findings can be interpreted with reference to Eysenck's theory of personality (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1991). As demonstrated in Halsall (2002) and Halsall (2005), some dimensions within Eysenck's model are evidenced more among girls than boys. Therefore, that the girls feel more threatened than the boys by nuclear war and terrorism demonstrates that they have higher levels of anxiety, interpreted by Eysenck as higher levels of neuroticism (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1991). This fits with previous findings that

girls and women record higher scores of neuroticism in comparison with boys and men (Francis, 1993). Furthermore, that the boys in this sample display greater positivity with regard to war and terrorism, demonstrates their higher levels of aggression, interpreted by Eysenck as higher levels of psychoticism (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1976). This fits with previous findings that boys and men record higher scores of psychoticism in comparison with girls and women (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1976).

Socio-economic group is a factor of some significance when considering the young people's values regarding war and terrorism. It is evident that there is a relation between socio-economic group and the young people's values regarding war and terrorism in that the higher their socio-economic group, the more positive the young people are regarding war, and the more threatened they feel by the risk of terrorism. This may be related to the socio-economic coding used here (Office for National Statistics, 2000), in which army and service occupations are classified in higher socio-economic groups.

Having examined the young people's values regarding war and terrorism, their values with relation to the next value-area here, social issues, are now considered.

# **CHAPTER 24**

## **SOCIAL ISSUES**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding social issues**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**



## **Introduction**

An examination of young people's values regarding all social issues which may be important for young people in modern society is a study in itself. Therefore, the present study examines young people's values regarding three main social issues, which can be seen from the focus groups and literature review to be of particular importance for young people. The young people's values regarding the issues of: relationships; the environment; and human and animal life, are considered here.

The focus groups highlighted the issue of relationships as of particular importance in the young people's lives. In this value-area in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI), the young people's values regarding relationships are explored in a wider societal context, rather than with relation to themselves as in earlier chapters. The issue of the environment also arose in the focus group discussions as of importance to the young people, and about which some expressed concern. Francis (2001) indicates that Furnham and Gunter (1989) predict that pollution to the environment will be a cause of great concern to young people as they have longer to live in this polluted world. Examining the values of the young people in the present study regarding the environment tests the extent to which Furnham and Gunter's (1989) prediction holds true.

The issue of human and animal life was debated in the focus groups through discussion of the issue of poverty in the Developing World. The young people discussed whether this was an issue that affects their lives. Many of the young people in the focus groups felt that poverty in the Developing World was an issue of importance for them, reflecting the position, cited by Francis (2001), of aid agencies such as Christian Aid (Spencer and

Snape, 1994). However, others in the focus groups felt that poverty outside of the United Kingdom was not important to them. Therefore, the extent to which the young people completing the HaFVI feel that poverty in the Developing World is important in their lives is explored here, within social issues of human and animal life.

The assessment of the young people's values with relation to social issues in the HaFVI has been devised to examine the extent to which the young people are concerned about issues surrounding three main areas. These are: relationships; the environment; and human and animal life. This assessment of the young people's values concerning social issues consists of one main section comprising nine items. Of these nine items, three items explore the young people's values regarding relationships, examining: the age of sexual consent; having children outside marriage; and divorce. Three items explore their values regarding the environment, examining: pollution; use of resources; and extinction. Three items explore their values regarding human and animal life, examining: fox hunting; abortion; and poverty in the Developing World.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values with relation to social issues, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's values in this area, exploring the extent to which the values of the young people completing the HaFVI reflect the values of those in the focus groups. The young people's primary concerns are also explored, examining the extent to which these concerns reflect the individualism expressed in their core values.

## Profile of young people's values regarding social issues

### Overview

Table 24.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding social issues, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 24.1. Social issues: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
I think it is wrong to have sex before you're 16	22.4	21.6	56.0
It is wrong to have children before getting married	11.4	18.4	70.2
Divorce is wrong	13.8	26.6	59.6
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	44.5	33.2	22.3
I am concerned that we use too much of the Earth's resources	50.0	33.0	17.0
I am concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct	48.3	27.7	23.9
I think fox hunting is wrong	61.9	17.8	20.3
I think abortion is wrong	35.5	30.0	34.5
I am concerned about the poverty of the Developing World (eg Africa)	49.2	33.9	16.9

Table 24.1 demonstrates that the young people express high levels of concern regarding many of the social issues considered here. They express the highest levels of concern about human and animal life issues, yet are not concerned, but very tolerant about issues of relationships.



The highest proportion of young people in this value-area (61.9%) agree that fox hunting is wrong. Nearly half (49.2%) agree that they are concerned about the poverty of the Developing World, while just over a third (33.9%) are unsure whether or not they are concerned about the poverty of the Developing World. A smaller, but still substantial proportion (35.5%) agree that they think abortion is wrong. On this issue, the young people's opinions are fairly evenly spread, as 30.0% are uncertain in their values regarding abortion, and 34.5% disagree that abortion is wrong.

The young people also express concerns in their values regarding the environment. Close to half of the young people agree that they are concerned about each of the three environmental issues. Thus, 50.0% agree that they are concerned that we use too much of the Earth's resources. A third (33.0%) are unsure regarding our use of the Earth's resources, and under one out of five (17.0%) definitely disagree that we use too much of the Earth's resources. Furthermore, 48.3% agree that they are concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct; yet nearly a quarter (23.9%) definitely are not concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct, and 27.7% are unsure. Moreover, 44.5% of the young people agree that they are concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment, while 33.2% are unsure, and 22.3% disagree.

The young people are tolerant in their values regarding the social issue of relationships. Just 22.4% agree that it is wrong to have sex before you are 16, and over half (56.0%) disagree with this item. Moreover, just over one out of eight (13.8%) agree that divorce is wrong, although just over a quarter (26.6%) are uncertain, and nearly six out of ten (59.6%) disagree. The young people are most certain in their values relating to having

children outside marriage. Just 11.4% agree that it is wrong to have children before getting married, 18.4% are not certain, and 70.2% disagree.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding social issues, according to their sex, is presented in table 24.2.

**Table 24.2. Social issues: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I think it is wrong to have sex before you're 16	26.4	18.3	26.54	.001
It is wrong to have children before getting married	9.4	13.5	11.83	.001
Divorce is wrong	9.7	18.1	43.14	.001
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	41.1	48.0	13.88	.001
I am concerned that we use too much of the Earth's resources	43.1	57.0	52.76	.001
I am concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct	45.9	51.0	7.40	.01
I think fox hunting is wrong	67.8	55.8	42.88	.001
I think abortion is wrong	37.5	33.5	5.29	.05
I am concerned about the poverty of the Developing World (eg Africa)	52.6	45.8	11.66	.001

Sex is a highly significant factor when considering the young people's values concerning social issues, although the values of the girls and boys are mixed concerning the social issues presented here. On the issue of relationships, the values of the girls and boys are

mixed even within this specific social issue. More of the girls (26.4%) than the boys (18.3%) agree that it is wrong to have sex before you are 16; while more of the boys (13.5%) than the girls (9.4%) agree that it is wrong to have children before getting married. Moreover, nearly twice the proportion of boys (18.1%) than girls (9.7%) agree that divorce is wrong. All of the items regarding relationships generate differences in responses between the girls and the boys of high statistical significance.

More of the boys than the girls are concerned about all of the environmental issues here. Thus, 57.0% of the boys, in comparison with 43.1% of the girls, agree that they are concerned that we use too much of the Earth's resources. Furthermore, 51.0% of the boys, in comparison with 45.9% of the girls, agree that they are concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct; and 48.0% of the boys, in comparison with 41.1% of the girls, agree that they are concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment.

However, on the social issue of human and animal life, more of the girls than the boys are concerned. Thus, 67.8% of the girls, in comparison with 55.8% of the boys, agree that fox hunting is wrong; and 52.6% of the girls, in comparison with 45.8% of the boys, are concerned about the poverty of the Developing World. Further, more of the girls (37.5%) than the boys (35.5%) agree that abortion is wrong.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding social issues, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 24.3.



**Table 24.3. Social issues: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I think it is wrong to have sex before you're 16	25.9	18.5	22.45	.001
It is wrong to have children before getting married	11.9	11.0	0.66	NS
Divorce is wrong	13.2	14.3	0.77	NS
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	45.8	42.9	2.47	NS
I am concerned that we use too much of the Earth's resources	49.1	50.7	0.75	NS
I am concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct	51.1	45.5	8.79	.01
I think fox hunting is wrong	63.3	60.5	2.31	NS
I think abortion is wrong	37.5	33.4	5.34	.05
I am concerned about the poverty of the Developing World (eg Africa)	50.1	48.4	0.75	NS

Age is a factor of limited significance when considering the young people's values on social issues. From the items in table 24.3 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that the year nine pupils demonstrate higher levels of concern than the year ten pupils. Thus, more of the year nine pupils (25.9%) than the year ten pupils (18.5%) agree that it is wrong to have sex before you are 16; and more of the year nine pupils (37.5%) than the year ten pupils (33.4%) agree that abortion is wrong. The year nine pupils also portray higher levels of concern (51.1%) than the year ten pupils (45.5%) about animals and plants becoming extinct.

### *Socio-economic group*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding social issues, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 24.4.

**Table 24.4. Social issues: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
I think it is wrong to have sex before you're 16	24.1	19.0	25.5	7.01	.05
It is wrong to have children before getting married	13.5	9.2	13.1	6.43	.05
Divorce is wrong	13.3	14.1	11.5	1.31	NS
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	50.4	40.9	40.0	17.65	.001
I am concerned that we use too much of the Earth's resources	55.2	46.6	50.3	10.15	.01
I am concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct	50.8	48.0	49.1	1.10	NS
I think fox hunting is wrong	62.4	57.5	67.0	8.40	.05
I think abortion is wrong	31.4	34.6	39.1	6.68	.05
I am concerned about the poverty of the Developing World (eg Africa)	57.3	46.4	43.6	23.34	.001

Socio-economic group is a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding social issues. It is apparent that either those from lower or higher, but not intermediate, socio-economic groups are most concerned about the issues presented. For example, concerning relationships, more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups (13.5%) agree that it is wrong to have children before getting married, than those

from lower (13.1%), or intermediate (9.2%), socio-economic groups. More of those from lower socio-economic groups (25.5%) agree that it is wrong to have sex before you are 16, in comparison with 24.1% of those from higher socio-economic groups, and 19.0% of those from intermediate socio-economic groups.

On the social issue of the environment, more of the young people from higher socio-economic groups express concern. For example, 50.4% of those with parents in 'managerial' occupations agree that they are concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment, in comparison with 40.9% of those with parents in 'administrative' occupations, and 40.0% of those with parents in 'elementary' occupations.

On the social issue of human and animal life, more of the young people from lower socio-economic groups agree that fox hunting and abortion are wrong, while more of those from higher socio-economic groups are concerned about the poverty of the Developing World. Thus, 57.3% of those from higher socio-economic groups agree they are concerned about the poverty of the Developing World, in comparison with 46.4% of those from intermediate socio-economic groups, and 43.6% of those from lower socio-economic groups. Furthermore, for example, 67.0% of young people from lower socio-economic groups agree that fox hunting is wrong, in comparison with 62.4% of those from higher socio-economic groups, and 57.5% of those from intermediate socio-economic groups.

### **Conclusion**

The young people express reasonably high levels of concern with relation to the three social issues explored here. The individualism expressed by the young people in their



core values is not greatly apparent in their values regarding social issues. However, the findings presented here only reflect the young people's stated values, and not necessarily their actions.

The values of the young people completing the HaFVI concerning the poverty of the Developing World reflect both the commitment and uncertainty about this issue expressed in the focus groups. Nearly half the young people here agree that they are concerned about the poverty of the Developing World, although a third are unsure. This reflects the discussion regarding this issue in many of the focus groups.

Nearly half of the young people agree that they are concerned about the three environmental issues addressed here. However, Francis (2001) demonstrates that 66% of the young people in his sample were concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment. Therefore, the proportion of young people expressing concern about environmental issues appears to be decreasing. This is in contradiction to Furnham and Gunter's (1989) prediction that the environment would be an issue of importance for young people. Moreover, McNeish (1996) portrays the results of a MORI poll (MORI, 1990) which asked young adults aged 18 to 34 what they saw to be the most important issues facing Britain over the next ten years, in which 46% of the respondents agreed that the environment was an important issue. This is a similar proportion to the young people in the present study, demonstrating that the findings here, while not fitting with Furnham and Gunter's (1989) prediction, can be said to be a reasonably accurate portrayal of the values of a wider group of young people regarding the environment.

Sex is a factor of high significance when considering the young people's values concerning social issues, although the levels of concern among the girls and boys vary according to the social issue being addressed. For example, the values of the girls and boys regarding relationships are mixed. Yet, the finding that more boys than girls see marriage as a necessary precursor to having children fits with the findings of Oakley (1996) from the Young People's Social Attitudes Survey. Oakley (1996) demonstrates that more males (22%) than females (14%) agree that 'when there are children in the family, the parents should stay together even if they don't get along' (p. 25). The findings from the present study, therefore, confirm these previous findings regarding more males than females holding marriage as an important context for the raising of children.

Socio-economic group is also a significant factor when considering the young people's values concerning social issues. The young people from either the lower or higher socio-economic groups are more concerned about the items here; young people from intermediate socio-economic groups do not express the highest levels of concern. This suggests a level of apathy among young people from intermediate socio-economic groups.

Young people from higher socio-economic groups express the highest levels of concern about the poverty of the Developing World. This fits with the previous finding concerning the young people's aims in life, that the greater economic freedom experienced by young people from higher socio-economic groups enables them to think further beyond their immediate situation to a greater extent than young people from other socio-economic groups.

Having examined the young people's values regarding social issues, their values regarding the final value-area here, substance use, are now considered.



# **CHAPTER 25**

## **SUBSTANCE USE**

### **Introduction**

### **Profile of young people's values regarding substance use**

#### *Overview*

#### *Sex*

#### *Age*

#### *Socio-economic group*

### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the young people's values regarding the final value-area in their values-profile; substance use. The value-area of substance use is identified as of importance to young people in both the focus groups and literature review. For example, in the focus groups, many of the young people cited alcohol as important to them in the brainstorming at the beginning of the group. Smoking was also raised as an important issue, particularly with relation to peer pressure. The issue of the legalisation of cannabis was strongly debated, and thus demonstrated to be an important issue for the young people. Those in the focus groups, particularly the girls, also discussed chocolate as important in helping them to feel better. While chocolate has not been typically included in previous considerations of young people's substance use (for example, Francis, 2001), it is included here as it has been frequently cited by the young people as helping them to feel better.

Substance use is also seen as an issue of importance for young people in previous literature. For example, Coleman and Hendry (1999) discuss substance use among young people, highlighting that cigarette smoking, drinking alcohol, and taking illegal drugs are particular behaviours among young people that adults are concerned about. However, Coleman and Hendry (1999) argue that 'such voiced concern may actually make adolescent drug-taking more dangerous and attractive' (p. 128). Through their discussion, the importance of substance use, in differing ways, for young people, can be seen.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding substance use in the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI) has therefore been devised to explore the young

people's attitudes towards substance use, and something of the level of substance use among young people. In line with Hendry, Shucksmith, Love and Glendinning (1993), no direct questions are asked in the HaFVI about young people's personal use of substances, but rather items concerning the young people's perceptions of their friends' use of substances are included. Similarly to the exploration of the young people's perceptions' of their friends' values with relation to religion, an investigation of the young people's perceptions of their friends' use of substances may also give some indication of the level of substance use among the young people themselves.

The assessment of the young people's values regarding substance use consists of one main section comprising seven items. The young people's attitudes to substance use are examined through two items concerning alcopops and the legalisation of cannabis. Three items measure the young people's perceptions of their friends' use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. The final two items assess the young people's use of more commonplace substances: chocolate and caffeine.

This chapter presents an overview of the young people's values concerning substance use, followed by an examination of these according to their sex, age, and socio-economic group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the young people's attitudes to substances, and the use of substances among their peer group. Sex and age are factors of significance when considering the young people's values regarding substance use.



## Profile of young people's values regarding substance use

### Overview

Table 25.1 presents an overview of the young people's values regarding substance use, as assessed by the HaFVI.

**Table 25.1. Substance use: overview.**

	Yes (%)	? (%)	No (%)
Alcopops encourage people of my age to drink alcohol	49.1	26.7	24.2
I think cannabis should be legalised	34.6	27.5	38.0
Most of my friends smoke cigarettes	37.2	16.9	45.9
Most of my friends drink alcohol	70.6	15.0	14.4
Most of my friends take drugs	20.0	18.2	61.8
I rely on caffeine to keep going (eg tea/coffee/cola)	21.1	15.2	63.7
I sometimes eat chocolate to make myself feel better	45.7	16.4	37.8

The young people are reasonably negative in their values towards substance use, although there is also a strong element of uncertainty. High proportions of the young people agree that most of their friends take the substances mentioned here. Further, the young people do not rely to a great extent on caffeine, although they do rely on chocolate.

Thus, 49.1% of the young people agree that alcopops encourage people of their age to drink alcohol. Just over a quarter (26.7%) are uncertain regarding this item, and 24.2% disagree. Furthermore, 34.6% agree that cannabis should be legalised, while 27.5% are

uncertain, and 38.0% disagree. The relatively high levels of uncertainty among the young people in their values regarding substance use are apparent.

With relation to their friends' use of substances, the largest proportion of the young people agree that their friends drink alcohol. Thus, 70.6% agree that most of their friends drink alcohol, 15.0% are uncertain with relation to this item, and just 14.4% disagree. The next largest proportion of the young people, although much smaller than concerning alcohol, agree that most of their friends smoke cigarettes (37.2%). The smallest proportion of young people, although still a fifth of this sample (20.0%) agree that most of their friends take drugs. Less (18.2%) are uncertain whether or not most of their friends take drugs, and over six out of ten (61.8%) disagree.

Many more of the young people feel that they are reliant on chocolate rather than on caffeine. Just over a fifth (21.1%) agree that they rely on caffeine to keep going, 15.2% are uncertain, and over six out of ten (63.7%) disagree. In comparison, over four out of ten (45.7%) agree that they sometimes eat chocolate to make themselves feel better, while 16.4% are uncertain, and 37.8% disagree.

### *Sex*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding substance use, according to their sex, is presented in table 25.2.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values with relation to substance use. From the items in table 25.2 generating differences in responses of

statistical significance, it is apparent that more of the girls than the boys agree that most of their friends smoke and drink alcohol, and that they sometimes eat chocolate to make themselves feel better. Yet, more of the boys than the girls agree that most of their friends take drugs and that cannabis should be legalised, and therefore the boys appear more positive towards use of drugs than the girls.

**Table 25.2. Substance use: by sex.**

	F (%)	M (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Alcopops encourage people of my age to drink alcohol	49.0	49.0	0.00	NS
I think cannabis should be legalised	28.7	39.2	28.41	.001
Most of my friends smoke cigarettes	41.0	33.2	18.35	.001
Most of my friends drink alcohol	73.2	67.8	8.97	.01
Most of my friends take drugs	17.0	23.0	16.34	.001
I rely on caffeine to keep going (eg tea/coffee/cola)	19.6	22.5	3.82	NS
I sometimes eat chocolate to make myself feel better	58.9	32.0	195.98	.001

Thus, 41.0% of the girls, in comparison with 33.2% of the boys, agree that most of their friends smoke cigarettes. Furthermore, 73.2% of the girls, in comparison with 67.8% of the boys, agree that most of their friends drink alcohol. In addition, nearly twice the proportion of girls (58.9%) than boys (32.0%) agree that they sometimes eat chocolate to make themselves feel better.



Regarding the more positive attitude to use of drugs among the boys than the girls, it is apparent that 23.0% of the boys, in comparison with 17.0% of the girls, agree that most of their friends take drugs. Moreover, 39.2% of the boys, in comparison with 28.7% of the girls, agree that they think cannabis should be legalised.

### *Age*

A comparison of the young people's values regarding substance use, according to their age measured by school year, is presented in table 25.3.

**Table 25.3. Substance use: by age.**

	Yr 9 (%)	Yr 10 (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Alcopops encourage people of my age to drink alcohol	44.3	54.1	27.32	.001
I think cannabis should be legalised	30.8	37.2	10.61	.01
Most of my friends smoke cigarettes	29.9	45.3	71.91	.001
Most of my friends drink alcohol	62.1	80.0	100.61	.001
Most of my friends take drugs	15.4	25.0	41.89	.001
I rely on caffeine to keep going (eg tea/coffee/cola)	21.3	21.0	0.04	NS
I sometimes eat chocolate to make myself feel better	44.4	47.2	2.20	NS

Age is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values regarding substance use. From the items in table 25.3 generating differences in responses of statistical significance, it is apparent that the year ten pupils are more tolerant in their values regarding substance use than the year nine pupils.

Thus, over half (54.1%) of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 44.3% of the year nine pupils, agree that alcohol encourages people of their age to drink alcohol. This is reflected in the proportions of the two year groups reporting that their friends drink alcohol. Eight out of ten (80.0%) of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 62.1% of the year nine pupils, agree that most of their friends drink alcohol.

Furthermore, a greater proportion of the year ten pupils (37.2%) than the year nine pupils (30.8%) agree that cannabis should be legalised. This greater tolerance regarding cannabis among year ten pupils is reflected in the proportions agreeing that their friends take drugs. A quarter (25.0%) of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 15.4% of the year nine pupils, agree that most of their friends take drugs. The greater proportions of year ten pupils using substances also holds true when considering cigarettes. Thus, 45.3% of the year ten pupils, in comparison with 29.9% of the year nine pupils, agree that most of their friends smoke cigarettes.

### ***Socio-economic group***

A comparison of the young people's values regarding substance use, according to their socio-economic group, is presented in table 25.4.

Table 25.4 demonstrates that socio-economic group is not a factor of any significance when considering the young people's values regarding substance use. However, for some of the items the young people from intermediate socio-economic groups have the highest levels of agreement. For example, more (21.7%) of the young people from intermediate socio-economic groups agree that they rely on caffeine to keep going, in comparison with

18.8% from lower socio-economic groups, and 18.2% from higher socio-economic groups. Furthermore, 20.3% of young people from intermediate socio-economic groups agree that most of their friends take drugs, in comparison with 17.7% from higher socio-economic groups, and 15.8% from lower socio-economic groups. However, the fact that more young people from intermediate socio-economic groups agree with these statements does not reflect well for them, and does not contradict the hypothesis of apathy among young people from intermediate socio-economic groups suggested in the previous chapter.

**Table 25.4. Substance use: by socio-economic group.**

	Man. (%)	Admin. (%)	Elem. (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	P<
Alcopops encourage people of my age to drink alcohol	52.0	50.6	49.5	0.67	NS
I think cannabis should be legalised	33.3	32.3	29.4	1.63	NS
Most of my friends smoke cigarettes	32.8	35.3	38.7	3.74	NS
Most of my friends drink alcohol	71.7	71.8	72.1	0.01	NS
Most of my friends take drugs	17.7	20.3	15.8	3.13	NS
I rely on caffeine to keep going (eg tea/coffee/cola)	18.2	21.7	18.8	2.91	NS
I sometimes eat chocolate to make myself feel better	48.8	43.3	46.9	4.11	NS

### Conclusion

The values of the young people with relation to substance use, as explored through the HaFVI, are that the young people are reasonably negative towards substance use, although



they also display considerable uncertainty towards some aspects of substance use. Reasonably high proportions agree that most of their friends take drugs, smoke cigarettes, and drink alcohol, particularly when considering the age (13 to 15 years) of the young people in this sample. It can be argued that the finding that a fifth of the young people agree that most of their friends take drugs at this age is a cause for concern, and needs to be addressed by those undertaking drugs education programmes with young people.

Coleman and Hendry (1999) state that 'in present-day society alcohol consumption among teenagers is common' (p. 124). The finding here that over seven out of ten young people agree that most of their friends drink alcohol confirms Coleman and Hendry's (1999) statement. In addition, Coleman and Hendry (1999) maintain that 'in terms of illegal drugs the most commonly used is cannabis' (p. 126). The finding here that over third of the young people agree that cannabis should be legalised again confirms their statement. Therefore, the findings from the present study with relation to young people's values about substance use, confirm those of previous studies about young people's use of substances.

Sex is a factor of significance when considering the young people's values concerning substance use. The finding that more of the girls than the boys agree that most of their friends smoke cigarettes can be said to be in line with findings from previous literature, assuming that the majority of young people this age will have a friendship group primarily composed of young people of the same sex. It is well documented (Lloyd and Lucas, 1997; National Statistics, 2000) that more girls than boys smoke, and the findings from the present study reflect this trend. Yet, the finding that more girls than boys agree that

most of their friends drink alcohol is in contradiction to previous literature. Marsh, Richards and Barnes (1986), as cited by Coleman and Hendry (1999), demonstrate that boys drank more alcohol than girls, a finding which is contradicted by the findings from the present study.

It is also apparent that more of the boys than the girls agree that most of their friends take drugs, and that cannabis should be legalised. It is therefore argued that the boys portray a more positive attitude towards use of drugs than girls. This finding is in line with findings from previous literature regarding the attitudes of girls and boys to substance use. For example, Ben-Shlomo, Sheiham and Marmot (1991) and Francis and Kay (1995) demonstrate that boys are more positive than girls regarding substance use. With relation to drugs therefore, the present findings reflect this trend.

Age is also a significant factor when considering the young people's values with relation to substance use. More of the year ten than the year nine pupils agree that alcohol encourages people of their age to drink alcohol, that cannabis should be legalised, and that most of their friends drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and take drugs. It is suggested that these findings reflect the ease with which more young people from year ten than year nine can gain access to substances, through being older, and thus finding greater opportunities to buy alcohol and cigarettes in shops.

Socio-economic group is not a significant factor when considering the young people's values regarding substance use. This both confirms and contradicts previous findings. Hendry, Shucksmith, Love and Glendinning (1993) demonstrate that, concerning

smoking, social class differences among young people were not significant. The findings of the present study serve to confirm this. However, Hendry, Shucksmith, Love and Glendinning (1993) also portray a significant link between young people's perceptions that their friends were drug users, and their social class. No significant link is found in the present study between socio-economic group and agreement by the young people that most of their friends take drugs. Further research is therefore needed to examine whether or not socio-economic group continues to be significant regarding the young people's values regarding substance use; that is, whether the findings of the present study are an anomaly, or reflect change over time.

This consideration of the young people's values regarding substance use completes the values-profile of young people depicted in the present study. This values-profile is now drawn together in conclusion; exploring what can be said regarding the values of young people today, the changes that need to be made to the HaFVI as the instrument used to generate this profile, and examining further research that is now needed.



# **CHAPTER 26**

## **CONCLUSION**

**Introduction**

**Young People's Values**

*A profile*

*Factors of significance*

*Implications*

**The Halsall-Francis Values Inventory**

**The Young People's Values Project**

## **Introduction**

This study has utilised qualitative and quantitative research methods to draw a detailed yet generalisable portrait of the values of young people in England and Wales. This Conclusion comprises three main parts which draw together the findings from this study and examine ways in which these can be built on and expanded.

The first section of this Conclusion examines what can be learned from the profile of young people's values presented in this study. It summarises the values-profile of young people given in part two of this study, and examines what can be said from consideration of the three factors that may be significant with relation to young people's values. This first section then examines the implications of the profile of young people's values for education and for society.

The second section of this Conclusion reflects on the quantitative instrument generated by this study: the Halsall-Francis Values Inventory (HaFVI). In light of the responses of participants, and comments made by teachers, changes that need to be made to the HaFVI are suggested, to improve it for use in the next stage of the Young People's Values Project.

The third section of this Conclusion considers the next stage of research in the Young People's Values Project. As stated in the Introduction to this study, the nature of the methodological approach utilised, a synthesis of methods, is that it is circular, and thus issues that have arisen from the quantitative data presented in part two are highlighted for later further qualitative consideration.

## **Young People's Values**

This first section of this Conclusion comprises three main parts. First, the young people's values-profile presented in this study is summarised. Second, the three factors considered as of possible significance with relation to young people's values are examined. Third, the implications of this profile and these factors, in terms of addressing the thesis of this study, and in terms of education and wider society, are examined.

### ***A profile***

The method utilised in this study ensures that checks of the qualitative and quantitative findings can be made against each other. Consideration of the data here demonstrates that, in the main, the quantitative data generated in response to the HaFVI cohere with the qualitative findings from the focus groups, and therefore the profile of young people's values presented in this study can be said to be valid. The Introduction states that the main aim of this study is 'to address stereotyping and discrimination against young people, through providing a portrayal of young people's values that has integrity for the young people and for the researcher' (p. 3). It is argued that this has been achieved, in that every effort has been made in this study to present a profile of young people's values that is true to the values expressed by those participating in this study. However, within this, it is recognised that any presentation of data involves some interpretation, as stated by Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace (1996):

However much we - the teachers, the researchers - are committed to struggling for the empowerment of young people, and however much we convince ourselves that we are presenting their authentic voice, we are likely to be refracting their meanings through the lens of our own interests and concerns (p. 177).



Bearing in mind, therefore, that some interpretation by the researcher is inevitable in any presentation of data, it remains the case that the portrait of young people's values presented in this study retains integrity for the young people as a valid portrayal of their values, and retains integrity for the researcher in minimising the extent to which the researcher's agenda impacts on this portrayal of young people's values.

The profile of young people's values given in this study is now summarised here, exploring in turn each of the 13 value-areas derived in the values-map from the focus groups and literature review as of importance to young people.

### *Core values*

There are two main parts to the young people's core values: their community core values, and their individual core values. The young people portray a strong sense of community core values, in that they highly value the people around them; specifically, their family and friends. It is argued that the young people's strong community core values arise from a more individualistic motivation, in that they are concerned about the people that are closely related with them, and not generally about the community as a whole. The young people also portray a strong sense of individual core values, and are even, to some extent, hedonistic in their expression of these. This finding of strong individualism among the young people completing the HaFVI fits with the young people's values as depicted in the focus groups.

Overall, regarding the young people's core values, it can be stated that the young people are primarily individualistic in their core values, and while this may extend to a concern

and value for their immediate community, there is nothing to suggest that many young people are motivated in their core values by a concern for the community overall. Echoing the conclusions of Francis (2001) it is maintained that the young people in this sample still emanate a strong identity in their individualistically motivated core values as 'Thatcher's children' (p. 209).

### *Aims in life*

The aims in life expressed by the young people are predominantly traditional, reflecting aims in life often expressed by previous generations, as demonstrated through comparison with Patey (1964) in chapter ten. The aims in life expressed by the young people completing the HaFVI reflect the aims in life expressed by the young people participating in the focus groups. High proportions of the young people would like to get married, have children, a successful career, lots of money, their own home, and to travel. Therefore, the young people's values regarding their aims in life predominantly reflect aims for personal success, material security, and financial gain.

Much lower proportions of the young people wish to experience different cultures and make a difference in the world community. Therefore, the aims in life of the young people can be said to be primarily materialistic and individualistic. The young people's individualistic core values as 'Thatcher's children' are reflected clearly in their life plans.

### *Family*

The young people completing the HaFVI are more positive in their values regarding their families than the young people participating in the focus groups who express more mixed

values with relation to their families. However, while the young people completing the HaFVI are generally positive in their values with relation to their families, they are not as positive concerning discussing their problems with their family. Overall, the young people are positive in their values regarding their families, although they appear to be becoming more independent of them.

### *Friends*

There are two main parts to the value-area of friends. These consider the young people's relationships with friends, and their methods of communication with friends. The young people are very positive in their values regarding their relationships with friends. This confirms the findings from the focus groups that friends play a central role in the young people's lives. Furthermore, peer pressure affects the young people's lives, primarily through their need to fit in. This need to fit in is very important both to the young people completing the HaFVI, and the young people participating in the focus groups, and therefore here again, the authenticity of this profile of young people's values is confirmed through the consistency between the qualitative and quantitative appraisals of young people's values.

When examining the young people's values concerning communication with friends, it is apparent that the young people primarily communicate with their friends by telephone, both mobile and landline. Computer based methods of communication with friends, for example e-mail and Internet chat, are not as popular, although they are still used by substantial proportions of the young people.



### *Area*

The young people participating in this study are primarily positive in their values regarding their area. However, they also remain uncertain as to whether or not they feel part of the community they live in, and are negative regarding the specific provision for young people in their area. These findings again concur with the findings from the focus groups.

### *Worries, concerns, and fears*

There are two main parts to the young people's values regarding their worries, concerns, and fears. The first part pertains to the young people's fears, and it is evident that the young people express high levels of fear with relation to the items in the HaFVI. To some extent, the fears of those completing the HaFVI reflect the fears of those participating in the focus groups. However, the fears of the young people completing the HaFVI differ from those expressed in the focus groups, in that the young people completing the HaFVI do not express such high levels of fear regarding their own mortality as the young people participating in the focus groups. This difference may be related to the difference in the two methods of assessment of the young people's values, demonstrating the importance of the synthesis of methods in gaining a full picture of the young people's values.

The second part of the value-area of worries, concerns, and fears pertains to the young people's self-esteem. The young people's responses to items evaluating their self-esteem are mixed, demonstrating that their levels of self-esteem are diverse. However, reasonably high proportions of the young people have considered acting on low self-

esteem, for example by eating more or less, deliberately hurting themselves, or considering suicide. These responses should be a cause for concern.

### *School*

The young people are positive regarding many aspects of school life. However, they also portray high levels of concern about their exams at school, and great uncertainty about the issue of bullying. The increase in the young people's levels of concern regarding the issue of bullying, in comparison with the levels of concern expressed by young people in Francis (2001), questions the efficacy of policies to tackle bullying in schools.

### *Stereotyping and discrimination*

There are two main parts to the young people's values in the area of stereotyping and discrimination. The first part concerns discrimination against young people. The young people feel that young people are stereotyped and discriminated against both in society generally and by the media. The young people completing the HaFVI express a more gradual recognition of discrimination against young people than those participating in the focus groups.

The second part of the value-area of stereotyping and discrimination concerns racism. This assesses the levels of racism in the values of the young people and their perceptions of racism in society. It is evident that the young people do not hold strikingly racist values, although there is some racism present in their expression of values in this area. In addition, more of the young people feel that black people are discriminated against than feel that Asian people are discriminated against. Furthermore, one out of eight of this

predominantly white sample feel that white people are discriminated against, and a further third are unsure. These values regarding discrimination against white people may be a cause for concern.

### *Media*

The young people are high consumers of the media, particularly in the forms of television and music. Moreover, high proportions emphasise the effect they feel the media has on them, for example in terms of influencing their mood, and through advertising. Only small proportions of young people in this sample see celebrities as influencing them.

### *Spirituality and religion*

The young people are predominantly uncertain in their values regarding spirituality and religion. However, they are not overtly negative in these values, and express openness to spirituality and religion. Yet while the young people may be reasonably positive regarding their own spiritual and religious values, they strongly resist spiritual and religious labels. Furthermore, they are negative when considering their perceptions of the religious values of their family and friends.

### *Political issues*

There are two main parts to the young people's values regarding political issues. The first concerns the young people's attitudes to politics. There are three main findings in this value-area. First, the young people are positive in their values concerning politics demonstrated in their ambition to participate in the democratic process. Second, they are disillusioned in their values concerning politics when considering the impact they can



have on the world. Third, they are negative in their values regarding politicians. From this it can be stated that the young people are not politically apathetic, but rather are embittered or disillusioned with politics, and this disillusionment primarily stems from their perceptions of politicians. These findings from the young people completing the HaFVI reflect values regarding attitude to politics expressed by the young people in the focus groups.

The second part of this value-area concerns the young people's values with relation to war and terrorism. The young people are negative in their values towards war and terrorism, although they are slightly more negative with relation to terrorism than war. It can be argued that the young people do not necessarily feel that war is the best way to tackle threats of terror.

### *Social issues*

The young people express fairly high levels of concern regarding two of the three social issues addressed in this value-area. The young people express concern regarding issues of human and animal life, for example, fox hunting. Regarding the poverty of the Developing World, the young people completing the HaFVI reflect the concern yet also uncertainty about this issue expressed in the focus groups. In addition, around half of those completing the HaFVI express concern regarding environmental issues, although this is a decrease from the proportion of young people expressing concern about environmental issues reported in Francis (2001). The social issue about which the young people are not concerned regards relationships. The young people completing the HaFVI are positive and tolerant in their values regarding issues of relationships.

### *Substance Use*

The young people are reasonably negative in their values towards substance use, although they also express levels of uncertainty. Yet high proportions of the young people agree that their friends take drugs, smoke cigarettes, and drink alcohol.

This summary therefore draws together a portrait of the values of young people in England and Wales at the beginning of the twenty-first century, giving an indication first of the overall value-areas that are important to young people, and second of the detail of young people's values within these value-areas. Having considered this summary of the young people's values-profile generated in this study, the significance of the three factors explored with relation to young people's values in this study will now be examined.

### *Factors of significance*

In addition to drawing an overview portrait of young people's values, this study also compares their values according to the three demographic factors of sex, age, and socio-economic group. It is difficult to talk of the impact these factors may or may not have on young people's values, as the analysis provided here cannot be used to demonstrate the impact of a particular factor; other issues and factors may be coming into play. However, the analysis provided here does demonstrate significant differences in the young people's values when compared according to these factors of the young people. For each of the three factors, a summary is given of the significant differences in the young people's values from these comparisons, for the value-areas in which there are significant differences.

## *Sex*

In this study, comparisons of the young people's values according to their sex generates significant differences in the expressions of values of the girls and the boys across all 13 value-areas. Consideration of the young people's core values shows that more of the girls than the boys agree that they hold both community and individual core values, although when individual core values are phrased as being to the detriment of others, more of the boys than the girls agree. In the value-area of aims in life, significant differences from a comparison of the young people's values according to their sex demonstrate that the girls are less individualistic than the boys in their aims in life. The exception concerns careers, where the girls appear to be more individually focused. Consideration of the young people's family values demonstrates that the girls are more positive than the boys in their expressions of family values, with the exception that more of the boys than the girls find it helpful to talk about their problems with their dad. Similarly, in the value-area of friends, the girls are more positive than the boys in their values regarding their friends. More of the girls than the boys rely on their friends for support, and more of the girls than the boys agree that they use the suggested methods of communication to keep in touch with their friends.

The significant differences in the girls' and boys' values concerning their area indicate that the boys are more positive than the girls with relation to their area. The boys also express a strong sense of localism, particularly with relation to their school. Consideration of the young people's worries, concerns, and fears demonstrates that the girls express more fears than the boys, and also that more of the girls than the boys express low levels of self-esteem. Furthermore, in the value-area of school, the



significant differences between the values of the girls and the boys indicate that the girls are more worried than the boys about aspects of school life, but that, overall, the girls are more positive than the boys about school. The young people's values with relation to stereotyping and discrimination, compared according to sex, show that the girls have a stronger feeling than the boys that young people are discriminated against, and are stereotyped in the media. Less of the girls than the boys hold values that may be described as racist. Consideration of the young people's values about the media generally demonstrate, similarly, that more of the girls than the boys recognise the influence the media has on them, and the importance of the media in their lives.

In the value-area of spirituality and religion, a well documented pattern of sex differences (Francis, 2001) is confirmed, in that more of the girls than the boys are positive in their values towards spirituality and religion. The significant differences between the girls and the boys in their values concerning political issues indicate that the boys are more negative than the girls concerning politics overall, and also that the boys express more apathy than the girls. Additionally, more of the girls than the boys agree that war and terrorism are wrong, and less of the girls than the boys agree that war and terrorism are sometimes justified. Consideration of the young people's values about social issues, however, demonstrates significant differences between the values of the girls and the boys, although no clear pattern is evident in these differences. On the issues of substance use, the significant differences between the values of the girls and the boys are clear. More of the girls than the boys agree that most of their friends smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, although the boys are more positive than the girls in their values towards use of drugs.

It is clear that sex is therefore a highly significant factor with relation to the young people's values across all 13 of the value-areas in this study. This reflects the findings of Bibby (2001). From his exploration of the values of young Canadians, Bibby (2001) cites gender differences in values as one of the three most important findings of his study.

He states that:

More females than males value relationships and general civility. They have limited interest in violence whether it is found in sports and video games, capital punishment, or war. They are more likely to approach social issues with compassion (p. 46).

Moreover, Bibby (2001) states that females are 'more likely than males to worry about their looks and to express low self-esteem' (p. 47). It is important to note that Bibby's (2001) findings of gender differences in the values of young people in Canada are similarly found in the present study of the values of young people in England and Wales.

### *Age*

Comparisons of the young people's values according to their age measured by school year generate much fewer significant differences than comparisons according to sex. Significant differences are found in comparisons of their values according to age across eight of the value-areas. Consideration of the young people's core values shows that more young people from school year ten than year nine agree that increased responsibility comes with independence, and hold strong individual core values. Significant differences between year nine and year ten pupils in their values regarding their area show a greater positivity towards their area among year nine than among year ten pupils. In the value-area of worries, concerns, and fears, the year ten pupils express more fears than the year nine pupils. The significant differences between the values of the year nine and year ten

pupils about school demonstrate that age is a factor of high significance in this value-area. More year nine than year ten pupils are positive about school attendance, specific lessons, and the relevance of what they learn in school to their future.

The young people's values with relation to stereotyping and discrimination, compared according to age, indicate that more young people in year ten than year nine agree that young people are discriminated against. Consideration of the young people's values regarding the media shows that more year nine than year ten pupils want to look like a celebrity, while more year ten than year nine pupils agree that music is important to them. Significant differences between the values of the year nine and year ten pupils on political issues show that more year nine than year ten pupils agree that young people should have a vote. In the value-area of substance use, more year ten than year nine pupils agree that their friends drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and take drugs. In addition, more year ten than year nine pupils agree that alcopops encourage young people to drink alcohol, and that cannabis should be legalised. This indicates a greater positivity in their values about substance use among year ten than among year nine pupils.

### *Socio-economic group*

When comparisons of the young people's values according to their socio-economic group are made in this study, significant differences, often of greater significance than those generated by comparisons according to age, are found in nine of the value-areas. Significant differences in the values of young people from higher, intermediate, and lower socio-economic groups when comparing the young people's core values are primarily found in the young people's individual core values. They indicate that young people from



higher socio-economic groups hold more individual core values, than those from intermediate, or lower socio-economic groups. Similarly, consideration of the young people's values regarding their aims in life indicates that young people from higher socio-economic groups express stronger aims in life than those from intermediate, or lower groups. Significant differences arise from comparisons according to socio-economic group in the value-area of friends concerning communication with friends. More young people from higher socio-economic groups, than intermediate, or lower groups, communicate with friends through on-line methods, while more young people from lower socio-economic groups communicate with friends through letters. Consideration of their values regarding their area demonstrate that more young people from higher socio-economic groups are positive about their area. In the value-area of worries, concerns, and fears, more young people from lower, than higher, or intermediate socio-economic groups, express fear of their families dying, while more young people from higher socio-economic groups agree that their life has a sense of purpose.

The significant differences in the values of young people from different socio-economic groups concerning school indicate a greater positivity towards school among young people from higher, than intermediate, or lower, socio-economic groups. Consideration of their values regarding stereotyping and discrimination shows that less young people from higher, than intermediate, or lower socio-economic groups, express values that may be interpreted as racist. In the value-area of political issues, young people from higher socio-economic groups are less disillusioned with politics than those from other groups. Moreover, they are most positive in their values towards war, followed by young people from intermediate socio-economic groups. Those from lower socio-economic groups are

least positive in their values towards war. Consideration of the young people's values about social issues indicates least concern, thus greater apathy, among young people from intermediate socio-economic groups, in that either those from higher, or lower socio-economic groups are most concerned about all the given issues in this value-area.

These summaries of the significant differences in the young people's values from comparisons of their values according to sex, age, and socio-economic group, give rise to conclusions about the relative significance of these three factors with relation to young peoples' values in this study. It is clear, similarly to the finding of Bibby (2001), that sex is the factor of greatest significance with relation to young people's values. It is the only factor of significance across all 13 value-areas. Socio-economic group is the factor of next greatest significance. It is significant in more value-areas than age and is often also more significant than age within a value-area. Where age is of significance in a value-area it is often with relation to a small number of items, and thus is the factor of least significance in comparisons of young people's values in this study. The high significance of age in the value-area of school is unsurprising, bearing in mind that age here is measured by school year.

In light of this, the factors of sex and socio-economic group are most significant in this study for young people's values. This has important implications for young people, and these are discussed in the next section of this Conclusion.

### ***Implications***

Four main points can be made concerning the implications of the profile of young people's values and the factors relating to it as expressed here. First, implications for the thesis which this study addresses, of stereotyping and discrimination against young people, are considered. Second, implications of the strong individualism expressed by the young people are considered. Third, implications of the differences in the values of the young people from differing socio-economic groups are considered. Fourth, implications of the young people's values for education in schools are considered.

As has been seen in the Introduction to this study, young people are frequently the target of stereotyping and discrimination in modern society, and are, at times, viewed as the cause of many of society's problems. The actions and values of a minority of young people are taken to be those of all young people. This study contradicts these assumptions and stereotypes of young people. The values-profile of young people presented here does not portray them as delinquents. Rather, the values-profile presented by the young people is, in many respects, conservative. While the young people participating in the Young People's Values Project would not have been brought up under the influence the Thatcher government in the 1980's, in many respects they echo the values of the previous generation who were brought up under this government. As stated previously in this study and by Francis (2001), the young people participating in the Young People's Values Project can often be described from their values as 'Thatcher's children' (p. 209). Thus, rather than being different in their values, the young people in this study echo the values of the (school) generation before them, and their parents' generation, as demonstrated by the comparisons with Patey's (1964) study. This paradox,



of the assumptions regarding young people's values contrasting with their actual values, is summarised well by Oakley (1996). Regarding the gender differences and values portrayed in the Young People's Social Attitudes Survey, she states that:

Commonly held 'adultist' images of young people portray them as in revolt against parental authority and experiencing crises of conflict as a 'natural' stage in their development ... but the data ... suggest a different interpretation ... young people are, to a large extent, speaking exactly the same language as their parents (p. 40).

Thus, the empirical evidence from the portrait of young people's values drawn in this study demonstrates that young people are overall very different in their values from the stereotypes prevalent in society. It is now important for this empirical evidence to be utilised to combat discrimination and stereotyping of young people, both academically as identified in chapter one, and in wider society. Thomson, Flynn, Roche and Tucker (2004) state this need effectively:

the lives led by young people are as divided and as varied as those of adults, and at the same time what unites youth is the reactions of adult society. If young people are to become effective social actors then social practices and attitudes will have to undergo change (p. xix).

The second point regarding the implications of the findings from this study concerns the strong individualism expressed by the young people in their values. It is apparent that the young people's core values are predominantly driven by individualism, which is also apparent in other areas of their values, but particularly in their aims in life. This individualism is also found in the values of young people in Canada, as depicted by Bibby (2001). Bibby (2001) states that this individualism in young people's values may have positive or negative outcomes:

Individualism, if it represents a healthy emphasis on individuality, obviously is a good thing. But if individualism takes the form of emphasizing the individual

at the expense of the group, it can make social life difficult at a number of levels (p. 47).

From the values expressed by the young people in the present study, it can be argued that their individualism does take the form of emphasising the individual at the expense of the group, as demonstrated particularly in their aims in life. Moreover, the concern expressed by many of the young people to fit in with their peers, demonstrates a predominant lack of a 'healthy emphasis on individuality' (Bibby, 2001, p. 47). Thus the strong individualism expressed in the values of the young people in this study does not bode well for the future. It remains to be seen whether the young people will retain, or move on from, this individualism, or whether work needs to be done to counter this growing trend. This work may need to be undertaken in an education context, perhaps within the realm of the new curriculum area of Citizenship, to enable young people to understand that a healthy society cannot survive with each individual constantly emphasising themselves at the expense of the group.

The third point regarding the implications of this study concerns the differences in values of young people from higher, intermediate, and lower socio-economic groups. Ball, Maguire and Macrae (2000) conclude from their study that young people can be seen to be individualistic. However, they also emphasise the importance of acknowledging differences between young people from differing socio-economic groups, stating that: 'too much emphasis given to the process of individualization may obscure the continuation of common routes and fates' (p. 145).

From the present study, while the strong individualistic nature of young people's values is evident, there are also strong differences in the values of young people from differing socio-economic groups, including with relation to individualised values. Two main points are notable with relation to the differences in values between the young people from differing socio-economic groups. The first point concerns the apparent apathy of young people from intermediate socio-economic groups. Young people from intermediate socio-economic groups hardly, if ever, express the highest levels of concern regarding the issues in their values-profile in this study. This leads to a conclusion that these young people are apathetic and individualistic, comfortable in their own environment, and essentially 'Thatcher's children' (Francis, 2001, p. 209).

The second point concerns the advantages displayed by the young people from higher socio-economic groups in their values, in comparison with those from intermediate, and particularly lower, socio-economic groups. For example, young people from higher socio-economic groups are: more positive in their values regarding school; less disillusioned regarding politics; have higher levels of aims in life; are more likely to communicate using a computer; and are more likely to feel that their life has a sense of purpose. These advantages demonstrated by young people from higher socio-economic groups in their values beg the question of the equality of our society and culture. From this profile it is clear that those young people born with an economic advantage develop values and attitudes that give them further advantage. Thus, our stringent culture of success or failure, which is particularly pushed by New Labour in education through, for example, the language of 'failing schools' (Reay, 2002) appears to be resulting in



advantaging the already advantaged, and disadvantaging the already disadvantaged. This situation needs radical reappraisal to give all young people equal opportunities in life.

The fourth point regarding the implications of this study concerns practical implications for the education of young people. The young people's values presented here indicate ways in which their concerns and fears could be addressed, possibly through education. For example, addressing the young people's strong individualism through Citizenship education has been suggested above. Furthermore, the young people's high levels of fear and high levels of consideration of acting on their low self-esteem could also be addressed initially through education, although arguably these difficulties cannot solely be addressed in the classroom. The young people also portray high levels of concern regarding bullying in school, and these levels have increased since the study undertaken by Francis (2001). Schools need to consider the efficacy of their policies to tackle bullying. There is also some racism evident in the values of some young people in this study, and, as suggested by young people in the focus groups, this could also be tackled through education.

Thus, the profile of young people's values here demonstrates issues to be considered with young people, and it is suggested that the relatively new curriculum area of Citizenship may be an appropriate vehicle within which to begin to address these issues.

The need for changes in education is ultimately demonstrated in this study through the finding of greater negativity among pupils from school year ten, than year nine with relation to school. This decrease in positivity with relation to school, the longer young

people stay in school, suggests that a radical change of approach to the education of young people may now be necessary.

Having summarised the findings of this study, and examined the implications of these findings, suggestions for further research, first in terms of changes to the HaFVI, and second in terms of the wider Young People's Values Project, are now considered.

### **The Halsall-Francis Values Inventory**

The values of the young people completing the HaFVI primarily reflect those of the young people participating in the focus groups, and vice versa, and thus the validity of the HaFVI as an instrument for measuring young people's values is evident. However, there are areas in which the HaFVI could be improved. Two main areas of improvement for the HaFVI are addressed here: first, difficulties in the layout of questions and the inventory overall; and second, difficulties regarding specific questions.

First, overall difficulties with the HaFVI, and difficulties concerning its layout, are considered. The changes suggested here utilise and bear out comments made by both pupils completing the HaFVI, and teachers administering the HaFVI. The final page of the HaFVI, as can be seen from Appendix One, allows space for pupils to add their comments, and these were very mixed in their positivity or negativity towards the HaFVI, perhaps reflecting the level of difficulty the young person found in completing it. Some of the negative comments made by students demonstrated that they found it repetitive:

“The same questions kept being asked just in a different way!”

Others felt that the HaFVI wasted their time, and responded by not completing it properly:

“I found this questionnaire a little waste off time but we could of had a good productive lesson but know we had to do this lame questionnaire so I did little patterns with my answers just to waste even more time and paper so ha ha I was’nt good.”

It should be noted that responses to the HaFVI in which the respondent had clearly been just drawing patterns were excluded from analysis, and are not included in the total of 2,973 usable responses received.

However, some young people found completing the HaFVI helpful. For example:

“It was excellent and made me think a lot about life.”

“This questionnaire made me think a lot about stuff.”

“Some of the questions made me think what I do actually truely believe in.”

In general, teachers that commented on the HaFVI were positive in their responses. It was felt that the cartoons and pictures included in the HaFVI were a positive addition in making it accessible for young people. However, some teachers felt that more work needs to be done to ensure that the HaFVI is accessible for young people of more varied academic ability. Thus, it is suggested that the third part of the HaFVI should be shortened, and some of the more repetitive items removed. The text of the questions in the HaFVI could also therefore be made bigger, which would help to make it more accessible. Making part three shorter would have the additional benefit of enabling the HaFVI to be completed in a shorter period of time, thus making it usable for more schools as it does not make such a demand on schools, and thus increasing participation in the Young People’s Values Project. It is also suggested that a computer-based version of the



HaFVI be produced, which would allow pupils to complete part of the HaFVI and return to it later. Obviously, this would have implications for consistency of expressions of values, and could not necessarily be used straightforwardly alongside the paper version of the HaFVI. This important development of the HaFVI is a crucial area for further research.

Having examined changes that need to be made to the general layout of the HaFVI, more detailed changes that need to be made to specific items in the HaFVI are now considered. In the first part of the HaFVI, four main changes need to be made. First, the responses to the question regarding the kind of area in which the young people live need to be simplified in their use of language. Second, in response to the question regarding the young people's main use of their mobile phone, it should be specified that only one answer should be ticked. Third, language regarding the young people's parents, for example concerning their parent's occupations, should be widened to refer to their parent, or primary female/male carer. This was the intention of the questions, and has been utilised in coding the young people's responses, however, this needs to be made clearer for the young people completing the HaFVI. Fourth, questions need to be added to this part regarding whether or not the young people have a disability; this is an important minority group that has been missed.

In the third part of the HaFVI, three main changes need to be made. First, the language of many items needs to be simplified. Teachers suggested that language such as 'tarot cards', 'cloning', and 'discrimination' is not necessarily understood by young people in this age group. Second, the item regarding animals and plants becoming extinct needs

to be simplified to relate to only one aspect, and it is suggested that the item focuses only on animals. Third, the item stating that 'The music I listen to is important to me' has, despite numerous checks, been included twice in the HaFVI. One of these items needs to be omitted.

There are a variety of changes that need to be made both to the detail, and the overall layout and approach of the HaFVI. Thus, the importance of this study as a pilot for a wider study of young people's values, as described in chapter one, is recognised. These highlighted changes can now be made, and an improved version of the HaFVI can now be completed by a larger quantitative sample of young people, as part of the Young People's Values Project.

### **The Young People's Values Project**

The final main section of this Conclusion, therefore, considers needs for further research arising from this pilot study and as part of the synthesis of methods within the Young People's Values Project. Two main areas for further research are identified here; that is, for quantitative research, and for qualitative research.

First, further quantitative research is considered. This study of young people's values, while functioning as a study in itself drawing a portrait of young people's values, also acts as a pilot study for a larger study of young people's values, as part of the Young People's Values Project. Therefore, the next stage of quantitative research within the Young People's Values Project necessitates involving more young people in completing the HaFVI, once the improvements suggested above have been made. In recruiting this wider

sample, it is important to ensure that a greater representation of young people from ethnic minorities, bearing in mind the heavy bias towards white young people in the present sample.

Second, further qualitative research is considered. As stated in chapter one, this study is part of a project utilising a synthesis of methods, which in nature, is a circular method of research (Thorne, 2001). Thus, alongside the quantitative extension of the Young People's Values Project, it is crucial to undertake further qualitative interviews with young people to explore in more detail issues that have arisen from the quantitative data. Five issues are initially suggested here for exploration in this way.

First, the young people's spiritual and religious values need to be explored in greater detail, with particular reference to whether or not the young people feel their family and friends influence their religious values.

Second, the young people's values regarding social issues need to be explored in greater detail, with particular reference to whether or not the young people's levels of concern about social issues translates into action, and why.

Third, the young people's values regarding political issues need to be explored in greater detail, with particular reference to whether or not the young people's disillusionment with politics stems from their negative values regarding politicians.



Fourth, the young people's values regarding their families need to be explored in greater detail, with particular reference to the uncertainty expressed by some young people in their values regarding their families.

Fifth, the young people's values regarding their fears need to be explored in greater detail, with particular reference to the difference in the levels of fear of their own mortality expressed in the focus groups, and by those completing the HaFVI.

In conclusion, this study has built a firm foundation both as the pilot for the Young People's Values Project, and in addressing stereotyping and discrimination against young people through drawing an accurate portrait of young people's values. This study has also identified areas of concern with relation to young people, that could be addressed through education, and has added further empirical evidence regarding inequality between the advantaged and disadvantaged in society. Ultimately, this study has aimed to be driven by the young people's agenda in expressing their values, and it is to this agenda that we return, as articulated by a focus group participant in this study, in emphasising the need for further research regarding young people's values:

“You don't know what we're really like, do you Miss?”

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**APPENDIX ONE**  
**THE HALSALL-FRANCIS VALUES INVENTORY**

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