



Book reviews

The exclusive society. Social exclusion, crime and difference in late modernity

JOCK YOUNG

1999, *Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi*

216 p. ISBN 0 8039 8151 1 (pbk)

This book analyses the transformation of the social fabric in the last third of the twentieth century from an inclusive society of stability and homogeneity to an exclusive society of change and division. The author traces the rapid unravelling of the industrialized world, charting the rise of individualism and of demands for social equality which emerged on the back of the market forces that have permeated and transformed social life. It notes the slow but steady erosion of deference whether it is in politics, in public life, in the classroom or in the family. Jock Young, professor of sociology at Middlesex University, explores exclusion on three levels: 1) economic exclusion from the labour market, 2) social exclusion between people in civil society, and 3) the ever-expanding exclusionary activities of the criminal justice system. Taking into account the massive dramatic structural and cultural changes that have beset our society, and relating these to the quantum leap in crime and incivilities, the author develops a theory based on a new conception of citizenship and a reflexive modernity. Young makes clear we live now in a much more difficult world than some decades ago: we face greater range in choices than ever before, our lives are less firmly embedded in work and relationship, our everyday existence is experienced as a series of encounters with risk either in actuality or in the shape of fears and apprehensions. At no time in human history has every normative nuance been so measuredly scrutinized. This highly innovative book will appeal widely to every one who likes to know what forces are currently influencing our society.

Overcoming child abuse. A window on a world problem

MICHAEL FREEMAN (Ed.)

2000, *Ashgate, Aldershot*

375 p. ISBN 1 85521 982 4 (hbk)

In this book, fifteen different contributors make clear what is going on in their countries with regard to child abuse. Different countries have different views as to what is abuse. Definitions of child abuse differ, legal emphases vary and so do management techniques. The essays reveal the importance of culture, structure, and commitment to eradicate the problem. This book learns to think critically about the own system by studying those of others. The editor underlines that if we are to solve the problem of child abuse, many changes in sensibilities and outlook are needed. So we have to ask why children are still exploited, sexually molested and subjected to physical and psychological violence. In addition, the key to prevent child abuse lies in the way societies have regarded children. In general, there are two models to understand and explain child abuse. In the psychopathological model anyone who would abuse or kill his child is considered to be sick. In the socio-environmental model stress and frustration resulting from multifaceted deprivations are considered to be major causes of child abuse. Neither of the two dominant models made any attempt to explain the phenomenon in terms

of the child's status in culture. Yet the cultural perspective helps us to better understand abuse of children in terms of a denial of their personality. Children's rights – or their absence – are very much a key to the understanding of abuse and neglect.

Prevention and early intervention with children in need

MICHAEL LITTLE and KEVIN MOUNT

1999, *Ashgate, Aldershot*

113 p. ISBN 0 7546 2079 4 (pbk)

This book is one of the Dartington Social Research series dealing with aspects of what is beginning to be known as a common language for children's services. The aim is to build up knowledge about different groups of children in need in a form that will be readily understood by policy makers, professionals, researchers and customers and to make it possible to predict outcomes for such children and to design an affective agency response. The book consists of two parts. At first, the main concepts and ideas on children in need are explained in an integrative summary. Secondly, 20 projects from United Kingdom, Europe and the United States are described that appear to have improved our understanding of outcomes for children in need and that may act as reference point to those wishing to put parts of the common language in practice. The language of children's services is evolving by making use of the results from the Dartington studies, of practical developments properly evaluated in a number of test sites and of findings from other research groups working in the area. The authors try to disentangle some of the complex ideas underpinning successful preventive and early interventions for children experiencing social or psychological difficulty. There is a website describing the evolution of the common language: www.dsru.co.uk.