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# Discourses of Exclusion: Reconceptualising Participation Amongst Young People

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## **Abstract**

This paper considers how varying discourses of social exclusion have informed policies regarding young people's participation in education, training and employment. Drawing on a cohort study of over 800 16–18 olds, the research suggests that the binary categories of exclusion/inclusion, and marginalisation/participation grow less and less adequate as parameters for understanding changing patterns of post-16 participation and non-participation. It is argued that a range of statutory, structural, financial and social pressures to normalise participation produce forms of inclusion that are ephemeral and that carry very different meanings from those implied in discourses of exclusion. The paper gives a brief overview of the changing context in which participation needs to be understood, then presents evidence and analysis of young people's trajectories after 16. Some interpretations are offered of a wide range of meanings of participation, which suggest that old notions of transition to independence are unsustainable for a substantial minority of young people, and that patterns of participation are increasingly complex, have multiple significances, and carry the potential to mask inequalities and new forms of exclusion. These readings have major implications for how we conceptualise social exclusion, and for policy developments associated with it.

## **Introduction: discourses of exclusion**

The 'problem' of young people who do not make a smooth transition from school and college into employment was one of the key policy issues signalled by New Labour in its courting of the UK electorate during the mid 1990s. By the time of the 1997 election the New Deal and the guarantee to slash youth unemployment rates had emerged as a flagship policy (Labour Party, 1997), emblematic of New Labour's commitment to remedy some of the worst social consequences of successive Conservative administrations, without disrupting their neo-liberal approach to the (de) regulation of work (see Grover and Stewart, 1999). Alongside policies concerning lone parents and disability, unplaced young people became the main front of tackling what became established in public discourse as 'social exclusion'. Critique and analysis of the term and the discourse with which it has become associated are well-rehearsed (e.g. Levitas, 1996; Lavalette and Mooney, 1999; Stepney, Lynch and Jordan, 1999). This paper begins by examining how this discourse is enmeshed with associated discourses of disaffection, and of marginalisation, and considers how these discourses have

informed ideas and policies of mandatory inclusion regarding young people's participation in education, training and employment. These policies embody particular understandings of the causes of young people's 'failed' transitions into employment, financial independence and adulthood, which do not take account of structural *and cultural* changes in the interfaces between education and employment, and between youth and adulthood. The perceived causes of 'exclusion' work to legitimise a shift in the balance of responsibility from state to individual and community. By moving towards mandatory forms of participation which replace the exclusionary tendencies of an unregulated market in places by prescribed forms of inclusivity, one effect of policy may be to further entrench inequality, poverty and social dislocation. There are indications from the research findings reported here that cultural changes in the meanings of participation in education, training and employment for a substantial minority of young people put them beyond the reach of government prescriptions for inclusion.

Three discourses have tended to be used, in constructing New Labour's approach to young people's 'failed transitions': those of social exclusion, disaffection and marginalisation. While each has a distinct set of meanings and a distinctive genesis, the three have become interpenetrating, and in some contexts difficult to separate. The exclusions discourse has varying manifestations, from those which regard the excluded as socially and culturally closed off from 'normal' modes of participation, to those which allow that poverty, that is the direct result of exclusion from work or benefit entitlement, is also contributory. Similarly, some versions portray acts of exclusion as the result of witting neglect by external agencies acting upon the excluded, but more commonly they are portrayed as unintended consequences of larger social and economic structures (see, for example, Atkinson's, 1998, definitions). All appear implicitly sympathetic to the plight of the excluded, in that the umbrella term social exclusion carries the sense of victims who have been acted upon to their detriment. But beneath these interpretations, less sympathetic versions emerge. In these the causes of exclusion are variously understood as either predominantly exogenous and usually structural, or predominantly endogenous in the form of limiting individual capacities and dispositions that do not readily match a rapidly changing social or economic environment. However wide the variation in meanings and interpretations of this discourse, its distinctive core feature is that it disregards structural poverty and patterned inequality as a key source of exclusion, and stresses instead its mediation through diverse social and cultural contexts to produce very diverse outcomes. It is not poverty in itself but how it is allowed to constrain possibilities that is the key determinant. Social and cultural explanations are sought for non-participation.

Nested within the discourse of social exclusion is its own underclass version. It identifies patterns of persistent non-participation and sustained exclusion which it attributes to individual and family behaviour, of a mainly endogenous

nature. When applied to young people, this version often emerges as a discourse of disaffection. On some interpretations this is viewed as a dysfunctional or even pathological and proto-criminalisable alienation from adults, key social institutions, and dominant social and cultural norms, particularly regarding gainful employment (see, for example, MacDonald's, 1997, overview of the underclass debate). Other interpretations understand disaffection in terms of youth sub-cultures that generate their own distinctive meanings constructed directly from prevailing culture (Brownfield, 1996). Significantly, an apparent want of suitable alternatives drives many policy advisers (for example, Pearce and Hillman, 1998) to perpetuate the discourse of disaffection despite their express criticisms of it.

Unlike discourses of exclusion, those of marginalisation are consistent in portraying groups of young people as shaped and constrained by social and economic structures that maintain and reproduce dominant power relations. At one extreme the behaviours, beliefs and attitudes associated with certain 'outsider' groups prompt conscious efforts to push them to powerless positions at the margins of their social world, by closing off key opportunities, minimising resources allocated to their development, or actively debarring them from some forms of participation. Concealing 'difficult' young people in special units or on 'sink' employment schemes, and ignoring their non-participation exemplifies this. At the other extreme, ostensibly neutral processes of selection and allocation of young people are seen repeatedly to depress the opportunities open to some, closely following the lines of the classic social divisions. As diversifying social forms over-ride the traditional categories of division, the manifestations of these recurrent patterns change. Some young men, particularly working-class young men, fare much worse in academic performance and in the job market than most young women, especially those from middle and higher socio-economic groups. Black and Asian groups are highly differentiated, yet some persistently occupy the lowest positions in academic performance and in economic status. Structural reproduction of social divisions continues in changing forms, but continues to push predictable groups of young people to the margins (see, for example, Coffield *et al.*, 1986; Williamson, 1993; Rees *et al.*, 1996; MacDonald, 1997).

What all these intersecting discourses of exclusion, disaffection and marginalisation have in common when they are applied to young people's transitions is the centrality of *participation* to the assumptions and interpretations they carry. Taken at face value, this is unremarkable and logically necessary. Social exclusion means being denied a range of forms of social participation that make people integrated, interdependent, networked-in 'stakeholders' and members of society, in the classic Durkheimian sense. Social inclusion is the antithesis of social exclusion, and social inclusion is inconceivable if it is not through a range of forms of social participation. So exogenous forms of exclusion are constituted as, for example, structural barriers to full social citizenship, by virtue of racial

identity, which limit effective access to health provision and so reduce some groups' capacities for participation in the community. Endogenous exclusions might take the form of poor literacy which prevents participation in certain kinds of social or cultural networks. Disaffection characterised as rejection of the values and cultures of dominant institutions closes off extensive possibilities for social participation. And marginalisation manifests itself as, for example specific prohibitions on the activities of people with criminal records.

However, in the deployment of these discourses in the generation of social and welfare policies, some subtle and significant slippages occur in the logic that connects exclusion to participation via particular understandings of inclusion. In effect, the forms of inclusion which are privileged are those which have historically served the needs of some social and cultural groups least well. While in principle, any and all forms of sanctioned social participation alleviate exclusion, it is only those which are centred around formal education, recognised and award-bearing training and commodified work that are constituted as legitimate modes of participation. This centrality of work, education and training to New Labour's policies to tackle social exclusion in general, and particularly amongst young people, has been described extensively elsewhere (see, for example, Levitas, 1996; Mooney, 2004; Fergusson, 2002, 2004).

The research on which this paper is based gives cause to query the firm connection between participation in education, work or training and the advance of social inclusion. In particular, we will argue that a range of statutory, structural, financial and social pressures to normalise and even enforce participation tend to produce forms of inclusion that are ephemeral and that carry very different meanings from those ostensibly envisaged by the architects of inclusionary policies. We begin from a brief overview of the changing context in which participation needs to be understood, then present some preliminary evidence and analysis of young people's trajectories after they have completed compulsory schooling at 16. On the basis of this analysis some interpretations are offered of a wide range of meanings of participation in courses and in employment that suggest old notions of transition to independence are unsustainable for a substantial minority of young people, and that patterns of participation are both more complex and have multiple significances. These readings have major implications for how we conceptualise social exclusion, which are explored in the broader context of current policies regarding young people.

### **Reconceptualising participation**

It is difficult to research the experiences of young people without framing them in terms of the discourses of exclusion outlined above. Yet so much has changed so markedly in what was once termed the 'transition' from youth to adulthood as to make the assumptions of these discourses difficult to sustain, even from

within the value positions they draw upon. What were once treated as problems requiring remediation no longer carry the same meaning. The binary categories of exclusion/inclusion, and marginalisation/participation are less and less adequate, as the parameters of participation in education, training and work, and movement between them change. They are unable to describe new hybridised, ambivalent forms of participation and non-participation. The ephemeral nature of new openings, closures, withdrawals and restarts eludes these categories (Roberts, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Young people's trajectories which follow these new forms, we suggest, manifest themselves in terms of multiple relocations in the months following their completion of compulsory schooling, as they shift repeatedly between courses, jobs and periods of inactivity. These patterns of relocation need to be understood in the context of crucial changes which have taken place during and after the restructuring of post-16 arrangements in three areas: education and training provision, youth labour markets and benefits arrangements.

In education and training, the marketisation of provision through competition between providers for students, and a massively extended curriculum and array of qualifications has transformed admissions policies and participation rates. An inclusionary finding of places for applicants takes precedence over a selective process of academic differentiation on all but advanced level courses. Prospective students are free to apply to join any sixth form or college. Someone refused admission to one institution is free to seek admission to another. For schools and colleges, competitive student-related funding mechanisms and an advancing ethos of marketing and customerisation spur managers to offer the widest and most flexible programmes they can afford. In training, the key providing agencies operate in a highly competitive environment of contracts whose terms give priority to delivering numbers of placements.

The early to mid 1980s saw the virtual collapse of youth labour markets (YLMs) in some localities, and their substantial contraction, for 16–18 year olds more generally (see, for example, Raffe, 1985; Ashton *et al.*, 1989). Although there is considerable evidence of the re-emergence of significantly restructured YLMs during the economic revival of the late 90s it remains difficult for would-be leavers at 16-plus to acquire full-time jobs (Maguire and Maguire, 1997). The proliferation of part-time, casualised, flexible jobs has made labour markets much more accessible to young people, but as a residual activity, since rates of pay and variable hours substantially limit earning potential.

At the same time, this age group has no benefit entitlement, except in extreme circumstances. In 1986 the benefits regime redefined childhood dependency as ending at ages ranging from 18 to 24, depending on the context, rather than 16 as in the past. In practice this results in prolonged reliance on parents to provide continuing full material support for their children (see, for example, Ford, Burrows and Rugg, 2002; Hutton and Seavers, 2002). Consequently, the pressures

upon the 16-plus age group to participate in full-time education or training are substantial, and young people are able to do so in a context in which they have a good deal more choice, and a degree of power as customers to shop around for the courses which best suit their predilections. Post-16 provision is in most respects a market. Choice, competition, innovation, product development, match and mismatch of demand and supply, market-determined tariffs controlling access, and differential means of engagement in the processes of exchange are all plainly visible in the catallaxy of activities which constitute the processes of post-16 placement. This is not to suggest that these processes are a close approximation of a perfect neo-classical market. Structurally the self-interest of providers is not a motive force, given the high rave of state involvement. The hand that sets admissions tariffs is by no means an invisible hand. Markets do not successfully 'clear'. And so on. Nevertheless, the financial and managerial pressures to create courses and placements which are accessible to a range of post-16 aspirations, on one side; and the personal, social and regulatory pressures to exploit these opportunities on the other serve to create market-like conditions in which vendor and purchaser seek each other out and play each other off to achieve the most mutually satisfactory match in the prevailing circumstances.

These changed parameters of post-16 placement have radically altered what were once describable as trajectories of activity. Linear progress along established routes for a substantial proportion of each age cohort has given way to unpredictable and unpatterned short-term engagements with courses, training places and jobs (Roberts, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). These often mark serial changes of direction, as one activity interrupts the last in pursuit of more conducive conditions or the promise of greater benefits: hence the concept of dislocation introduced above, defined in terms of experiences that fall outside the norm of standard transitions.

### **Mapping relocation**

One of the main reasons for the persistence of the discourses which this paper aims to problematize is that it is inherently difficult to chart the movement of young people who are learning to function in increasingly volatile markets of competing opportunities. It has been recognised for some time that a significant proportion of the 16–24 age range is invisible to most of the agencies of data collection, and to much research (Istance, Rees and Williamson, 1994; Pearce and Hillman, 1998). It is estimated that around one in ten of this age cohort are not in education, training or employment at any given time, and therefore go unrecorded. Otherwise, snapshot data on each age cohort find relatively high rave of participation in 'active' categories. Insofar as social inclusion is taken to be synonymous with some form of participation, these estimates give rise to an understanding that social exclusion amongst young people affects a relatively small proportion, at rave which cause some concern, but not alarm.

TABLE 1. Destinations of 1979–80 birth cohort, 1996–98.

Destination	1st		2nd		3rd		4th	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Sixth form	488	55.1	6	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Local FE	168	19.0	58	6.6	9	1.0	6	0.7
Other FE	15	1.7	4	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Job	47	5.3	92	10.4	32	3.6	5	0.6
YT	46	5.2	29	3.3	4	0.5	3	0.3
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.6</b>
No known positive destination (a)	112	12.7	58	6.6	34	3.8	10	1.1
<b>Sub-total (b)</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<i>(a) as % of (b)</i>	—	<b>12.8</b>	—	<b>22.8</b>	—	<b>25.0</b>	—	<b>41.7</b>
Moved away	9	1.0	7	0.8	1	0.1	0	0.0
No known relocation	—	—	631	71.3	805	91.0	861	97.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes:

1 Each ordinal listing is a sub-set of the previous listing: that is, the locations of young people recorded under '1st destination' include the destinations of all those young people who moved to a second destination, and so on. Thus a young person may have joined the sixth form as a first destination, moved to a YT scheme, and then left it without taking up any 'positive' position. They would then be recorded under 1st, 2nd and 3rd destinations.

2 'No known positive destination' groups those who were known to be 'inactive' (not in education, employment and training) with those for whom none of the listed sources was able to provide information regarding a positive destination.

3 Only those respondents (or agencies acting on their behalf) who actively informed us of a change of activity are recorded as having second or subsequent destinations. These are therefore likely to be substantial underestimates (see discussion below).

### Recorded patterns of relocation

More secure estimates of patterns of relocation require intensive tracking of young people using instruments that look beneath what is reported through official snapshot data. During a period of two years following completion of GCSE examinations, the research began from a sample of 885 young people, using a range of research instruments, principally two questionnaires, reports from schools and colleges, short structured interviews with a substantial proportion of the sample, and interviews conducted by telephone. The research took place in a medium-sized new town in the English midlands which has an enlarged under 24 population but also a buoyant youth labour market predominantly based in tertiary sector economic activity. Fieldwork began in the Spring of 1996, the bulk was completed during the winter of 1997/98, selected contacts continued until the summer of 1998. As Table 1 shows, attrition rates in tracking the full sample beyond a first destination were necessarily high, because no agency has responsibility for this work, and because our research efforts were



concentrated on more intensive tracking of a sub-set of the sample, building more detailed case studies, including short interviews, with approximately 150 young people whose trajectories looked likely to be 'non-standard'. In addition, 18 of them contributed extended taped interviews. Almost all the young people in the sample were predisposed to active participation. All completed the first questionnaire in school time. All sat a number of GCSEs, as a result of acceptable performances in mock examinations. The sample deliberately excludes most of those who have already rejected or have been formally excluded from school; who may be estranged from their families; who have been transferred to special schools or other institutions for pupils with 'challenging behaviour', or who are in secure units as a result of criminal convictions. The focus is therefore squarely on young people who were 'mainstream' participants at aged 16.

Table 1 gives the destinations of up to 885 young people, recording such movement as it was possible to trace amongst those who moved to second and subsequent destinations over the research period.

There are a number of important observations to be made about the data itself. Firstly, young people were recorded as having no known destination only when all possible sources had been unable to offer information of a positive destination. Secondly, the recording of a first positive destination was less a snapshot than a delayed action image, whose timing was varied to accommodate positive destinations – in practice over a period of several months following completion of GCSE exams. It was not a fixed-moment recording, not least because none of the agencies concerned is able to collect such data. (This is normal practice in gathering the data that provide DfES and DWP returns on post-16 participation and economic activity rates.) Not only does this give the best possible picture of the proportion of positive destinations, it implies that those destinations endure. The relative ease with which we found young people for whom this was not so suggests not only that such supposed snapshots greatly exaggerate the degree of stability of locations, but that our own estimates of relocation are very likely to be substantial underestimates. Each known shift from one category of activity to another was recorded. So were shifts between institutions in the same category, for example from one job to another. However, the junctures of recording were unavoidably *ad hoc* and predominantly reactive: apart from attempts to track at least the first relocation (i.e. second destination) of the selected sub-set of 150, all recordings of relocation took the form of information offered to the researchers, not as the product of systematic collection. Even amongst the targeted 150, our efforts beyond a first follow-up contact were by no means complete. It is beyond doubt that at least a significant minority (the size of which we 'model' below) of young people relocated without our knowledge.

Seen in this light, the findings of the tracking exercise are striking, and give the appearance of considerable market-driven 'churning'. Even taken at face

value, the rate of relocation seems high. The sample sub-divides such that at least a quarter and up to a third of the known population proceeds from a first destination to a second, from a second to a third, and so on, up to six times, over a period of approximately eighteen months. An estimate of the extent of actual relocations is outlined below.

Relocation, even if it is multiple and frequent cannot be taken as a sign of disaffection or exclusion. To do so would be to ignore the substantial number of young people for whom finding a satisfactory course or occupation is unavoidably a matter of trial and error. For example, 29 per cent of the population were unsuccessful in reaching their first destination of choice, defined in the broadest possible terms by using the same categories of activity as Table 1. Significantly, the frustration of expressed plans to enter the full-time (or even part-time) labour market was the largest single category of mismatch between intention and initial outcome. Subsequent relocations may therefore merely be intended to put this right. The incidence of movement to a second destination that corresponded to an originally expressed preference was indeed more towards jobs than any other category, at 34 per cent. However, as Table 1 shows, gaining a job accounted for only 49 per cent of the totality of second moves and a modest 23 per cent of those making such a move were known to have expressed such a preference on our first contact with them. Furthermore, the most commonly recurring trajectory amongst those who moved more than twice was to become unemployed following a period of employment, which itself followed a period in full-time education. And for those who moved more than three times in this period, almost all failed to achieve their original category of preference. There are therefore major limits to describing multiple relocation as purposive: on this basis, market churning is a more accurate descriptor.

### **Modelling relocation**

In the pursuit of a more informative explanation of relocations, several possibilities of finding significant patterns were pursued, using standard statistical techniques. The extensive data set allowed a range of detailed analyses of variables. The data were primarily derived from the two questionnaires: 688 respondents (78 per cent of the sample) completed the first questionnaire in March/April 1996 as they approached their GCSE examinations and the end of their final year of compulsory school attendance (Year 11), and 559 (63 per cent of the sample) completed the second, between September and December, when most had become 'established' in their first post-16 destination. In addition, data on GCSE performance, entitlement to free school meals, and registered special educational needs were supplied by schools.

It is notable that there are no overwhelmingly powerful patterns of correlation between these variables and propensity to known multiple relocation. If we take the trajectories of the whole sample, including those who were assumed

TABLE 2. Correlations with number of relocations (full sample).

	Correlation	
	Co-efficient	Sig.
GCSE score [GCSE]	-0.244	0.000
Truancy in Year 11 [truancy]	0.193	0.000
GCSEs have been useful [use quals.]	-0.161	0.000
Enjoying current activity (Year 12) [enjoy]	-0.142	0.001
Participating in raves [raves]	0.139	0.000
Current activity is unplanned (Year 12) [unplanned]	0.131	0.002

TABLE 3. Correlations with number of relocations (sub-sample).

	Correlation	
	Co-efficient	Sig.
Participating in raves [raves]	0.311	0.000
Hours worked in p/t job (Year 12) [p/t hours]	0.269	0.018
Truancy in Year 11 [truancy]	0.237	0.001
Club or pub going [clubs]	0.235	0.001
Current activity is unplanned (Year 12) [unplanned]	0.255	0.002
Changed sense of self [changed self]	0.236	0.005
Current qualifications likely to be useful [quals]	-0.233	0.006

to have remained in their first destination throughout the research period, the following correlations with propensity to relocate are as shown in Table 2.

If the analysis is restricted to the smaller sub-sample which is known to have relocated at least once, as recorded in Table 1, the following correlations with propensity to relocate are as shown in Table 3.

While all but one of these patterns of correlation are at the highest level of significance, the coefficients of most indicate discernible but not compelling associations. There is a fairly strong connection between participation in raves and the relocation patterns of those who have moved at least once, and there is some consistency in the variables included in both the full sample and the sub-sample (notably regarding truancy and raves, but also 'unplanned' activity). But in general correlation with single variables does not indicate links so powerful as to imply a compelling case that there may be a causal connection. However, once a model of relocation is developed, using the multiple regression technique of General Linear Model univariate analysis, the *interactions* of several variables were found to account for a large part of the variability in both the full sample and the multiple-relocation sub-sample.

In the case of the whole sample, including those assumed to have remained in their first destination, 87 per cent of the variability was accounted for by multiple

TABLE 4. Model of number of relocations (full sample).

	Sig.
(i) GCSE × clubs × raves	0.000
(ii) GCSE × careers × truancy	0.000
(iii) Unplanned × enjoy × placement × use quals	0.000
(iv) GCSE × p.t.hours	0.001
(v) Raves × p.t.hours	0.006

Note: Adjusted R-squared value is 0.614.

TABLE 5. Model of number of relocations (sub-sample).

	Sig.
(i) truancy	0.000
(ii) p.t.hours	0.018
(iii) truancy × p.t.hours	0.000
(iv) truancy × unplanned	0.000
(v) p.t.hours × unplanned	0.000
(vi) p.t.hours × raves	0.027

Note: Adjusted R-squared value is 0.750.

interactions between variables, in which raves, rave of GCSE attainment, and long hours of part-time work are recurring factors. So, for example, although GCSE scores are a significant but not a high correlate of relocation, and although hours of part-time work did not register as a significant correlate of relocation at all, when one is mediated by the other in the modelling process it contributes a large part of the variability in the patterns of relocation. Similarly club going was not a significant correlate alone, but once it is analysed in combination with GCSE performance and participation in raves, it becomes a contributor.

A univariate analysis gives the following model, in which the selected interactions are all influential at the highest raved of significance (see Table 4).

If we restrict the sample to those who were known to have relocated at least once, 86 per cent of the variability was accounted for. This gives the following model, in which the selected interactions are, once again, all influential at the highest levels of significance (see Table 5).

The power of these optimum models in accounting for so large a proportion of the variability in patterns of relocation, and the degree of correspondence between the two models, suggests that the influence of the key variables is significant and may indicate meaningful connections with propensity to relocate. We consider elsewhere in some detail (Fergusson, forthcoming) the ways in which the particular sets of interactions between variables in the models may be interpreted, in conjunction with qualitative evidence collected from short

TABLE 6. Cross tabulation: number of destinations/participated in clubbing.

Number of destinations	Clubbing				Total	
	Yes		No			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	175	42.5	237	57.5	412	100.0
2	52	38.2	84	61.8	136	100.0
3	25	55.6	20	44.4	45	100.0
4	10	71.4	4	28.6	14	100.0
5	4	80.0	1	20.0	5	100.0
6	1	100.0	—	—	1	100.0
TOTAL	267	43.6	346	56.4	613	100.0

TABLE 7. Cross tabulation: number of destinations/participated in raves.

Number of destinations	Raves				Total	
	Yes		No			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	77	18.7	335	81.3	412	100.0
2	25	18.4	111	81.6	136	100.0
3	20	44.4	25	55.6	45	100.0
4	8	57.1	6	42.9	14	100.0
5	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	100.0
6	1	100.0	—	—	1	100.0
TOTAL	133	21.7	480	78.3	613	100.0

biographies and recorded interviews. For now, it is important to note the prominence of participation in raves and club going, the incidence of self-reported truancy, the involvement in longer part-time working hours, and self-reported changes of direction [unplanned] in both models. While the correlation-coefficients for these single variables were not high (and were in some cases of lower significance), their consistent presence in both the whole sample and sub-sample analyses, and their prominence in the interactions in the regression model, make it worth noting clear patterns of association with frequency of relocation, as shown in Tables 6–10.

The tables demonstrate patterns of association that are important in the analysis that follows. Participation in clubbing and in raves is considerably more prevalent amongst young people who had three or more recorded destinations, and although the absolute numbers of those with multiple relocations who had also provided this information are relatively small, it remains a statistically significant correlation amongst those relocating more than once. Self-reported

TABLE 8. Cross tabulation: number of destinations/self-reported truancy.

Number of destinations	Truancy										Total	
	Very often		Quite often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	1	0.2	4	1.0	31	7.7	78	19.5	287	71.6	401	100.0
2	2	1.5	4	3.0	10	7.5	34	25.4	84	62.7	134	100.0
3	1	2.2	1	2.2	7	15.6	18	40.0	18	40.0	45	100.0
4	1	7.7	—	—	3	23.1	3	23.1	6	46.2	13	100.0
5	—	—	1	20.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	5	100.0
6	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	100.0	—	—	1	100.0
TOTAL	5	0.8	10	1.7	53	8.8	135	22.5	396	66.1	599	100.0

TABLE 9. Cross tabulation: number of destinations weekly hours in part-time job (quintiles).

Number of destinations	Weekly hours in part-time job										Total	
	1*		2		3		4		5			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	39	17.0	49	21.4	45	19.7	50	21.8	46	20.1	229	100.0
2	12	20.3	9	15.3	19	32.2	9	15.3	10	16.9	59	100.0
3	3	21.4	2	14.3	—	—	5	35.7	4	28.6	14	100.0
4	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	25.0	3	75.0	4	100.0
TOTAL	54	17.6	60	19.6	64	20.9	65	21.2	63	20.6	306	100.0

Note: \*1st quintile = shortest working hours.

TABLE 10. Cross tabulation: number of destinations/unplanned first destination.

Number of destinations	Unplanned first destination				Total	
	Yes		No			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	117	30.2	271	69.8	388	100.0
2	37	34.9	69	65.1	106	100.0
3	15	53.6	13	46.4	28	100.0
4	7	87.5	1	12.5	8	100.0
5	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	100.0
6	1	100.0	—	—	1	100.0
TOTAL	178	33.4	355	66.6	533	100.0

TABLE 11. Cross-tabulation: number of destinations/GCSE score (quintiles).

Number of destinations	GCSE score (quintiles)										Total	
	1*		2		3		4		5			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	74	16.7	65	14.7	80	18.1	101	22.9	122	27.6	442	100.0
2	21	14.5	37	25.5	55	37.9	20	13.8	12	8.3	145	100.0
3	15	30.6	16	32.7	8	16.3	7	14.3	3	6.1	49	100.0
4	3	21.4	6	42.9	3	21.4	2	14.3	—	—	14	100.0
5	1	16.7	1	16.7	3	50.0	1	16.7	—	—	6	100.0
6	—	—	1	100.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	100.0
TOTAL	114	17.4	126	19.2	149	22.7	131	19.9	137	20.9	657	100.0

Note: \* 1st quintile = lowest range of GCSE scores.

truancy is rare amongst those students who were not known to have relocated, and becomes progressively more common in line with increasing frequency of relocation. Again numbers are small amongst those relocating three times or more, but when the comparison is restricted to those with at least one relocation (two destinations) a much more significant pattern of correlation is found. Changes of plan are clearly much more common amongst those relocating even once, and proportionately they rise dramatically and incrementally amongst those with three or more recorded destinations. Similarly, when the part-time working hours of students during Year 12 of school/college (quintiles 3–5 represent the range 12–42 hours per week) are correlated with number of destinations, the long working hours of those with three or four destinations by comparison with others are once again very notable. (Numbers are very small, because of the lower numbers of those with frequent relocations who answered this question on the questionnaire, and the working-hours profiles of those with two destinations are similar to those with only one.) And, finally, it is clear that those who go on to relocate more frequently are likely to have changed their earlier post-16 plans. So although none of these patterns of association signals a compelling link, taken in combination (the more frequent truant who also works long hours in a part-time job, for example) they stand as secure predictors of patterns of relocation. We will return to their significance later.

In addition to these factors, one other is important to note: the prominence of GCSE performance as a correlate of number of destinations for the whole sample reflects a discernible difference in relocation patterns which will also inform some of the analysis that follows. The pattern is clear in the cross-tabulation shown in Table 11.

Each student's GCSE scores were categorised as quintiles, with those in the high fourth and fifth quintiles achieving points ratings of 54 and above, the equivalent of five passes at grades A–C, allowing automatic progression to

A-level study or its equivalent. It is clear that the proportion of students attaining this level declines quite consistently in step with the number of relocations later recorded. And obversely, more frequent relocations are closely associated with a greater proportion of students producing GCSE scores in the lowest range, in quintiles one and two. Only the slightly reduced figures for those with four destinations in these two quintiles disrupt an otherwise very uniform pattern of association.

This significant but nevertheless limited pattern of association has particular importance for this analysis. Like the other factors identified, the association is neither easily ignored nor compelling in its indications of a possible causal link. And this is especially telling in relation to the social patterning of educational attainment and its career consequences. In the sample population, the familiar and long-established patterns of underachievement amongst the poor, those with special needs, and along gendered and racialised divides persist – but *without* any directly discernible consequences for subsequent dislocated trajectories. So students whose parents were entitled to Job Seeker's Allowance or other poverty-related benefits, and those with notified special needs performed well below average academically, but neither group is more prone to relocation. Similarly, true to the new patterning of gender differences in performance, 46 per cent of girls compared with 31 per cent of boys gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A–C, almost three times as many boys as girls gained no passes. Yet despite these differences, boys were no more inclined than girls towards relocation. And Pakistani students, and Black students (other than African) achieved high-grade GCSEs at barely half the rate of the sample as a whole, but were no more likely to experience multiple relocations afterwards. Poorer GCSE scores may indeed signal and perhaps contribute to relocation, but the association is weak enough to allow no discernible effect in relation to the very groups which perform least well.

Insofar as academic performance is a causal factor in relocation, then, it is clearly mediated through other factors. This underlines the importance of a multi-factored analysis that moves beyond simple indicators of poor performance, disaffected behaviour in school (truancy), the presence of distractions (part-time jobs), and of ascriptive factors, notably gender, race, disability or class. In terms of quantitative modelling, it is already clear that some quite complex and multiply layered interdependent factors may be more informative. And as we show elsewhere (Fergusson, forthcoming), when the possible meanings of interactive combinations of factors are read in conjunction with qualitative data, there are strong indications that the interactive associations are in many cases meaningful. But even without such indications, the strength of the univariate models of variability, and the particular factors and combinations that emerge provide a strong *prima facie* case that relocation has a range of cultural and social meanings which cover a spectrum, from active pursuit of preferred alternatives,



to the exploitation of deregulated slots in post-16 markets for courses, training and jobs for social and cultural purposes. And by the same token, we will argue, the absence of relocations is indicative of the stable pursuit of standard careers into higher education and secure career trajectories for some, but also of a new modality of inequality for others. How particular objectifiable factors (from the ascriptive to the explicitly attitudinal) become associated with particular outcomes amongst those who relocate and those who do not, is mediated by what are, we suggest, emergent new cultural meanings and 'ways of being' that are products of the new post-16 context.

### **New subjectivities, new inequalities**

As we have argued elsewhere (Fergusson *et al.*, 2000), for some young people relocation comes to be regarded not as a means of refining their preferred direction, but as an end in itself. Around the fluidities and flexibilities afforded by the new market arrangements form new possibilities for previously unenvisioned ways of being. New identities are being constructed by some young people around highly provisional, contingent and ephemeral mixes of studentship and part-time employment. These place young people in an entirely different set of relations to their 'main' activity from standard categories of activity as students, trainees, employees, etc. We refer to these as *new subjectivities*, which become constructed around new hybridities of studentship and employment. For these young people, the possibility of regular relocation transforms the market in places in education and work from one of instability and insecurity into one of opportunity to make decisions and seize chances to shape a desired world – particularly in relation to 'life-style' and leisure activities. Much of the identification of new subjectivities derives from our analysis of biographical and other qualitative data described elsewhere (Fergusson *et al.*, 2000; Fergusson, forthcoming), where it is suggested that there is a complex mutuality and interaction between three key elements: a loose attachment to studentship, a significant disposable income gained through part-time work, and an active social life centred upon high-expenditure life-style leisure forms such as clubbing and raves.

Three brief sketches taken from the data give a sense of these lifestyles. TB stayed on at school to study two A-rave on the basis of a points score that was unequivocally below the standard five A–C GCSE grade threshold. His comments at interview revealed some considerable unease and contradictions, at once doubting whether he should have stayed on, valuing the possibility of university entry, and being both bored and over-stretched by the course. Behind his decision to stay on is some strong family influence; but also an expressed liking for the local nightlife, and for the income from the cleaning job he does every weekday evening. He admits to not being bothered to keep up with course work, and attributes this more to friends and social life than to the job.

SB gained six GCSEs above grade C, but not in the subject she preferred. As a result she registered for a GNVQ Advanced course in Business Studies because she lacked alternatives, and soon became doubtful about its suitability. Earnings are a major consideration for her and she wondered if even the small income from Youth Training (YT) would have made it preferable. She continually looks to supplement her small part-time job to support her committed interest in rave, club and pub going, and expenditure on alcohol and cigarettes. Her eagerness for a 'good job', independence and freedom suffuse her responses, as does a sense that she is held back from enjoying herself.

DW had three simultaneous part-time jobs during Year 11, and worked an average 19-hour week. He lists club and pub going amongst his main expenditures. His GCSE results fell below his hopes, with only one Grade C. As a result he signed up for a GNVQ Intermediate course in Health and Social Care, despite the teasing of his friends and father that it is a 'girlie' course. He is very clear that he is bored with the course, would rather be working full time, and that he was continuing by default, while keeping up his part-time earnings and life-style. As another student put it:

[I'm] not doing the work I should and not going to the lessons that I should and not spending the time that I should at all on what I should be doing [in school]. But I mean I suppose I spend most of my time socialising . . . if I know what I'm going for I'll do it but at the moment I haven't got a clue.

The tensions embodied in the magnetism of the new subjectivities life-style are nicely captured in this comment from another respondent:

I think it is really unfair, I mean the pressure about not having a job . . . your parents can't really afford for you to go out clubbing every weekend. I mean it's a lot of money . . . Mum can't afford to keep buying me designers and that all the time.

From these brief sketches alone, it is clear that the triadic relation of study, part-time work and leisure activities is prominent. It is possible to isolate it in the quantitative data analysis.

### **Defining and estimating new subjectivities**

The young people who 'fit' the new subjectivities profile have chosen to participate in post-compulsory education, but have a loose attachment to it. This corresponds closely to the propensity in the correlation and regression analyses of those who relocate more frequently to have lower academic performance, as shown by the pattern of association with GCSE scores; and to be more inclined to have truanting during Year 11. In neither case are these extremes: very few respondents even with the highest rates of relocation have very low scores or report very frequent truancy. Both these characteristics are consistent with active but circumscribed participation, utilising flexibilities of access and attendance

that had not existed before. Certainly, the suggestion of loose attachment is consistent with the interaction between GCSE performance and truancy in the univariate analysis: if those lower performers who were at least occasional truants are more prone to relocate, and vice-versa, there may indeed be a causal connection with post-16 participation at a reduced level of commitment.

Those who relocated most frequently also showed a clear inclination to working longer part-time hours. On the assumption that this produces higher earnings, it corresponds closely to the need for a substantial disposable income. And although this need is by no means restricted to those who relocate frequently, it is notably more pronounced amongst them. For some, as well, optimising part-time earnings requires the very kinds of flexibility and availability that would be served by a willingness to trade job commitments against course commitments when necessary: this would have been likely to be one of several reasons for occasional truancy in Year 11 for some students, and is consistent with the interaction in the univariate analysis between truancy and part-time hours.

Increased frequency of relocation is also associated with a greater inclination to club going, and strongly associated with participation in raves. This connection accords well with the representation of new subjectivities in terms of leisure and life-style choices. Both clearly require the support of a disposable income, especially when all the associated costs, from clothes and consumables to CDs and late-night transport, are taken into account. This would be consistent with the contribution of the interaction between part-time hours and raves in the univariate analysis. It may also be significant that the stronger association is with the less mainstream and more disreputable culture of raves, in which costs may be higher (for a range of reasons from purchase of drugs to travel distance) and the 'deleterious' effects of long sessions on study may be greater. Furthermore, as the univariate analysis showed, rave going also interacts with GCSE performance in influencing frequency of relocation: coupling lower attainments with rave going in patterns of relocation is consistent with 'deleterious' effects.

One facet of frequent relocation, we suggest, is a readiness to move relatively fluidly between study, employment and perhaps inactivity, in pursuit of the new subjectivities life-style. In this sense, not only are 'transitions' disrupted and iterative, they are part of a new 'way of being' between childhood dependence and compulsory studentship, on the one hand, and financial, domestic and social independence, on the other. This reading of frequent relocation raises important questions about whether young people are actively motivated by the pursuit of new subjectivities, and even purposive in their relocations, or whether they are pragmatic and reactive, turning undesired conditions to their own short-term ends until better opportunities arise. Discussions of motivation are beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important to note that young people's adaptability to prevailing circumstances, and the possibilities they offer should not be taken to imply their active preference for consumption-oriented life-styles at the expense of secure employment and a secure economic future, were these to be available.

TABLE 12A. Number of young people matching restricted new subjectivities profile.

	N	As % of 6th/FE
Total population	885	
<i>of whom</i> : known positive 1st destination	764	
<i>of whom</i> : in sixth form or FE	672	100
<i>of whom</i> : in substantial part-time work*	124	19
<i>of whom</i> : lower GCSE score**	72	11
<i>of whom</i> : participating in high-expenditure leisure***	33	5

Notes:

\* 12–42 hours per week; group mean = 17 hours.

\*\* in lowest three quintiles with points score below 54.

\*\*\* clubs, pubs or raves (12 respondents were involved two, and 8 in all three).

Of course, some young people's cultural predispositions incline them to inhabit new subjectivities more than others. But as we will suggest, choosing to relocate frequently is only one facet of the uncertainties of post-16 lives, and it constitutes a set of responses that is by no means universally available. There are nevertheless strong indications that it is characteristic of the trajectories and biographies of a small but identifiable minority of young people, once they are released from the legal obligations of school attendance.

Of course, it is in the nature of such trajectories that it is difficult to estimate their incidence with any accuracy, and that they become overlooked as a result, in favour of quantifications based on more familiar discourses of exclusion. However, it is possible to construct an estimate around the defining features of the new subjectivities profile. These are taken to be: initial participation in post-16 education, GCSE scores below that which would be required for A-level study or its equivalent, involvement in substantial part-time work, and participation in high-expenditure leisure. The parameters we have selected are in part determined by the limitations of the information collected, and in part by the need to make it possible to 'operationalise' them for the purposes of quantitative analysis. This produces the estimate shown in Table 12a.

This definition suggests that around 5 per cent of post-16 participants in education and training may live this life-style. But it is quite a narrow definition, in that some aspects of the new subjectivities 'profile' could well fall outside it, and so produces quite a conservative estimate. For example, young people from more affluent homes might not require substantial part-time earnings to focus their activity on life-style options and treat study as background. Similarly, it is quite restrictive to suggest that only public forms of socialising in clubs, pubs and raves constitute the pursuit of life-style options: a range of activities from social time dominated by private parties, to the home-based focus on techno-leisure would stand equally well as potential distractions from study and 'career'. Table 12b relaxes just the part-time work criterion, and still produces a

TABLE 12B. Number of young people matching extended new subjectivities profile I.

	N	As % of 6th/FE
Total population	885	
<i>of whom</i> : known positive 1st destination	764	
<i>of whom</i> : in sixth form or FE	672	100
<i>of whom</i> : in any form of part-time work*	321	48
<i>of whom</i> : lower GCSE score***	165	25
<i>of whom</i> : participating in high-expenditure leisure**	82	12

Notes:

\*  $n$ -42 hours per week; group mean =  $n$  hours.

\*\* in lowest three quintiles i.e. points score below 54.

\*\*\* clubs, pubs or raves (28 respondents were involved in two, and 15 in all three).

TABLE 12C. Number of young people matching extended new subjectivities profile II.

	N	As % of 6th/FE
Total population	885	
<i>of whom</i> : known positive 1st destination	764	
<i>of whom</i> : in sixth form or FE	672	100
<i>of whom</i> : in substantial part-time work*	124	19
<i>of whom</i> : lower GCSE score**	72	11
<i>of whom</i> : current activity is unplanned	27	4

Notes:

\* 12–42 hours per week; group mean = 17 hours.

\*\* in lowest three quintiles with points score below 54.

substantially increased estimate of 12 per cent with profiles that match key features of the new subjectivities life-style.

An alternative approach takes account of the other factor that was consistently included in the earlier models: the unplanned nature of participation in school or college. In one sense this is the most secure indicator of default participation: respondents acknowledged following a different course of action from the one they had intended a few months previously. However, it is probable that it considerably under states the extent of default participation, in that it assumes that students had formed prior intentions that they would be able to recall months afterwards, in a time of some inevitable turbulence. Nevertheless, if we combine this response with less restricted definitions of exclusion from high earnings *and* high leisure expenditure, it indicates substantial numbers who are beyond doubt mostly default participants, and who in all probability match at least some of the elements of the new subjectivities profile.

Whichever of these estimates we follow, it is important to note that all of them are based on characteristics associated with relocation. But the propensity to relocate of the young people described here is not indicative of any of the

conditions connoted by the discourses of social exclusion, of disaffection or of marginalisation with which we began. If we follow the new subjectivities interpretation, they are neither victims of closure of available options, nor are they hostile to the prevailing conditions of their dominant activity, nor are they the concealed or neglected subjects of prevailing policy. Rather, they work with a range of opportunities, and configure new mixes of activity, and new cycles of movement between these activities around key life-style options. These are provided by their new-found market value as bearers of customer-related resources (see Pye and Muncie, 2001, for an expansion of the notion of market value), by the consequent openness and fluidity of course registrations, by the deregulation of labour markets, and by the expansion of consumption opportunities that commodify and facilitate sociability and the realisation of life-style options.

At this point, it is important to enter a caveat about the place-specific nature of the study on which these analyses and interpretations are based. While by no means exceptional, the buoyancy of the local economy at the time of the study, and its amenability to low-skilled, casualised part-time work in the tertiary sector presented young people with opportunities that are by no means universally available. So also, the strongly youthful skew of local demography, and absence of strong local traditions of particular kinds of employment make these very different conditions from those which prevail in many localities. It is unlikely that the trends highlighted here would have clear counterparts in, say, a predominantly working-class northern city whose traditional male-dominated manufacturing base had collapsed. However, the study took place in a town which is not affluent, and which is by no means atypical in its adaptation to the economic restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s. In this sense, it would be surprising if these findings were not replicated in many other localities, without being fully generalisable.

### **Defining and estimating new inequalities**

In terms of immediate policy concerns, of greater significance than the emergence of new subjectivities from re-location is the emergence of new forms of closure and the varied significances of participation in courses that they come to define. As we suggest elsewhere (Fergusson *et al.*, 2000), much of what might be addressed by the exclusions discourse, and its variants, is securely camouflaged inside systems of education and training participation, as new forms of inequality. These inequalities are identifiable principally as an antithesis of new subjectivities. Some young people are able to respond to career options that are not attractive to them by moving around in the free market of courses and jobs, and by making sense of their position by de-centring 'career' in favour of part-time earnings and life-style options. Others do not have the wherewithal, even if they have the motivation, to constitute themselves in these new subjectivities. That is to say, they may lack the capacity to switch between courses; or to gain access to the

more lucrative part-time jobs and climb the ladder of increased responsibilities and earnings; or to engage with the social worlds of clubs and raves, and alcohol and illicit drugs. As we observed earlier, although lower academic attainment is relatively strongly associated with multiple relocation, a number of key social groups are under represented amongst those who relocated frequently in our data – notably young men, those from the most impoverished households, young people with special needs, and the lowest attaining black and Asian groups. Such young people may be more risk-averse, they may be more aware of their limited capacity to constitute themselves within new subjectivities, or they may be more prone to inertial forces and the pull of new courses and qualifications that held a burgeoning proportion of the post-16 population in full-time education and training during the 1990s.

Again, two brief case-studies are illustrative. RG did not achieve any GCSE grades above E, but stayed at school to take a GNVQ Foundation course in Leisure and Tourism. He is unequivocal that this was the only alternative, given his inability to gain employment. This reflects previous part-time employment which he was asked to leave because of his attitude, and no recent record of any employment. He hoped to join the army but was unwilling to serve in Northern Ireland. His general demeanour in interview was described as initially confrontational. He has no income, no expressed interest in socially based spending, and makes frequent reference to cigarette-buying and an allusion to the (harms of) drug misuse.

PW stayed on in the sixth form to do GNVQ Foundation studies in Business. He gained one grade E GCSE in Art and Design, all others were graded F and below. He was receiving extra help with maths in Year 11. His family were in financial difficulties following his parents' separation, and he was receiving free school meals in Year 11. Numerous attempts to gain part-time work had nevertheless been unsuccessful, and his responses to questionnaires are suggestive of someone who has few friends and who is 'got down' by people around him. Most of his leisure-time pursuits were consistent with minimising spending and staying home. His choice of course he explains, most unusually, as being a route to participation in a YT scheme, in the hope that he can work in a sports shop – a position that many of his peers would have taken as an adjunct to successful A-level study. It is beyond much doubt that the course was the only option available to him, assuming that he had been unable to move directly to YT.

Something of the flavour of the perceptions of those locked into post-16 courses is captured by these telling comments from two other respondents:

Because there is nothing really out there to do and I thought if I go back [to school] and just see if something comes up while I am there, and it didn't really.

I think that [GNVQs] are an excuse to get you higher sort of thing . . . GNVQs are just another way of getting people who didn't do that well at school into university because there's no jobs out there.

Not only were the lives of these young people far from those of the new subjectivities group, their prospects of success on their courses, or of gaining full-time or part-time work appeared slim, and they had little knowledge of the local labour market. There is every prospect that their participation was no more than the postponement of their exclusion.

As was the case for new subjectivities, there are inherent difficulties in estimating the extent of these new inequalities, conceived of in terms of the closure of new subjectivities to identifiable groups of young people. The most practicable approach is to invert the parameters used for new subjectivities. The baseline population is again taken to be those whose first destination was in full-time education and training, and who had sub-A-level GCSE scores. This is not to suggest that all lower-achieving students who do not match the new subjectivities profiles can be assumed to be reluctant, non-progressing or default participants. The assumption is only that those who lack part-time work (or who work short hours), and who do not participate in high-expenditure leisure do not access the three-way mix of the new subjectivity parameters. As such this profile encompasses, even if it does not precisely define, the field of young people for whom extended studentship is the only available option, irrespective of their interests and preferences. This profile gives the following estimate:

TABLE 13A. Number of students matching restricted new inequalities profile.

	N	As % of 6th/FE
Total population	885	
<i>of whom:</i> known positive 1st destination	764	
<i>of whom:</i> in sixth form or FE	672	100
<i>of whom:</i> not in substantial part-time work*	254	38
<i>of whom:</i> lower GCSE score**	128	19
<i>of whom:</i> not participating in high-expenditure leisure***	54	8

Notes:

\* less than 12 hours per week, or not working.

\*\* in lowest three quintiles i.e. points score below 54.

\*\*\* i.e. none of clubs, pubs or raves.

Although this profile suggests that a substantial 8 per cent of students may be locked out of the new subjectivities lifestyle, this is again quite a restricted definition, in that some aspects of the new inequalities 'profile' could well fall outside it. For example, it is arguably a duplication of the criteria employed to specify that those included should be both non-earning (as opposed to low-earning) students *and* non-participants in any of the identified forms of high-expenditure leisure, since the lack of income would preclude high expenditure for young people from all but the most affluent families. Relaxing the criteria in this way gives a more substantial 12 per cent estimate, as follows:



TABLE 13B. Number of students matching extended new inequalities profile I.

	N	As % of 6th/FE
Total population	885	
<i>of whom</i> : known positive 1st destination	764	
<i>of whom</i> : in sixth form or FE	672	100
<i>of whom</i> : not in any part-time work	140	21
<i>of whom</i> : lower GCSE score*	79	12

Note: \* in lowest three quintiles i.e. points score below 54.

An alternative approach again takes account of respondents' acknowledgment of recent changes of plan. With the same caveats as applied above regarding its probable substantial undercounting of changes of plan, this nevertheless indicates appreciable numbers who are beyond doubt mostly default participants, who cannot re-imagine their position through the new subjectivities life-style, as follows:

TABLE 13C. Number of students matching extended new inequalities profile II.

	N	As % of 6th/FE
Total population	885	
<i>of whom</i> : known positive 1st destination	764	
<i>of whom</i> : in sixth form or FE	672	100
<i>of whom</i> : not in substantial part-time work*	254	38
<i>of whom</i> : lower GCSE score**	128	19
<i>of whom</i> : current activity is unplanned	40	6

Notes:

\* less than 12 hours per week, or not working.

\*\* in lowest three quintiles i.e. points score below 54.

Whichever of these estimates we might adopt of how lower-achieving young people experience normalised participation in ways that are unequal to those who can incorporate them into a new life-style, on the face of it they remain participants. The dominant post-16 option of continuing education has been newly opened to them, they were sufficiently tolerant of full-time school or college to continue with it, so were not manifestly disaffected, and they have not become systematically invisible to this option or structurally debarred from it. On this reading, they do not match prevailing discourses of exclusion.

### Projecting relocation

The analysis so far has been based on the extent of known relocations, which provided the basis for the univariate analysis. But as we have noted, the extent of relocations is beyond doubt undercounted as a result of limits to the frequency of access to the cohort. It is of value to the argument being developed here to

TABLE 14. Number of actual and projected destinations.

Number of destinations	Actual*		(Adjusted by:)	Estimated	
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
One only	575	75	(-133)	442	58
More than one	189	25	(+133)	322	42
TOTAL	764	100		764	100

Note: \* Actual data taken from Table 1: 764 first destinations and 189 second and subsequent destinations.

have a grounded estimate of the actual extent of relocation, particularly if the link between multiple relocation and new subjectivities is accepted.

The most appropriate method we have identified for estimating the undercount of relocations involves the statistical technique of discriminant analysis (Note 1). Applied to this data set, it allows us to arrive at a prediction as to whether some young people who are recorded as having only one destination are in fact likely, on the basis of their other attributes across the selected range of variables, to have been misclassified i.e. that there is a calculable probability that they have relocated at least once, and so belong in the multiple destinations group. The outputs displayed a consistent range of misclassification values between 15 per cent and 25 per cent. That is to say, there is a probability of at least 15 per cent that young people in our sample currently counted as remaining in their first destination had in fact relocated at least once within the research period; and that the probability may be as great as 25 per cent. Put differently, at least one in seven and up to one in four young people are likely to have been relocating unbeknown to official agencies and to the researchers. Taking the most conservative 15 per cent estimate, this suggests an undercount of approximately 133 who have relocated at least once, in a total population of 764 whose first destination was known. Adding this projection to the 189 young people already known to have relocated produces estimates of the number and proportion of young people having one destination, and two or more destinations as shown in Table 14.

So even this most conservative estimate of misclassification marks a significant shift, from a 3:1 split between those who settle in one destination and those who relocate, to a 6:4 split. Applying results of the least conservative 25 per cent probability would give 1:2 split, in favour of those who relocate. It is also important to remember that these estimates are over and above the 12.7 per cent of our cohort who had excluded themselves from the sample from the outset.

A great deal more work would be needed to construct a qualitatively validated model of the parameters which provided the best projection of relocation, to differentiate between single and multiple relocations etc. For now, what is more significant than precise projected quantifications is the broad tendency they

suggest. Not only are multiple relocations clearly well-established, they do appear to describe at least the early post-16 trajectories of a very substantial minority of young people, and to imply a rate of frequency of relocation that would be more accurately characterised as ‘churning’ than as the necessary and ‘normal’ process of adjustment and purposive pursuit of preferred options.

The question of how the extent of relocation estimated in these ways cross-cuts the incidence of new subjectivities is complex and beyond the scope of this paper. We do not suggest that there is a simple, linear or directly proportionate link. Nevertheless, these projections of underestimated relocation substantially increase the likelihood that our estimates of the extent of new subjectivities are themselves conservative. The estimates of the proportion of participants matching the new subjectivities and new inequalities profile together combines to give a range from 10 per cent (Tables 12c plus 13c) to 24 per cent (Tables 12b plus 13b). The projections for those actually relocating at least once ranges upwards from 42 per cent, against 25 per cent of actual recorded relocations. What is beyond doubt is that, taken together, these estimates raise fundamental questions about how participation and non-participation in education (and also as a corollary in training and the labour market) after 16 are interpreted in prevailing discourses.

### **Reconceptualising the relation between exclusion and participation**

On this basis, there is an empirically sustainable argument that a significant minority of young people are formally participants, but fall outside dominant understandings of participation. Because of their formal participation, neither the new subjectivities nor the new inequalities groups is captured by any of the multiple discourses of exclusion from which we began. Those who match the new subjectivities profile are, as we noted earlier, not obviously excluded, disaffected, or marginalised. Those who match the new inequalities profile, too, are participants, and so elude all three discourses of exclusion. But it is suggested here that both groups are participating in ways that clearly differentiate them from ‘mainstream’ participation, and that are quite remote from the notions of ‘transition’ associated with social inclusion.

One key sense in which those young people who match the new subjectivities and new inequalities profiles are remote from transitions is in their continued dependency. In one sense, this does not differentiate them from other 16–18 year olds, most of whom are dependant on parents or partners as students, as low-waged junior employees, or as ‘economically inactive’. But those following ‘mainstream’ routes are accumulating value in credentials or work-experience that will lead them towards student loan entitlements or higher wages. For the new subjectivities group, maximising disposable income increases reliance

on the financial underwriting of parents or partners through the provision of a domestic infrastructure that serves emotional and social as well as material needs. The high-spending fast-moving option-juggling lifestyle is only open to those with such support, but it is premised on low commitment to study. For the new inequalities group, infrastructural dependency is much the same, but is based more on lack of alternatives than on the active utilisation of continued parental and other support. We do not yet have sufficient longitudinal data to be able to establish medium-term outcomes for the young people identified in these groups. However, there is extensive general evidence since the transformation of post-16 provision of disappointingly low course completion rates, alongside high rates of drop out (OFSTED/Audit Commission, 1993), including amongst New Deal participants (House of Commons, 2001). And, as we have argued elsewhere (Fergusson and Unwin, 1996) a complex triangle of colluding pressures acts to encourage participation in courses on the part of those with relatively low rave of commitment. In brief, the market-driven interest of schools and colleges to maximise registrations described earlier combines with parental belief in the value and prestige of their children's post-compulsory participation, to encourage staying-on amongst otherwise reluctant or even disenchanted 16–18 year olds, who are nevertheless empowered by their new consumer status.

For those who can turn these circumstances to their own ends, the new subjectivities life-style mitigates this outcome. For them, the issue is for how long the delicately balanced triad of studentship, employment and life-style can be sustained by serial relocations, and whether it transmogrifies to *dislocation*, as options begin to close down, as periods of unemployment that were once meaningfully describable as being 'between options' begin to limit life-style choices and become involuntary, or as the pace of relocation becomes driven more by its own history than by its life-style objectives. Once any of these changes coincides with strained relations of dependency in the domestic sphere, these newly inclusionary cultural and social 'ways of being' are highly vulnerable to 'flipping over' into manifest marginalisation.

Participation in education and training beyond 16, then, cannot be assumed to be indicative of social inclusion, if we are to move beyond the tautology that participation constitutes social inclusion. Once inclusion in relation to young people is understood in specific terms of achieving degrees of financial and domestic independence, or of tangible progress towards them, most of those young people in these data, who match the new subjectivities and new inequalities profiles, do not fit the inclusion criteria. They are neither independent, nor self-evidently on the road to being so. Of course this in itself is emerging as a new norm in a policy context in which youth (and by implication the expectation of financial and domestic independence) is defined under the New Deal welfare arrangements to continue until the age of 24. It is to this context that we now turn.

### **Young people, policy and mandatory inclusion**

Participation, defined as young people's participation in education, training or employment, is not a fixed category. It is ephemeral, and it has multiple meanings. The ephemeral nature of participation resides in the very conditions that have made increased participation both possible and necessary. And multiple meanings are the product of the great diversity of biographies, intentions and dispositions which are now drawn into the participatory framework. These changed conditions are fundamental to social policies that now affect young people.

Part of the change has been inductive in its effects. The marketisation of education and training provision and the deregulative expansion of youth labour markets described earlier induce participation on a far more open and free-running basis than before the mid 1980s. But other aspects of policy change have incrementally served to make participation mandatory in fact if not in name. When the last vestiges of independent welfare entitlement were removed from most 16–18 year olds, the only alternative available to those who were not in full-time education or employment was to join YT placements on a diminutive allowance. The discredited nature of the scheme, inherited from its predecessors, marked it off variously as a make-work or cheap labour scheme with a notoriously poor equal opportunities record (see e.g. Bates, 1984; Finn, 1987; Wallace, 1987; Cockburn, 1987). Youth Training was in its last year of operation as our 1979 birth cohort reached the end of compulsory school attendance, and the tiny rates of take-up shown in Table 1 are a typical reflection of the low esteem in which the scheme was held. As a result, course enrolment was the only active possibility for those who were unable to gain the full-time job they would have preferred. The only other options were to be inactive, or to find unofficial activities, which together account for most of the 12.7 per cent of the sample whose first destination was unknown.

Of course, much has changed in the nature of guidance for the 16–18 age range since the 1979 birth cohort reached this age. On the basis of initial evaluations of the pilots (Dickinson, 2001; OSFTED, 2002), there is every likelihood that the *ConneXions* programme for 13–19 year olds which began in 2001 will alter trajectories in the earlier stages of young people's post-16 lives, though there is no independent research to date that demonstrates this, and some suggestions of the persistence of old patterns amongst racialised minority groups (Britton, 2002; Aymer and Okitikpi, 2002). Furthermore, the range of post-16 provision on offer, and the ebb and flow of possibilities offered by labour markets for young school-leavers are not significantly altered. Certainly, the possibilities for leavers gaining jobs at 16 are, at the time of writing, greater than they were in 1996, and this has been reflected in a downturn from the celebrated 1993–94 peak of participation in education and training, recovery to which is by no means certain (see DfES, 1999–2002). But not only does this illustrate

that it is market conditions that exert overwhelming power over the collective trajectories of each age-cohort, it highlights the ostensibly higher value attached to jobs as against courses by some leavers. The more significant point is that the configurations of voluntarism and compulsion, of courses, jobs and make-work schemes that germinated in the hinterland of 16–18 provision now mark many of the parameters of provision for the 18–24 age group – and carry many of the same risks.

In policy terms, it is telling that this *de facto* mandatory participation had become so embedded in the arrangements for 16–18 year olds that this younger age group were in effect by-passed when New Labour took the principles of conditionality of welfare considerably further with its New Deal for Young People (NDYP) programme. The majority of the otherwise unplaced 18–24 age group is now required to choose between work in the voluntary sector or the environmental task force, or enrolment in a full-time college-based vocational course. In return they receive an ‘allowance’ marginally exceeding standard rate of benefit on the Job Seeker’s Allowance. The much more prestigious employer-based placements which attract market-rate wages are at a premium, especially in high-unemployment areas, and benefit about on average less than one in ten NDYP ‘clients’ (DfES, 2000 *et seq.*). This choice is an invidious one for those who hold low-paid make-work schemes reminiscent of the discredited YTS in low regard, but who lack the skills or the disposition for full-time study. Although there is an extensive period of matching young people to suitable slots (during which many are prompted to take existing jobs which they had previously rejected as unsuitable, unmanageable or too poorly paid (Ritchie, 2000)) placements are enforced on threat of withdrawal of benefits. NDYP marked the end of YT, and so, technically, the beginning of an assumption that all 16–18 year olds were on courses or the scarce and highly competitive Modern Apprenticeships if they were not in employment. The last vestiges of welfare-based income support for 16–18 year olds, which had lingered in the shape of YT allowances, thereby passed. Instead, the principle of conditional support and mandatory participation which took root in YT and its predecessors converged with the growing conditionality of the adult Job Seeker’s Allowance to shape the programme for 18–24 year olds. In this sense, the 16–18 age group was a core element of the soft-run pilot for managing young people’s fragmented transitions to independence.

This approach is part of a wider set of discourses concerning personal responsibilities and the conditional nature of welfare rights that have been explored well elsewhere (Deacon and Mann, 1999; Rose, 1999; Fergusson, 2004). Yet the consequences are much the same for the 18–24 age group and even beyond it: exclusions based in poverty and structural disadvantage become temporarily masked in activities that run the risk of consolidating the exclusion they purport to end, as a significant minority of participants accommodate and subvert the demands of these activities to their own ends, churn around the system of

placements, or dissolve into the shadowlands of those who have disappeared from official records. As other analyses have shown, NDYP creates few jobs (NAO, 2002), it is least effective where it is most needed (Sunley *et al.*, 2001) and it is more readily interpreted in terms of a new system of governance of the young as a core element of joined up inter-agency activity that reaches as far as the territory of the criminal justice system (Fergusson, 2004). So long as the discursive slippage continues that reworks exclusion as lack of participation, and reduces participation to formal enrolment in courses or placement in *any* form of paying labour, modes of enforced engagement that offer little hope of a genuine transition to financial and domestic independence for young people look set to continue.

### Note

- 1 The principle of this technique is that it determines which characteristics of the explanatory variables most contribute to discrimination between two groups on the basis of their being significantly different from each other. Such differences in the characteristics of variables are then used to predict group membership, by modelling which of two possible groups any given case belongs to. In order to ensure that this model does not produce a predictive classification of cases that merely reflects the known variables most closely associated with each of the two groups, a randomly selected sub-sample is generated to cross-validate the predictive function. This makes it possible to assess the predictive validity of the original classification of the groups, i.e. to assess the probability that any given case is correctly classified (further details are available on the website: <http://www.statsoftinc.com/textbook/stathome.html>, from which this outline is derived). In the approach adopted here, multiple replications of the random sub-sampling scheme were generated so that at each step (replication) a different random sub-sample of the same size was obtained and used to fit a discriminant model using the same variables (but different selected cases for model estimation). The analysis of results helped verify how robust to case selection the method was.

Techniques of this sort are now increasingly widely used to provide estimates of missing data, where some of the most significant patterns of activity are amongst the hardest to measure, because the people concerned are inherently inaccessible to standard survey techniques. For example, comparable statistical techniques have been used to provide estimates of critical 'missing data' from the 2001 Census, concerning a range of people described as reading 'like a checklist of social exclusion' (Walker, 2002). The potential of such techniques specifically in relation to young people's post-school trajectories and other similar data is explored elsewhere (Faria and Fergusson, forthcoming).

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