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Living on the edge: the marginalisation and 'resistance' of D/deaf youth

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Abstract. In this paper we examine D/deaf young people's sociospatial transitions from childhood to adulthood. We begin by identifying the common processes through which D/deaf young people may become marginalised in four spaces: at home, in educational institutions, in the workplace, and within Deaf communities. We then go on to consider how these shared predicaments may however result in different outcomes for individuals by focusing on four personal stories. These case studies enable us to consider what resources and forms of social support or assurance can help young people to be resilient in the face of the difficulties that they encounter, and what sort of experiences advance or aggravate processes of marginalisation. We conclude by reflecting on notions of individualisation, structure, and agency; and by outlining the practical and policy implications of the research.

Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that the Western world is witnessing an historical transformation as industrial society is replaced by a new modernity. The old predictable social order and its authorities are being challenged and class ties weakened. Freed from traditional social constraints, individuals now have more opportunities to choose between a wider range of different identities, lifestyles, and social ties. As Bauman (2001, page xv) explains:

> "No more are human beings 'born into' their identities ... Needing to *become* what one *is* is the hallmark of modern."

However, the do-it-yourself biography also brings with it new risks. Most notably, failures and setbacks are regarded as a product of individual shortcomings rather than as processes beyond one's control. Yet, "The social, personal and material resources needed to live a reflexively organized biography are not equally available to all" (Ball et al, 2000, page 24).

The transition process from dependent childhood to independent adulthood is one moment where such inequalities can become apparent. Although vulnerabilities are inherent in the transitions made by all young people because this process is about change and, therefore, choice and risk (Allatt, 1997), it is also true that some social groups—disabled people, those with special needs, those in care—find these transitions especially difficult (Coles, 1997). Coles (1997) describes these young people as 'vulnerable' youth. They are vulnerable not because they are inherently victims, but rather because these young people are subject to particular processes of marginalisation that can place them in vulnerable positions.

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In this paper we want to focus on one such group, D/deaf[1] young people. Coles (1997) has argued that research on youth transitions and studies of disabled people and those with special needs have tended to focus on general transitions to adulthood rather than specifically focusing on processes relating to transitions in terms of home, work, relationships, etc. Here, we begin by identifying the common processes through which D/deaf young people may become marginalised at home, in educational institutions, in the workplace, and within Deaf communities. We then go on to consider how these shared predicaments may, however, result in different outcomes for individuals by focusing on four personal stories. These case studies enable us to consider what resources and forms of social support or assurance can help young people to be resilient in the face of the difficulties that they encounter, and what sort of experiences advance or aggravate processes of marginalisation. We conclude by reflecting on notions of individualisation and agency; and by outlining the practical and policy implications of this research. In doing so our research contributes broadly to emerging literatures on geographies of children and young people (Aitken, 2001; Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Smith and Barker, 2000) and geographies of disability (Chouinard, 1997; Gleeson, 1999; Parr and Butler, 1999). At the same time it also draws upon and informs work within deaf studies on D/deaf people's experiences of family life, education, and employment (for example, Corker, 1996; Gregory et al, 1995; Kyle, 1996), and to research on youth transitions within the disciplines of youth studies and sociology (for example, Allatt, 1997; Ball et al, 2000; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

Our findings are based on in-depth interviews[2] with D/deaf young people aged 16 to 24 years, and retrospective interviews with 21 'older' D/deaf people about their memories of this period and the significance it had for the way their lives have subsequently mapped out. Thirty of these interviewees are heterosexual and eleven are self-defined lesbians and gay men. One informant is a British Asian of Muslim faith, one a British Asian of Sikh faith, and one of mixed Afro-Caribbean/white British heritage. The other informants are all white, of whom one identifies as Irish and another as Russian. In addition, fourteen service providers for the D/deaf (for example, social workers with D/deaf people, interpreters, representatives of the local authority, disability support workers for students, etc) were interviewed about their role in supporting young D/deaf people's transitions to adulthood. This work makes up part of a larger study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council titled "Living on the Edge: the marginalisation and resistance of vulnerable youth". This wider project has also included face-to-face interviews, e-mail interviews, and group work with hearing young lesbians and gay men, older hearing lesbians and gay men, and relevant service providers (see, for example, Valentine et al, 2002; Valentine et al, 2003).

The research informants were recruited from the Midlands of the United Kingdom by a combination of methods, including: snowballing from multiple sources; advertisements on the Internet and in newsletters; and contact with a range of relevant support, advice, and social groups. Our interviewees are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds (in terms of their parents' social class, educational qualifications, housing situation, and employment status) and have also grown up in a range of different family forms. These include conventional nuclear families, lone-parent households, and reconstituted families. As the diverse backgrounds of our interviewees imply,

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(1) D/deaf is written in this way to indicate, and be inclusive of, different understandings of deaf people defined in terms of medical models of disability (lower case d) or as a linguistic and cultural minority group (upper case D). A more detailed explanation of these positions is provided later in the paper.

(2) The names of all those quoted, and the people and places referred to in these quotations have been changed in an effort to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

'family' is a problematic term because it conceals a complex and diverse range of household forms (Stacey, 1990). In this paper we use it as an umbrella term to cover this full range of social relations.

Four of the D/deaf people we interviewed have D/deaf parents or siblings, the remainder come from families where all their immediate relatives (parents/siblings) are hearing. D/deaf children who grow up in D/deaf families usually have quite different experiences from those who grow up in hearing households because they do not experience the same communication problems with their families, and have a more positive and earlier introduction to D/deaf identity, culture, and community. Given the complexities of these differences and the constraints of the journal's word limit this paper focuses only on the experiences of those who have grown up D/deaf within hearing families. All the interviews, which were conducted by the authors(3) in a place of the informants' choice, lasted between one and two hours. These were audio tape-recorded, transcribed, and then analysed using conventional social science techniques. Five of the interviewees opted to use oral methods (lip reading and speech) of communication. The other interviews were conducted in British Sign Language (BSL) or Sign Supported English (SSE). As we are both hearing and have only basic signing skills we worked with professional interpreters chosen by the interviewees. In most cases the interpreter signed the interviewer's spoken questions to the informant, and then verbalised the signed responses back to the interviewer. These exchanges were audio tape-recorded.(4) In some cases the interpreter signed the questions to the informant who then responded verbally to the interviewer.

Like any cross-cultural research working with an interpreter can result in linguistic and cultural misunderstandings, and influence the behaviour and response both of the interviewer and of the informant (Smith, 1996; Twyman et al, 1999). These issues are particularly pertinent when the interpretation occurs between two languages with different modalities. BSL is a complex visual language that has its own structure and grammar that differs from oral–aural English (Kyle and Woll, 1983; 1985; Sutton-Spence and Woll, 1998). Rather than acting out words, BSL involves the three-dimensional use of space in which hand shapes and the speed, direction, and type of movements, combined with facial and bodily expressions, are used to convey meanings. Unlike verbal languages, which are essentially linear, visual languages such as BSL can simultaneously convey different pieces of information and layers of meaning. For example, different hands might be used to make subject and object signs within a signing space which can be employed to indicate location, while facial expressions are being used to show intensity, and head movements used to indicate whether this is positive or negative. As a result, in addition to the sort of changes in message that can occur as a result of errors when one spoken language is interpreted into another spoken language—such as the interpreter using a wrong word or pitching the register incorrectly—there is a further inevitable loss of meaning when a visual language is interpreted into a linear spoken language and the written word (Hale, 1997; Kyle and Woll, 1985).

These complexities of interpretation were further compounded in this interview context by the different linguistic backgrounds of our informants. Whereas for some BSL was a first language, for others BSL had been acquired quite late and so their

(3) Three interviews were conducted by Carol Devanney who was employed as a research assistant on this project (January–May 2001).

(4) We originally intended to video signed interviews so that these interviews would be recorded in BSL, thus enabling the interpretation of the signs to be checked by the informant and interpreter. However, most of our informants were uncomfortable with being filmed and so we resorted to audio tape-recording of the BSL interpretation instead.

signing was less fluent; still others had grown up using SSE or, in one case, Russian sign language. The fluency of the interpretation from BSL to spoken English often relied on the skills of the interpreter in engaging with the particular form of signing used by the informant. The interview schedule may also have disadvantaged BSL users in some respects because it was developed in a written form of English by hearing researchers. Although the schedule was checked and modified by the interpreters, BSL users may have been less familiar than oral communicators with particular concepts and implicitly oral ways of thinking. [All of these issues are discussed in more detail in Valentine (2002).]

There are two dominant constructions of D/deafness: deafness as a medical matter, and the Deaf as a linguistic minority (Corker, 1996; Lane, 1997; Padden, 1980). The writing of 'deaf' is commonly used to imply a medical description of deafness measured against the 'norm' of hearing people. It usually signifies those who do not present a strong deaf identity and who generally rely on oral styles of communication (lip-reading, speaking) rather than BSL. In contrast, 'Deaf' is linked to the construction of a linguistic identity and culture. It is commonly used by those whose first or preferred language is BSL, and whose identity and behaviour are consistent with the norms, traditions, and practices of Deaf culture. Deaf-aware hearing people who are fluent signers might be considered part of the Deaf community. A Deaf identity, however, is not just something that can be claimed by an individual as a self-identity; rather, a Deaf identity is also dependent at least in part on an individual being ascribed or accepted as Deaf by the community.

The boundary between what are known as 'big D' and 'little d' identities can be fluid over time and space. For example, learning BSL often results in a shift over time in an individual's self-identity from deaf to Deaf. Likewise, in different Deaf spaces an individual's behaviour might be regarded by others as more or less consistent with the social practices of Deaf culture, and therefore their identity might be ascribed in different contexts as Deaf or deaf (an ascription that may also differ from their own self-identity). Here, we generally use the convention of writing D/deaf in a dual form to reflect this fluidity and complexity, and to render our discussion inclusive of the different identities and positionalities articulated by our informants throughout the research upon which this paper is based. Where we use only the terms 'Deaf' or 'deaf', we are referring to the specific differentiated meanings outlined above.

Spaces of exclusion: language and processes of marginalisation

Home

Some 95% of D/deaf people are born into hearing families (Bullis et al, 1997). Most parents of D/deaf young people are introduced to a definition of D/deafness by the medical profession, in which D/deafness is presented to them as 'not normal'. This medical model of disability (Shakespeare, 1993) works from the assumption that the individual body at fault needs to be treated or managed so that it might conform as much as possible to mainstream 'norms'. In other words, it sees bodily differences as merely medical rather than social problems (Gleeson, 1999; Parr and Butler, 1999). In the case of the D/deaf this usually means offering D/deaf children hearing-aid technologies (and, more recently, cochlear implants) and training in oral methods of communication (lip-reading and speech). Hearing parents often do not know the other options available to them and their child (such as the possibilities of using BSL as a method of communication in the family and signing-based educational opportunities), and so they follow advice from hearing professionals without question. Yet these early choices, particularly in terms of methods of communication, can profoundly shape young people's future biographies. Language choices and ability notably shape the extent to which young people understand and grasp the world around them (Corker, 1996). Their ability to participate in everyday spaces from homes and educational institutions to workplaces and communities follow from this.

The majority of hearing parents, let alone other relatives, do *not* learn BSL (Bullis et al, 1994). Rather, most families get by with a combination of oral forms of communication and improvised gesture. Even where hearing families are very supportive, communication barriers can exclude D/deaf young people from everyday household life and cut them off from the extended family, such that they often do not even know the names of, or understand their connections with, their relatives (Gregory et al, 1995; Kyle and Sutherland, 1995). Many of the interviewees described their frustration, hurt, and anger about the ways in which they were marginalised from family meals, visits from, or to, relatives and significant family events such as weddings and parties. These problems are compounded for D/deaf Asians who, because of their linguistic exclusion from the family, may struggle to develop an Asian identity in terms of culture and religion (Ahmad et al, 1998; Jones et al, 2001). They are taught *British* sign language and often have no understanding of Asian languages. It is virtually impossible to find BSL interpreters who can work in languages other than English. Therefore, young D/deaf Asians cannot fully access their religions.

> **Liam**: "Well my Mum and Dad both spoke and of course I didn't have a clue what they were talking about ... they looked for a special school for Deaf kids ... so I was sent there and they taught me sign language but my Mum doesn't sign and my Dad doesn't sign ..."
>
> **Interviewer**: "So how did you communicate with your Mum and Dad ...?"
>
> **Liam**: "... they'd use gesture and so I didn't have a clue what they were talking about [edit]. It was hard, it was hard to understand it, so you know they' go to a pub. I wouldn't understand what was going on, and they do, you know they gesture I don't know, I'm going for a drink and I'd have to try and guess."

> **Bernice**: "it can be a problem being at home, not understanding what's going on. I really wish I had a Deaf Islam club that I could go to, where everybody's talking and chatting [in BSL], having fun and you'd understand what's was going on, at home they're having a good time but I just don't know what's going on, you know I have my life at college, it finished at five o'clock, I go home, I change my clothing and then you've got the, the Muslim gatherings and the family gatherings. And I don't have access to that, I really wish I could get that and there isn't such a thing, and there isn't ... even a building for an Islamic Deaf club at the moment."

Many of those interviewed have particularly distant relationships with their hearing fathers. This reflects the fact that in most households it is mothers who do the lion's share of the child-care and emotional work in families (Charles and Kerr, 1988; Dyck, 1990; England, 1996; Valentine, 1997), and it is therefore mothers who usually take responsibility for developing ways of communicating with D/deaf children and providing support for them. Fathers make much less effort to do so, reflecting their general modest levels of participation in everyday family life (Valentine, 1997). Young D/deaf people's relationships with hearing brothers and sisters are also often tense. Although many D/deaf children develop their own ways of communicating with hearing siblings these relationships are often strained by jealousy if the D/deaf child is perceived as getting more attention from the mother. Although, as we explain in the following section, maternal support can play a crucial role in enabling D/deaf young people to maximise their own potentials, close mother–child bonds can also encourage D/deaf young people to delay their transitions to independence, resulting in an overextended relationship of dependency upon the family. Carolyn and Tessa describe some of these complex family dynamics:

> **Carolyn**: "With my Mum she was very [Deaf] aware, she became a social worker for Deaf anyway, so she was very aware like [of] the Deaf community and Deaf although she could hear herself ... [we] still have a very good relationship. My Dad's the opposite, my Dad's very oral, he didn't believe in sign language, he thought that it would damage speech. And also a man, you know, image I'm different, like normal children that was important [edit] when I was a young person my Dad actually no one-on-one conversation. I talk to him and everything, my Dad goes 'yeah', 'no' ... if he's trying to tell me something, maybe the name of a road, like say he will say F for funny, A for Apple and I had to work it out you know ... it wasn't ideal at all and because of that I don't visit him [her parents have now separated] and he visits me twice a year, maybe only once a year."
>
> **Tessa**: "... she's [her sister] three years younger than me ... there was a lot of rivalry, not between me and her, it's more, she's always felt that my Mum and Dad was paying more attention to me because of my deafness than they did to her ... every now and then she sort of brings it up and says oh you, you're favourised ... more than me type of thing."

As a result the hearing family home can be a paradoxical space for young D/deaf people. On the one hand, it can be a very supportive, protective, and safe environment. On the other hand, the home can also be an isolating and lonely space where young D/deaf people struggle to develop a sense of their own identity and with it their self-esteem.

When hearing young people's needs cannot be met in the family they usually have a range of alternative agencies to which they can turn including social workers, counselling services, citizen's advice, health promotion organisations, and telephone help lines. Yet D/deaf young people can be alienated from each of these forms of support. Whereas for hearing children different social workers take on the contrasting roles of being agents of support and agents of control (for example, dealing with child protection issues), Social Workers with D/deaf People (SWDP) are expected to fulfill both functions. This deters some parents from taking up the help they can offer because they are suspicious of SWDPs' intentions and fearful that their children may be taken away from them. For the families of young Asian D/deaf people these fears can be compounded by their lack of knowledge of the welfare service, and by the discriminatory practices of service providers who often have little knowledge or understanding of their specific needs (Jones et al, 2001). In this way, young Asian D/deaf people, who may already be disadvantaged, can be further cut off from appropriate support (Ahmad et al, 1998; Jones et al 2001; Taylor and Meherali, 1991).

Likewise, BSL using young D/deaf people are also cut off from many forms of support and assurance because they are usually unwilling or unable to use interpreters in intimate situations such as counselling or medical consultations where confidentiality is crucial. In this way, problems such as anorexia, alcoholism, HIV-positive status, and domestic violence, can go unrecognised and unaddressed. This is particularly problematic because young D/deaf people frequently miss out on safe-sex education and a range of informal information about other personal issues that hearing children pick up from the media and from talking to their peers. Their consequent naivety can render D/deaf young heterosexual women and young gay men vulnerable to older hearing men. Clive Nevis, an interpreter who works for an out-reach team on a community bus, describes some of the young people he has met:

> **Clive Nevis**: "See an Asian girl, a 15 year old who's very young, 15 year erm, what they say really Deaf kids can be 3 or 4 years behind their age (in terms of language skills and understanding) ... she's so attractive ... she's got no idea whatsoever ... she was asking the most basic questions really, no idea about contraception, no idea about how she would...she ran the risk oh dear, got no idea about sexually transmitted diseases, no idea about erm drugs, no idea about alcohol, we were spending hours just going through this stuff, but the problem that I had [as an interpreter] with that is the linguistic problems of getting something over to a person that doesn't understand."

Education

Communication problems are equally evident in educational institutions (Foster and Holcomb, 1990; Foster, 1996; Watson et al, 1999). Our interviewees were educated in a range of different environments including: Deaf boarding schools (either oral or BSL), partial-hearing units (PHUs), special schools, and mainstream schools. Some also went on to college and/or university.

Although there were some problems in all of these different institutions, processes of marginalisation were most evident in mainstream schools. These are supposed to be inclusive, yet often fail to change their organisation and structures to accommodate D/deaf young people's different modes of communication, learning strategies, and culture. There is generally a lack of Deaf awareness throughout schools, and teachers and other pupils rarely have any knowledge of BSL. As a result, many D/deaf pupils find it difficult to participate in mainstream classrooms.

Both hearing teachers and careers officers commonly have very low expectations of D/deaf pupils. This is reflected in their limited efforts at effective communication, and inappropriate decisionmaking on behalf of their D/deaf pupils. For example, our interviewees described the way that staff often abdicated responsibility for teaching them to communication support workers (CSWs) who were only supposed to be there to help D/deaf pupils to participate in regular lessons. Some D/deaf young people also recalled being withdrawn from academic classes, particularly English and modern languages; being channelled into practical courses such as art; and being sent on undemanding and inappropriate work-experience placements. Not surprisingly, educational underachievement is commonplace (Decaro and Egleston-Dodd, 1982; Watson et al, 1999). Many young D/deaf people lack exposure to, or awareness of, the range of possible career options open to them and find themselves pigeonholed into stereotypical work.

> **Bernice**: "... the staff would be having a talk with each other and decided that when 'I was 12 or 13 I should drop English'. I wanted to carry on with it but they decided for me that I should drop it [later she continued] I got my timetable and I said 'what's happening here? There's no English', they said 'oh we've dropped it', and I said 'well why is that?' They said 'well you know you're deaf, how are you going to manage it'. I was really furious and I was upset too, it took me a while to get over it."

> **Interviewer**: "... did you ever go on a work placement?"
> **Karl**: "Hilltop farm, the milk factory."
> **Interviewer**: "What did you have to do?"
> **Karl**: "... look at the milk and everything, packing them in lorries and that, checking it. It was the teacher's choice it wasn't my choice."
> **Interviewer**: "What did you want to do?"
> **Karl**: "I wanted to do painting and decorating but they didn't, they put me in the milk factory for one week, crap."

A similar pattern is evident at college or university where, for D/deaf students who lack oral skills, underestimation of their abilities is particularly common. This again can lead to a narrowing of their options and to them being directed into less demanding courses. As a result, many of those interviewed did not feel that they had reached their full academic potential—a finding which compares with other studies that have shown low levels of English literacy amongst the adult D/deaf population (Powers et al, 1998).

D/deaf young people who use BSL commonly receive inappropriate levels of signing support at school and in further education because institutions can cut their costs by employing a CSW or person with stage 1 or 2 BSL qualifications rather than a specialist teacher of the D/deaf or a professional interpreter. Even where institutions have the budget and will to provide appropriate language support for D/deaf students, they can struggle to do so because of the national shortage of interpreters. These usually have to be booked well in advance, and they may have to cancel appointments to cover emergencies. Other common problems include D/deaf students on different courses requiring interpreters simultaneously, a reluctance among interpreters to cover unsocial lecture times, and a lack of interpreters who are able to cover technical subjects such as engineering and computing. In further or higher education institutions, communication or interpreting services are often employed on a piecemeal basis and so students find it difficult to build up established ways of working with particular individuals.

Support services in further and higher education are generally individually focused, and as such are responsive to those who can advocate for themselves (usually those from professional middle-class families). Those without the resources to do so can fall through the net. This means that professional support systems can aggravate pre-existing patterns of disadvantage. Notably, young people with poorer communication skills, low self-esteem, or who do not receive support from their families, and therefore are most in need of support from social agencies, are least well equipped to access these resources.

Indeed, there is no statutory duty on local education authorities (LEAs) to provide support for D/deaf young people's post-16 education. Where such support is provided it is at the discretion of the LEA, and often depends on the political commitment of individual service providers to continue some level of support for D/deaf students. Yet late language development (which can be exacerbated by late diagnosis and lack of family support) means that the D/deaf are more likely to be behind their hearing peers academically and therefore to need post-16 support to continue their education.

Further education colleges can bid to LEAs for extra resources for disabled students. Some regard D/deaf students as a bonus because they can obtain these resources while minimising their expenditure by employing a CSW for a group of students. In different LEAs the procedure for requesting support varies, as do the ways in which and by whom, allocation decisions are made. Resource provision can be a geographical lottery with no equity or parity between those who live in different areas.

As a result, individuals' choices of college or university are often shaped by where appropriate support is available rather than by the suitability of the academic courses on offer. D/deaf students often cluster in colleges that have a good reputation. Although this has positive aspects in creating a social network of D/deaf young people who can support each other, it can act to narrow the educational opportunities of D/deaf young people.

> **Eleanor**: "I did art and design at [name] College and carried on, stayed at [name of local town], and went to [name] University, because of the support that was provided there, and also again there was no real choice for the university, there isn't much choice because you have to think, right will they give me support? Or will there be a Deaf community there? And if I go to a different university where they've never met a D/deaf person before, will there be any Deaf awareness, will I be provided with the right support or will there be problems?"

Of the D/deaf people we interviewed who had received mainstream secondary education there were very high levels of distress, isolation, bullying, and experiences of persistent marginalisation from school culture. Hearing teachers often failed to recognise this or to respond to it in appropriate ways.

> **Bernice**: "... from 11 to 15 there was a lot of fighting, a lot of people getting at me, a lot of stress, a lot of arguments, and the teachers were hopeless we got no help. I used to get really, really irritated, people would really get at me, hearing kids would be getting at me, deaf kids were fine ... but the hearing people would be horrible to me and really laughing at me and teasing me. I really didn't like it."

Although this level of harassment is less evident in further and higher education, D/deaf students are often not prepared for the loneliness that can come with student life (Charlson et al, 1992; Murphy and Newlon, 1987). The size of higher education institutions is very daunting for many young D/deaf people. Although they get support in lectures, there is a whole range of more informally delivered information that they cannot access. Hearing staff do not appreciate how much information students pick up from general conversations (for example, timetable changes, how the library system works, the importance of noticeboards, etc) from which D/deaf young people can be excluded. Moreover, many D/deaf students miss out on the wider aspects of university life because they do not have interpreters to accompany them to clubs, societies, students' union meetings, etc (Charlson et al, 1992; Murphy and Newlon, 1987). Attending specialist groups such as lesbian and gay groups and religious societies can be particularly important for D/deaf young people to develop and articulate other aspects of their identities. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that social isolation was a more common cause of our D/deaf informants dropping out of courses than were academic problems.

Work

The picture is not much better in hearing workplaces where there is usually a lack of Deaf awareness or signing fluency amongst the hearing staff (Young et al, 2000). This can mean that it is hard for D/deaf people to get interviews, and these are often conducted in a hearing way. As a result, there are high levels of unemployment, and underemployment amongst the D/deaf population (Corker, 1998).

Within institutions the D/deaf generally receive little support. Many channels of communication (both formal and informal) are not equally accessible to D/deaf and hearing staff (Corker, 1998; Young et al, 2000). Interpreters are never or only infrequently provided, and the responsibility is always on the D/deaf person to find out how the institution works and to seek out their own training or support. Indeed, school does not appear to prepare D/deaf young people very well for the hearing world (Kyle, 1996). Some D/deaf young people do not pick up the same understandings of workplace culture, the dominance of clock-time, etc from participation in everyday life in the way that most hearing young people do. During their school years D/deaf children also have a lot provided for them (for example, taxis to school, someone to book their interpreters). This is not necessarily good preparation for the worlds of higher education or work, where the emphasis is on self-reliance and self-discipline. Hence some young people experience 'transition shock' when, at 16 or 18, they are suddenly thrust from the relatively protected environment of school into hearing workplace environments. A lack of 'hearing awareness' among D/deaf people can also cause tensions in the workplace as communication styles, body language, and facial expressions can be wrongly interpreted. A failure to recognise the professional and social hierarchies that exist at work can mean that some D/deaf people appear to behave inappropriately (Silo, 1997).

Interviewees described significant levels of bullying, harassment, and discrimination in a range of different workplace environments. D/deaf people experience social isolation and exclusion from work activities (such as meetings or union events) in the same way that they do at school (Corker, 1998; Foster, 1992; Young et al, 2000). In some cases interviewees had been deliberately exploited by hearing colleagues. For example, one woman described how she was working on piece-rates but did not understand what this meant. When she finished her own quota quickly, she was told by her coworkers to finish their tasks rather than doing extra of her own which would have earned her a bonus.

Given the lack of support and awareness to encourage the integration of D/deaf people into hearing institutions, it is not surprising that young people sometimes choose to go on to benefits, withdrawing into the D/deaf community, instead of seeking paid employment in the hearing world. This can fasten D/deaf people into a cycle of poverty and dependency.

Community

Like the home, the Deaf community can be a paradoxical space for some D/deaf young people. On the one hand, Deaf clubs can be very welcoming and supportive environments that provide an important alternative form of social commitment for Deaf people. For many young D/deaf people from hearing families the Deaf Club provided their first exposure to BSL, a source of information and advice about both the Deaf and hearing worlds, friendship and a positive sense of identity or belonging. A lack of contact with the Deaf community can itself be a cause of marginalisation for some young people because they are isolated from this sort of information and support and do not develop a positive sense of a Deaf identity and self-esteem.

On the other hand, the positive features of Deaf space can lead some young people to drift into separatism from the hearing world with all the economic marginalisation and social disadvantage that this entails. Moreover, like any 'community', the very ideal of unity can suppress other differences or generate exclusions (Young, 1990). As the quotations below illustrate, D/deaf people who prefer to or can only use oral communication skills, or have cochlear implants, can experience exclusion from Deaf space. Likewise, D/deaf people with other aspects of 'difference' as part of their identity such as D/deaf lesbians and gay men, and D/deaf Asians can experience marginalisation from Deaf community spaces (Taylor, 1999; Taylor and Meherali, 1991). There can also be distinct tensions (often played out in the spaces of Deaf clubs) between professionally employed D/deaf people who are commonly bilingual and work in the hearing world and more politically identified Deaf people who may be more separatist in their lifestyles and identities. That said, it is important to recognise that individuals can and do move between such identities over time and in different spaces. Eleanor and Peter describe their experiences:

> **Eleanor**: "... the Deaf community, well I have to be careful what I say about the Deaf community because of all the BSL versus oral debate. I know there's a lot of history about that and very old fashioned attitudes, there's I think the BSL have got a bit of a grudge against oral users. ... so I have to be careful what I say

> really, I have to be careful because once they found out that I'm from an oral family and that I've been brought up in an oral system, then basically I'm given a pretty hard time. [Later she explains] I don't fit into 100 per cent of the Deaf world, I'm 100 per cent Deaf in terms of my identity [Eleanor defines herself as Deaf with a big D but is not accepted as such by the Deaf community because of her oral background], but not in terms of fitting into the Deaf world because I don't agree with a lot of things that are held within the Deaf community, a lot of political issues, things like that I don't agree with their views."
>
> **Peter**: "I am gay, and I went to [name of Deaf club] and they all know now, and they all accept me for who I am and they don't have a problem with that ... now some Deaf clubs know, you know, if gay or lesbian people come in, they'll, they'll then go off in a group and they'll exclude you know gay and lesbian people because they think that they'll tarnish them ... some Deaf people in a group, you know if a gay or lesbian person'll come along some of them will fight them or punch them because of their sexuality."

The evidence of this section of our paper is that D/deaf young people encounter many common processes of marginalisation. These include, paradoxically, both extended dependence upon, but also exclusion from, hearing families; inappropriate or inadequate school and workplace support; the underestimation of their abilities and channelling into undemanding educational courses and employment roles; social exclusion and bullying (at school or work and sometimes within the Deaf community); and uneven access to resources and social support.

However, although many of our interviewees felt that as a consequence they have not reached their full potential, some of our informants have made very successful transitions into adulthood. In the following section we therefore explore how, and why, despite experiencing some similar processes of marginalisation individuals respond in different ways with different outcomes.

Individually together: narratives of 'resistance'

Giddens (1991, page 53) argues that self-identity is "the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography". In other words that individuals make sense of events in their lives and weave them into narratives that give them a sense of meaning or coherence. Giddens (1991, page 54) goes on to state that "A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour nor—important though this is—in the reactions of others, but the capacity to keep a particular narrative going." It is these stories that we each tell about ourselves that help to explain why some individuals experience or respond to processes of marginalisation in different ways, as the following four accounts demonstrate.

Anatol is 19 years old. He was born and spent his early childhood in Russia where he received a good education at a specialist school for the D/deaf. In the face of mounting economic and social problems, and in the context of Anatol's ill health, his mother decided that the two of them should migrate to the United Kingdom. Although Anatol had no knowledge of either written or spoken English or BSL when he arrived in the country, he is now studying for a BTec in graphic design at a college of further education in the Midlands. He is highly self-motivated, confident, and independent. These are attributes that he credits his family, particularly his mother, with instilling in him. Anatol has a very planned biography: he knows who he wants to be and is actively working to achieve this. He took the initiative to research the various college options open to him (in terms both of the course and of the support available at different institutions) so that he could make an informed decision about his education.

When his current course is completed he plans to go on to university, with the eventual goal of becoming an illustrator and travelling and working around the world. Anatol recognises that his short-term decisions and behaviour have long-term implications. He is very dedicated, organised and hard working, contrasting his own approach to his studies with those of his peers, whom he criticises for missing classes and assignment deadlines and for spending too much time and money drinking and partying. In this sense Anatol is quite strategic, regarding working hard and saving as short-term sacrifices for long-term gains. He appears to have little or no sense of external constraints, such as discrimination in or from the hearing world, either upon his past or in terms of his planned biography. Rather, he regards his future as entirely a product of his own agency.

Eleanor (aged 22), like Anatol, has been successful in the hearing world. Yet, in contrast to Anatol's individualised biography, Eleanor's narrative is constructed in terms of a familial effort to resist or overcome disadvantages as a Deaf person. From when she was diagnosed as deaf aged 2, Eleanor's parents have dedicated themselves to supporting her. Her mother did a correspondence course to learn how to teach her to lip read. Eleanor was also provided with an oral education though she, and her hearing parents and a sister, have all subsequently learned BSL (though she has a difficult relationship with her brother a non-BSL user, who also makes little effort to communicate with her orally). At primary level she was educated in a mainstream school where she only received support from a teacher for the Deaf once a week. However, Eleanor's parents decided she would need more support at secondary level and sent her to an oral boarding school for the Deaf. She flourished in this environment where she passed GCSE examinations and planned to study A-levels including English at a college (which she and her parents chose on the basis of the support it offered for D/deaf students). The college, however, refused to accept Eleanor on the English course on the grounds that it would be too difficult for a D/deaf person and that they would not be able to provide appropriate support. Thus Eleanor was channelled into art and design courses, although her mother did fight for her to be given additional English support.

At the end of Eleanor's college courses she went on to university to study textile design. Here she initially experienced a transition shock, moving from college where she received full-time support from a BSL interpreter that was organised for her, to university where she was expected to organise and book her own interpreters in the context of a large and less structured institution. Despite initial difficulties accessing formal and informal sources of information, she persevered and settled down academically and developed a good social network. On the basis of a graduation exhibition of her work she was offered a job. Now aged 22, she is developing a career, owns her own home, and is in a stable relationship with a D/deaf man from a Deaf family.

Yet, despite identifying as Deaf, Eleanor does not feel that she fits into the Deaf world. She describes being 'given a hard time' within the Deaf community at the college she attended and at her local Deaf club because she was brought up orally, supports the principle of oral education, and is successful in the hearing world. Although Eleanor believes that she has reached her potential, her narrative is nonetheless one of success achieved as a result of overcoming (with the support of her family) external constraints both in the hearing and in the Deaf worlds.

Like Eleanor, Liam's narrative also reflects an awareness of encountering processes of marginalisation. But whereas Eleanor's is a story of triumph over adversity, Liam's narrative contains less sense of agency. When Liam was of primary age he went to a special school for the Deaf where he learned BSL. His parents could not be persuaded to do the same and, because Liam could not speak throughout his childhood, he struggled to communicate with them. This situation was exacerbated when his parents separated and he was forced to live with his mother, even though he had a better relationship and pattern of communication with his father. Liam's childhood was marked by loneliness. He was isolated from hearing children in the local neighbourhood, and at 11 was sent to a mainstream school where he was bullied by hearing children.

Not only did Liam receive little familial support, but he is also critical of the lack of support he received from school, careers officers, and social workers with D/deaf people. At 15 he wanted to study computerised graphic design but was told he did not have the appropriate qualifications, so he researched and found for himself an alternative print course at a local college, for which he applied on his own initiative. At the college, for the first time in his life, he is receiving appropriate support including the services of a BSL interpreter and English tuition.

Although Liam (now aged 16) is currently very happy, is enjoying his course, and has made some hearing friends, he has no clear sense of his future career plans and is skeptical about his chances of getting employment in a hearing environment. Moreover, he is unconfident that he would fit into a hearing environment because he cannot speak and struggles to understand what is going on in the hearing world. He recalled several stories of encountering discrimination and intolerance from hearing people in everyday situations such as on buses and in shops. Liam is more at home in the Deaf world, with the exception of a few college friends, his social world is entirely Deaf and he is active in his local Deaf club.

Liam's narrative of identity is one of resilience in the face of marginalisation at home, school, and in everyday public space. He is reflexively aware of the opportunities he has been denied and how he has been stifled, and is critical of the lack of support he has received. In contrast to Anatol and Eleanor, he is limited by the constraints of what he sees as not possible and has developed alternative forms of social commitment.

Lisa, like Liam, is also 16. Her parents separated when she was quite young and she grew up with her mother and brother, neither of whom could sign. Although Lisa learnt to lip-read she cannot speak, and always felt on the outside of the family. She was sent to a Deaf unit in a hearing school where hearing children bullied her. Lisa found these communication problems very stressful and when she was 15 her father, who is training as a BSL interpreter and has married a Deaf woman, persuaded her to move and live with him and his new family. She is now involved in Deaf sports teams and the local Deaf club.

In contrast to Liam, who is reflexively aware of the marginalisation that he has encountered, Lisa has a more fatalistic attitude. She repeatedly used the phrases "I wasn't bothered", or "I'm not bothered" to describe her attitude to her school, her school work, the fact that her mother will not learn to sign, that she has little contact with her brother, and what she will do when she leaves school. She appears to take little responsibility for planning her own biography but, rather, drifts from day to day letting the future take care of itself. In McCrone's (1994, page 69) terms she is "getting by": coping in the short term on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis, eschewing any imagined future. It is a position that contrasts strongly with Anatol's more strategic, planned, longer term perspective. There is also a sense that for Lisa there may be some payoffs in her fatalistic attitude and failure to take responsibility for her own life, in that it may be a way of seeking or gaining attention from her father. In these terms, her 'getting by' might represent a rational choice in the face of her particular social circumstances.

The different responses of Anatol, Eleanor, Liam, and Lisa to some of the common experiences they have shared as D/deaf young people in a hearing world highlight a number of points. Although their experiences, for example, of being denied English tuition, being channelled into inappropriate courses, denied careers support, and bullied or isolated in different social environments, are similar, they are nonetheless not the same. Each of these young people have had access to differential levels of resources or support which have shaped the ways that they have interpreted, made sense of, and responded to these processes of marginalisation. In this sense, whereas Anatol and Lisa seem quite oblivious to the potential barriers they encounter, for Eleanor it has been an impetus to achieve, and for Liam experiences of marginalisation provide an explanation for why he has not been able to realise some of his personal goals. In other words, common predicaments are never truly shared.

The young people's responses to marginalisation are equally diverse. Any active response or challenge by nondominant groups or individuals to discrimination is often labelled 'resistance' (though see Katz, in press; Pile and Keith, 1997; Sharp et al, 2000). This term is used to embrace everything from political resistance and collective coordination (especially against the state) in terms of strikes, rallies, armed struggles, to various individual forms of transgression that are not directly confrontational, such as spitting in the boss's tea, shirking work, skiving school, and so on. The term resistance, therefore, includes both material and symbolic practices that operate across a range of geographical scales. Indeed, British sociologists have argued that working-class youth subcultures are an example of resistance through cultural expression (Hall and Jeffordson, 1976). In *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hall and Jeffordson, 1976) various writers (such as Clarke, Corrigan, Hebdige, Jeffordson) demonstrate that 'deviant' public styles, epitomised by Teds in the 1950s, Mods in the 1960s, and Punks in the 1970s, are not just forms of adolescent rebellion against parents. Rather they are statements of working-class identities that symbolise young people's sense of marginality and give them a sense of control over their own lives. At the same time, these styles can also have material effects, for example, by enabling young people to take up or occupy public space on the streets, provoking what Cohen (1972) has dubbed 'moral panics' amongst the middle classes. Although other writers have argued that such challenges to hegemony are rather oblique given that these subcultures can reproduce working-class young people's class position. For example, in his famous study *Learning to Labour*, Willis (1977) showed that, although a 'lads' subculture in the classroom represented a form of resistance to schooling it also contributed to undermining the young men's educational opportunities, so potentially trapping them into a future as unskilled manual labourers.

As such, resistance is somewhat of a weak or problematic category because it is an umbrella term that conceals a diverse range of practices, degrees of intentionality, and reflexivity that might be more effectively differentiated (Katz, in press). For example, the actions of Eleanor and her family are the most obvious demonstration of *resistance* in the sense that they have actively confronted and fought against the processes of marginalisation that Eleanor has encountered. Whereas Liam's attitude and behaviour is perhaps more appropriately labelled *resilience*, in that he has survived difficult circumstances but is less proactive in trying to challenge negative experiences and more fatalistic about the limitations that he anticipates encountering in the future. Anatol's self-motivation and determination represent the sort of agency that is often dubbed resistance, yet his apparent obliviousness to, or failure to acknowledge, the obstacles that he might encounter mean that his actions might be more appropriately characterised as *resolve*. Finally, although Lisa does not appear to be in any sense resistive, her lack of care or concern about the processes of marginalisation she has faced, and is facing, is in its own way resistance in the form of *obstinacy*. She is authoring her own identity beyond the control of hearing adults in a way that bears some parallels with Willis's (1977) study of young working-class men.

Whereas Eleanor and Anatol's forms of 'resisting' marginalisation have had positive outcomes for them, Liam and Lisa's responses have the potential to lead to their further marginalisation. For example, in the face of a lack of support and problems integrating in hearing institutions, some D/deaf people choose to go on to benefits and retreat into a fairly separatist lifestyle within the Deaf community. Both Liam and Lisa show signs that they may potentially follow this path. Yet, by resisting hearing discrimination in this way, Deaf people can trap themselves into a cycle of poverty and dependency.

The four stories presented here also demonstrate that processes of marginalisation and resistance in the four different contexts described—home, education, work, and D/deaf community—can be linked, sequential, or consequential. The isolation and lack of support both Liam and Lisa have experienced at home have undoubtedly contributed to their lack of motivation at school. In turn, their schooling experiences obviously have potential consequences for their employment opportunities. Yet processes of marginalisation can also be spatially or temporally discrete or contradictory. For example, Eleanor has very supportive home and work environments. As a child her dominant experiences of marginalisation were encountered in educational institutions. As an adult it is paradoxically in the Deaf community, a space in which she might have expected to be supported, that she has experienced most discrimination and hostility. Other interviewees also described being marginalised in the Deaf world because of their lesbian or gay sexuality or Asian cultural identity. In this way some of those we interviewed are multiply positioned as the excluded and excluders, in the sense that although they are being marginalised within the hearing world they also discriminate against others within the Deaf world.

Longitudinal work on young people has tended to focus on questions of childhood causation in adulthood. In other words, development is presumed to occur in a linear manner, so that future attainments or failures can be directly associated with the past. This paints a rather bleak determinist perspective of young people's prospects as they make the transition to adulthood. In contrast, the evidence of this section suggests that processes of marginalisation and resistance are not inevitable, nor do they have the same impact on, or provoke the same responses from, different individuals. Rather, processes of marginalisation emerge in practice and may therefore vary as much as the contexts within which they are experienced. Moreover, although our narratives of identity are often fairly robust in that "a sense of self-identity is often securely enough held to weather major tensions or transitions in the social environments within which the person moves", paradoxically it is also true that they are fragile because "the biography the individual holds in mind is only one 'story' among many other potential stories that could be told about the development of the self" (Giddens 1991, page 55). We each engage in revisions of our subjective account of our life histories.

Given the multiple and fluid ways that individuals can interpret and respond to processes of marginalisation, the key to understanding, and therefore preventing, negative outcomes appears to lie less in what happens to individuals than in what qualities, capacities, or resources some individuals have that enable them to deal positively and successfully with adverse circumstances. It is to this we turn in the final section of this paper.

Making a difference: resources for 'resistance'

It is well established in the literature on young people that "Youth transitions are deeply influenced and sustained by the family, its status and its resource systems—economic, social, cultural and affective" (Allatt, 1997, page 93). Certainly, the evidence of our interviews is that maternal support is often one of the most crucial factors in enabling D/deaf young people to resist successfully processes of marginalisation. It is mothers (mainly middle-class) who have taken it upon themselves to learn to communicate with their children, who have researched different language and educational options, who have made initial contact with the Deaf community on their child's behalf, and who have often fought for their children's rights, particularly in educational settings. Important additional support is often provided by siblings, though more rarely by fathers or extended members of the family.

The sort of support offered by the family is significant in a number of different ways. Being able to communicate is crucial in enabling young people to understand the world around them and to raising their self-esteem, confidence, and expectations. Family advocacy allows D/deaf young people to locate information and to make informed choices, to resist negative channelling and to access limited resources. In particular, professional support systems are responsive to those who can advocate for themselves (largely educated, professional, middle-class parents). Familial contacts and social networks can also be important in opening up employment opportunities (Bowlby et al, 1998) while families play a general role in developing young people's independence, self-motivation, and sense of responsibility (Allatt, 1993).

> **Tessa**: "Oh my Mum pushed me all the way, I firmly believe that, that D/deaf people, in order for them to survive really well, I think they have to have strong family support, and if you don't have strong family support I don't think you survive as well or you get no skills or the opportunity to get those skills as well. My Mum has always been behind me, she was always you know, she fought for me, pushed me, and you know spent time doing my English er, getting me to speak words properly and that sort of thing."

> **Lara**: "When I was 15 I wanted to do GCSEs [national examinations] cos my [hearing] sisters were doing GCSEs so I thought well you know I want to do the same. And the school said no that I couldn't because I was deaf, and my parents yet again had to fight [they had already fought to get her into the school and taught BSL], they've constantly had to fight for me throughout my life. And finally they agreed to let me take GCSEs."

Yet, as the examples of Anatol, Eleanor, Liam, and Lisa, above, demonstrate, families differ both in their willingness and in their ability to mobilise emotional and practical support. Notably, as Furlong and Cartmel (1997) have pointed out, despite the fact that collectivist traditions have weakened, social structures such as class do continue to shape life chances. In particular, the relationship between class and educational performance persists. It is a lack of, or a fear of, education that appears to deter many hearing parents from being willing to learn to sign. Likewise, linguistic and cultural differences and limited educational opportunities mean that most British Asian parents do not learn BSL. These parents are thus not able to communicate with their children, nor do they usually have the skills to advocate for them and help them navigate choices (Jones et al, 2001). In this way as Anatol, Eleanor, Liam, and Lisa's stories imply, preexisting familial patterns of advantage or disadvantage have an important influence on how young people interpret and respond to being D/deaf.

D/deaf friends or adult mentors can act as an important supplement to, or as a substitute for, family support. Deaf people in hearing families rarely come into contact with BSL users and so do not otherwise have access to Deaf culture (Sutherland and Kyle, 1993). Meeting successful D/deaf people was important to many of them in making them aware of possible educational, career, or personal routes and in providing information and practical help. In the face of adversity young people commonly claimed, therefore, that it was D/deaf friends or D/deaf people that they admired encouraging them not to give up that were the most important factors in enabling them to achieve positive outcomes. Although friends or mentors can offer practical support, high-profile D/deaf adults in public life can also be inspirational, although young people commented on the lack of D/deaf adults who are visible in this way.

> **Tessa**: "I find that I have to have like a support network [to cope with working in a hearing environment], so I have my friends who are D/deaf and then when I get down I phone [using type talk] one of them and start blubbing ... I think you're always battling away ... you're trying to fit in and trying to do the same as everybody else and then all of a sudden you sort of think I can't cope anymore, so you go on a downer and then you come back up again."

> **Carolyn**: "I mean there was one D/deaf, well she was an ex-pupil, Sandra, she came back [to the school] and you know she was talking to us about what you, its like to be at university ... I remember she said it would be very lonely and hard for two weeks but university you could through anything so don't give up ... whereas the teacher kept saying you'll be fine, you'll have no problem, it'll be easy ... but cos she'd [Sandra] done it herself, she went through it herself I thought ... that first two weeks I hated it so I thought no keep going, I remember what she [Sandra] said to me and then after two weeks it started to improve."

A range of institutions and organisations including D/deaf societies, clubs, charities, and campaigning groups; sensory impairment teams; social workers with D/deaf people; and interpreting services can facilitate the development of mentors and practical support networks. The Internet is also emerging as an important means of facilitating D/deaf young people to access information, to communicate with hearing people, and to develop on-line D/deaf social networks at a range of scales. However, it is learning BSL, and therefore being able to communicate with other D/deaf people and to access the close-knit D/deaf world, that is the most effective way for many young D/deaf people to overcome social isolation and access a supportive social network, as both Liam and Lisa's stories illustrate. Not having the opportunity to do so can be as important a contributory source of marginalisation for D/deaf young people as is discrimination in the hearing world.

Above all, however, the biggest resource that would contribute to alleviating D/deaf young people's marginalisation is not something that needs to be provided for the D/deaf—rather it is a resource required by the hearing world. It is the inability of hearing people to sign that is the biggest obstacle to D/deaf young people's full participation in everyday life. This means that D/deaf people such as Eleanor who learn to communicate orally (as a result of their family and schooling biographies) have better resources to cope in the hearing world than exclusive BSL users such as Liam and Lisa who cannot speak (although Liam and Lisa's BSL skills give them the resources to access a positive sense of identity within the Deaf community). However, if BSL were to be recognised as an official language and all hearing people were introduced to it at school, all D/deaf people would have a more equal opportunity to participate in everyday life and therefore to construct the biographies of their choice.(5)

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(5) In 1998 the European Parliament called on member nations to recognise indigenous sign languages as official minority languages of their countries. However, BSL is still not fully recognised as a language of Britain, despite being the first language of over 70 000 people, and the preferred language of over 150 000 people. This has obvious implications for its status, for example, BSL is not taught in mainstream schools. The Deaf community is campaigning for official recognition of BSL, and holds annual protest marches.

Conclusion: 'structured individualisation'

In this paper we have argued that young D/deaf people face genuine communication problems which mean that they can be cut off from assurance and support within the family and from professional support workers (doctors, careers advisors, etc) and can struggle to reach their educational potential. The lack of D/deaf awareness and limited communication skills in the hearing world means that a whole range of educational, workplace, and public institutions are inaccessible for many D/deaf people. In the face of these processes of marginalisation, D/deaf communities provide alternative forms of social commitment. Yet many deaf young people born to hearing families do not receive information about BSL or know how to find the Deaf community. In this way, the marginalisation of D/deaf people is not just a product of the difficulties that they may have accessing spoken language in the hearing world; rather, it can also be a product of a lack of access to Deaf community and the sense of 'normalcy' and positive cultural image and self-identity that this can provide.

At the same time, however, we have argued that processes of marginalisation are not inevitable and that individuals interpret and respond to them in very different ways, producing very different outcomes. We have suggested that here it is particular resources or capacities—namely, family support, mentors, the D/deaf community, and language abilities—that can play an important part in enabling young people to achieve positive rather than adverse outcomes in the face of disadvantage.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. In terms of social theory, the case studies of Anatol and Eleanor that were presented in this paper appear to emphasise the importance of individual agency (in terms of independence, responsibility, and self-motivation) in successful strategies to resist marginalisation. Indeed, the contemporary emphasis on individualisation within the social sciences has tended to play down the impact of social structures on young people's biographies. However, there is a danger in seeing Anatol's or Eleanor's self-determination and positive educational and career paths as individualistic choices, rather than recognising the way that such behaviours have occurred within particular social contexts. Notably, in both cases, family resources and competencies have played an important part in shaping Anatol's and Eleanor's individual transitions. In this sense there are limits to individualised notions of self-determination. Our choices are clearly embedded in our relationships not only with our families but also with a whole range of significant others (peers, mentors, on-line and off-line 'communities', etc). Indeed, Beck (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001, page xxi) have already highlighted the contradiction between the concept of the individual and the reality that we are all 'self-*in*sufficient' in that we are bound to others through a whole range of ties and networks. As such, Roberts (1997, page 59) suggests that we can talk of "structured individualization".

Indeed, one consequence of individualisation is that, although we are all encouraged to pursue self-determination, there is a gap between this goal and our ability to cope with or control the social settings within which we operate that make this self-assertion ultimately unrealistic (Bauman, 2001). There is still a need to seek collective remedies to shared problems and inequalities. It is not enough to see the solution, for example, to young D/deaf people's marginalisation purely in terms of the need for individuals to become more motivated, to develop new skills, etc. Rather, it is important to recognise, for example, the constraints of the wider context of the hearing world within which D/deaf people must operate. At the same time, however, it is important to retain an awareness of the limits of shared experiences or common interests. In other words, it is necessary simultaneously to maximise and minimise claims to a shared D/deaf identity and experience.

For example, there is a range of support and resources that all young D/deaf people need access to in order to maximise their opportunities to become effective citizens. These include: the official recognition of BSL and its adoption in schools as a compulsory language; D/deaf mentors who can offer advice, support, and an awareness of D/deaf culture to D/deaf children within hearing families; an expansion of interpreting services, the provision of more specialist social workers with D/deaf people and D/deaf counsellors to provide appropriate support to D/deaf young people; the more effective provision of genuinely bilingual education for D/deaf people, and D/deaf awareness training for educational and workplace institutions where D/deaf people are present; access to the Internet; and so on. At the same time, however, it is important not to lose sight of differences within the D/deaf community and not to place too much emphasis on normative models. This means being sensitive to individuals' experiences, recognising the processes of marginalisation that occur *within* D/deaf communities and thinking about how access, outreach, delivery, and coordination of some forms of support might be individualised to facilitate this.

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