8

'At-Risk' Youth Sport Programmes: Another Way of Regulating Boys?

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Introduction

Community youth sport programmes often target boys who are considered 'at-risk' of failing at school or not transitioning to an 'ideal' adulthood, with the assumption that sport will 'save them from social alienation'. This chapter draws on literature which highlights that youth 'at-risk' sport-based programmes work as a form of governmentality (e.g., Coalter 2011; Curran 2010; Kelly 1998, 2007, 2011), and extends it by arguing that (1) such programmes reinforce the need for (self-) regulation among youth in this context[1]; (2) sport, rather than educational success,

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is positioned as a 'way out' of social marginalisation for 'at-risk' boys; and (3) such programmes can produce an attraction to certain aspects of being a young person 'at-risk'.

To support and exemplify these claims, we draw on ethnographic data collected by the lead author. Hutchesson (2014) examined seven community youth programmes, with many of them using the arts as a focal point, but there were two that incorporated sports. The broader aim of Hutchesson's study was to examine the ways in which the 'at-risk' label is designated to, negotiated and lived by young people (who are considered marginalised or disadvantaged) participating in rural New South Wales (NSW), Australia, community-based (arts/sports) programmes. Specifically, in this chapter, we discuss data Hutchesson collected at the regional NSW Youth 'At-Risk' School-partnered Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) programme, from two police youth workers (one male, one female) and seven male participants (aged 13–15 years) which included two Indigenous Australians and two Maori boys. All of the young boys were included in the programme due to their involvement in minor criminal behaviour, such as drug use and theft.[2]

Over a period of two months, Hutchesson (2014) collected data from participants (staff and young people) through participant observations (which involved one day per week participating in formal sessions, going on bus trips, having lunch together and playing sport) and informal interviews with youth workers and participants of the programme. The young boys were encouraged to use the researcher's video and audio recorder, as well as share or compose song lyrics, to express what was important to them. This programme used sport (touch football and kick boxing) and other physical activities (white water rafting, horse riding and go-carts/karts) as a way to improve relationships between local police and young people who had previous involvement in minor criminal activity.

The inclusion and emphasis of sport in this programme is particularly significant because all of the participants were identified as 'at risk' of dropping out of school and having little or no success in the school setting. In other words, sport, not education, appeared to be held up as the key to success for the boys in the programme. In this chapter, we consider Michel Foucault's (1983, 1990) notions of governmentality and technologies of the self/control and Stephen Lyng's (2005) theory of edgework to argue that the very programmes that are designed to counter 'risk' through

sport can actually work to maintain, create or celebrate risk. Thus, the boys who are involved in the programme feel even more alienated and disengaged from school and/or the workforce when they step outside of the 'at-risk' youth programme and return to these 'normalising' contexts.

At-risk Youth Programmes as a Form of Neoliberal Governance

There is growing concern emerging from research that youth 'at-risk' community-based programmes, particularly with a sports/arts focus, can be used as tools of neoliberal governance to keep young 'risky' people 'on track' (de St Criox 2010). Peter Kelly argued that governmentality is useful in understanding the various attempts to 'regulate young people's identities through the construction of populations of Youth at Risk' (1998: 10). In Foucault's (1991) view, 'governmentality means the complex[ity] of calculations, programmes, policies, strategies, reflections, and tactics that shape the conduct of individuals—"the conduct of conduct" for acting upon the actions of others in order to achieve certain ends' (cited in Besley 2010: 530). Governmentality involves 'governing the self' and 'governing others' (Lemke 2002: 49). It involves the 'how' of governing the state and how an individual governs their own subjectivity in this process—linking technologies of power or domination with technologies of the self (Besley 2010).

Taking this line of thought, educational and social policies that regard youth 'at-risk' sit here, coupled with funding requirements that dictate who is 'at-risk', and how the state should intervene. These are governmental technologies aimed at shaping the conduct of young people who are seen as not behaving within social norms—thus producing and managing certain young people as 'at-risk'. Bessant suggests the notion of risk 'appears to involve, in Foucault's terms, dividing practices that distinguish between those who are "at-risk" from certain "problems" and those who are not' (2001: 32). The need to define youth 'at-risk' and establish boundaries before governmental power can be exerted positions young people 'through the individualization of risk and the responsibilization of youth' (Curran 2010: 37). These strategies are ingrained within discourses of risk via neoliberal rationalities governing youth, where young people are understood as responsible for their negotiation of 'risky' situations.

Hickey-Moody's (2013) work highlighted that the success of youth 'at-risk' programmes (particularly with an arts and/or sports focus) are typically measured in terms of 'self-improvement' in line with neoliberal governance and self-regulation (e.g., Coalter 2005; Department of Culture and the Arts 2010; Dreezen 1992; Fraser-Thomas et al. 2005; Gibson and Anderson 2008). This approach can appropriate arts/sports as a self-salvation project where such practices 'emerge as active management and control of problem youth populations' (Hickey-Moody 2013: 62), and ultimately reinforce that youth 'at-risk' are the 'proper subjects' for such community-based programmes.

The main aims of the PCYC programme from Hutchesson's (2014) study focused on enhancing effective relationships between 'at-risk' youth and police, to alter the negative perceptions of the police that the young people may have held, and to encourage them to remain at school. The NSW *Police Service Youth Policy Statement,* that was in effect at the time of data collection, highlighted that 'partnerships between young people, the community and the NSW Police Service [are] aimed at assisting young people [to] develop the qualities to be responsible citizens and leaders and to avoid becoming offenders or victims of crime' (NSW Police Service 2005: 14). The notion of a transition from someone who is young and not responsible to someone who is a responsible (adult) citizen is evident. This focus on a life transition is also part of the neoliberal push to produce economically productive subjects that are not a burden on society or the judicial system. Moreover, the idea of the young people needing help to 'develop the qualities to be responsible' suggests the need for self-regulation of 'risky' behaviours and dispositions in order to steer clear of criminal activity—which places onus on the young people to change, but disregards other relational factors (e.g., family, peers, education, socioeconomic status, rurality, gender and Indigeneity) that may be at play in criminal risk-taking (Kelly 2011; te Riele 2004). This approach can be seen as an extension of (neoliberal) governance, where young people are singled out by police and school teachers through their 'riskiness', and are placed into programmes to help get them 'back on track'.

A strong theme emerging from Hutchesson's (2014) study was that schooling is cited in opposition to what youth workers do effectively (such as relate well to young people). This finding suggests that educational institutions are less likely to succeed in engaging certain groups of young

people than targeted youth programmes because of the traditional and common practices used in school classrooms, such as formal teacher-centred/led lessons and knowledge transmission (Ord 2008). The youth workers from the PCYC programme believed that their casual approach and interaction was imperative in creating and maintaining successful connections with the boys throughout the sessions. It appeared that when youth workers made young people aware that they were 'on their side' when it came to perceived unfair treatment by teachers at school, a strong connection and respect between youth workers and the young people was forged. Conversations with youth workers suggested that such programmes are places for the young boys to relax and feel comfortable with people who are not there to tell them what to do, how they should act and what they should know—places where they can have 'fun' and 'perhaps have respite from managing the risks in their lives' (Curran 2010: 71).

Curran highlights how the youth workers in her study were understood as resisting neoliberal governance when the goals of the programmes were about 'wellbeing, happiness, fun, and creative expression', as adopting this approach 'limits the extent to which their programs take aim at preventing future danger and harm through the management of at risk, in spite of what their program goals are officially mandated to be' (2010: 72). This finding points to a tension in Hutchesson's (2014) study where, although there is a clear sense of fun (creative expression and wellbeing) incorporated into the programmes' goals, the 'fun' activities are used to encourage self-regulation. So what may be viewed at first as a break from their 'risky' lives (or a form of resistance by the youth workers), becomes another form of (neoliberal) surveillance where the young people continue to manage their 'riskiness', while they are both constrained and enabled (as we discuss later) through the negotiation of their identity under the 'at-risk' label.

Kicking Your Way Out of a Hard Life to Success

Sport-based approaches in areas such as youth work tend to be based on the belief that sport provides positive activities for young people, particularly youth who are considered socially vulnerable, 'at-risk' and disenfranchised (Crabbé 2007; Feinstein et al. 2007; Spaaij 2009). Sports

are typically regarded as opportunities to engage young people actively across a range of issues (Haudenhuyse et al. 2013) with successful outcomes linked to health-related, educational and social elements (for example Coalter 2011; Fraser-Thomas et al. 2005; Gould and Carson 2008; Holt 2008).

Sports programmes are also used in an attempt to reduce youth crime. For example, Nichols (2005) provided a type of manual on 'how-to-do' sports programmes to 'reduce youth crime effectively', which was aimed at managers of programmes, policy makers, researchers and university students. Morris et al.'s (2003) research looked at 175 sport-based programmes across Australia and found that 81% targeted young people who were 'at-risk' of, or engaged with, drug-use and criminal activities. On the other hand, Coalter argued that the use of sport-based approaches as ways to alleviate risky issues faced by youth, 'are mostly guided by inflated promises and lack of conceptual clarity' (2011: 473). He suggested youth 'at-risk' are less likely to engage in sport and recreation, due to their life circumstances often presenting barriers to their participation (Colthart 1996), which may be part of the attraction of these programmes for 'at-risk' youth. Coalter contends that it is not clear why organisations (such as community-based youth programmes) 'assume that participation in particular sports programmes can have certain impacts on [the young] people participating in them' (2011: 473). In the UK setting, Tacon (2007) highlighted that the use of football (soccer) to help young people in regard to social inclusion is prevalent in sports literature, yet, in line with Coalter's (2011) assertions, Tacon claims that there is little research that rigorously evaluates the effectiveness (or critiques the implications) of football-based social inclusion projects.

Notably, it is boys who are often the targets of sporting activities in community-based programmes, as if it is a 'natural' fit for them. In other words, such approaches are based on an assumption that sport will address unruly male behaviour and male aggression, and it will intervene to steer 'risky' young men back on a productive pathway—the one linear pathway towards 'ideal adulthood' (Kelly 1998, 2007; te Riele 2004). This assumption points to the question raised in the title of our chapter: Are 'at-risk' youth community-based sport programmes

another way of regulating boys? In particular, we are interested in how sport is positioned as a 'way out' of a 'hard life' for boys who are 'at-risk' of dropping out of high school and engaging in minor criminal activity.

Hutchesson (2014) observed an underlying notion that sport was being positioned as a way out for boys through the PCYC programme activities, such as a session with a guest speaker discussing how drugs ruined his life. This man was once a professional footballer (rugby league) before his drug addiction caused his downfall and landed him in gaol. His discussion with the boys focused on how he had an extremely difficult life growing up, but footy was the only place he felt confident and positive about himself, and how his decision to take drugs ruined his chance of a football career that, as he told the boys, could have let him 'have it all' (i.e., fame, money, a nice house, fancy car, etc.). The PCYC police youth workers from Hutchesson's (2014) study (Lynne and Max[3]) did not specifically set up being a successful male sports player as a desirable subjectivity per se. However, by using sports (in particular 'footy'/ rugby league) to connect with the young people and change their negative perceptions of the police—to ultimately help prevent these young men from 'going down the wrong path'—the youth workers were using sport to reduce youth crime—they just did not do it deliberately or consciously.

Although the intention of the youth workers in inviting the guest speaker was to make the boys aware of the damage taking drugs can do, after that session a number of the boys in this programme talked to one another about 'footy as the way out'. For example, during lunch that day, there was talk about how good football is and how good they (themselves) were at it—they believed they were good enough to be professionals. So, this session with the guest speaker, in a sense, helped provide affirmation for their beliefs. There was also a session on boxing/kickboxing which was aimed at boosting self-confidence and building on their physical skills and, as Lynne suggests, it allowed the boys 'to do something positive for a change, [something] that they know they are good at or could be good at', implying that successful future selves could be found through these sports.

In each PCYC session, and in the daily touch-footy games, the idea of self-improvement/self-salvation became apparent, with the inference being made by youth workers that sport can transform negatively viewed identities into positive ones. Sport was positioned and accepted as a way out of situations (such as schooling) where riskiness identified them as 'undesirable', 'loser' subjects, but at the same time, sport, and especially the 'risky' behaviour associated with sport, was seen by the boys as a way to get famous; particularly to the young Indigenous boys in the programme.

The notion of any form of football as 'a way out' for Indigenous young men is a particularly strong discourse in the Australian media. For instance, a newspaper article by Foster (2013) titled *Investing in Aboriginal youth will pay huge dividends* focused on Indigenous youth and football. Foster states 'Football is a gate to the world, and we owe it to Aboriginal youth to give them the opportunity to follow the same path of John Moriarty, Harry Williams, Charles Perkins, Travis Odd, Jade North and the talented Sam Kerr and Kyah Simon' (para. 2). Many male sports players identifying as Indigenous, such as John Moriarty and Charles Perkins (soccer), Arthur 'Big Artie' Beeston (rugby league), Neil 'Nicky' Winmar (AFL) and Adam Goodes (AFL) among others, have built careers as a result of sport after rising from 'tough lives'.

The above examples highlight that sport can be a way to engage 'successfully' in the world and as Bamblett's (2011) research highlights, is instrumental to the particular ways in which an overrepresentation of Indigenous people in popular sports (such as football) adds to the essentialising of an Indigenous identity. The informal conversations Hutchesson (2014) had with the boys from the PCYC programme, particularly the Indigenous and Maori boys, supported the dominant naturalising discourse about sports being the main 'way out' for young Indigenous people to succeed in society and gain some sense of respect—a discourse that provides a 'restricted representation of Indigenous Australians…that foregrounds deficit and victimhood' (Bamblett 2011: 1). This representation is taken up through the media-fuelled notion of a 'hard risky life' equating to success and is reinforced through the abundance of sports programmes for youth 'at-risk' that aim to improve their lives. The implication of this type of thinking among the boys in the programme examined by Hutchesson (2014) becomes evident below.

Risk, Sport and Fame: Walking the Risky Edge

Hutchesson's (2014) study highlighted that connections between media-glorified risk, edgework (Lyng 2005) and community-based youth 'at-risk' programmes can produce an attraction to certain aspects of being a young person 'at-risk'. A form of 'riskiness' in the media that is glorified is the notion of a 'hard risky life' equating to success in certain reality TV programmes. Graeme Turner (2006), in his article, 'The mass production of celebrity "Celetoids", reality TV and the "demotic turn"', argues 'that the function of the media has mutated as it has increasingly directly participated in the construction of cultural identity as one of its primary spheres of activity' (154). Contemporary media creates and maintains idealised subjectivities that are positioned as successful or unsuccessful on the basis of class, gender, sexual and racial lines. Allen and Mendick (2012) also see a structural shift in Western media in their work on popular culture and identity, showing 'how young people's identity work through Reality TV [RTV] involves making judgements of different ways of being and how this (re)produces social class inequalities' (460). They suggest that, despite seemingly equating success with a 'risky' or disadvantaged background, RTV ultimately holds up a middle-class subjecthood, that has agency and access to resources necessary for successful identity construction, as the ideal. This focus produces an image of the working-class as a subject 'located outside of the good authentic self' (462), and one needing to become more middle-class. It is argued that such idealised risk-taking is often viewed by young people as enabling, as a 'way out' and as a way to become somebody—become popular or famous—albeit in an 'impoverished' and/or temporary sense (Hutchesson 2014).

The boys in the PCYC programme examined by Hutchesson (2014) often talked about reality TV programmes and conversations emerged around fame being positioned as a way to escape 'a crap life', if you were not very academic. All of the boys emphasised the importance of sport in and out of school, with Scott[4] (PCYC participant, 14 years old) and Ben[5] (PCYC participant, 13 years old) making it very clear that the only time they felt 'liked by teachers', 'respected' or 'fit in to school', was during the school sports lessons. Despite the boys being adamant that they would stay at school and conform in certain ways, there was an underlying theme

in their talk of the lure of professional sports and the 'risky fame' it represented. For example, Jeff[6] (PCYC participant, 14 years old) included this perception in the song he had composed as part of this study:

> *…… Wanna be a big footy star make the crowds roar*
> *Gotta get out of this place so I don't get chased down by the law.*
> *Wonder if I'll ever see my name up in lights*
> *I'll spend money, have loads of sic parties and as many girls I like.*

Here Jeff shares his aspiration to be a famous footy player (as many of the boys did) and he imagined footy as his 'ticket out' to start again with a clean slate. His lyrics imply certain ways to feel powerful (sport, girls, money)—that a successful performance and negotiation of sporting activities equals successful masculine identities (see Martino 2003; Saltmarsh and Youdell 2004). Throughout the informal (audio recorded) conversations with Jeff, his peers and Hutchesson, it became evident his home and school life was difficult and risk-taking was a big part of it. Another boy in the study, MC[7] (15 years old), who identified as Indigenous Australian, repeatedly talked about his 'brushes with the law', retold stories of life hardships with pride and showed his prowess as a football player in the touch-football weekly sessions at PCYC (and in local competition games). MC said he wanted to be famous and play football for Melbourne Storm (a professional Australian rugby league team).

MC's continual insistence that 'footy' was going to be the only way he could 'get away from his 'crap' life' aligns with Bamblett's (2011) work which highlights how narratives around Indigenous success in other professional arenas (academic, business or otherwise) are largely absent from popular media. Bamblett stresses present day society's limited perceptions of Indigenous people in the public sphere, where due to backward notions of 'Aborigines' physical prowess' (Harris 1984: 21 cited in Bamblett 2011), sport remains possibly the only area in which success is possible. We suggest that on the one hand becoming a footy star was a way to escape the undesirable 'at risk' subjectivities and spaces the boys were in, but on the other hand, being a footy star required idealised risky behaviours—physical, hyper-masculine, violent and all manner of other 'celebrity' behaviour like drug-taking, womanising and drunken antics as

epitomised by real footy stars (e.g., AAP 2013; Ferguson 2009; Proudman 2009). Such behaviours were used by these young boys in the PCYC programme to position themselves as 'successful risky' and 'sporty' subjects, instead of 'at-risk unsuccessful' student subjects (Hutchesson 2014).

Risk-taking, fame and sport—and the taking up of desirable 'risky' subjectivities—can also be viewed in terms of Lyng's (2005) notion of edgework. Lyng (2005) refers to voluntary risk-taking as edgework, where the seduction of working the edge is strong and becomes a way of constructing the self as in *control* within particular contexts. Lyng and Matthews contend that edgework can be seen as a way to escape or resist key 'structural [and cultural] imperatives' and 'institutional routines [and constraints] of contemporary life' (2007: 5–6)—to be free from 'overwhelming social regulation' (9). They argue that if engaging in risk-taking is viewed 'as integral to the fabric of contemporary social life' (10), then risk-taking becomes part of the way individuals 'integrate themselves into the existing institutional environment that valorises risk-taking propensities and skills' (Lyng and Matthews 2007: 10); such as in Australian football (rugby league) culture. Although the edgework discussed in Laurendeau (2008) and Lyng and Matthews (2007) focuses on high-risk extreme leisure sports, it opens up a space to begin to think about forms of 'delinquent' risk-taking/edgework and how young people use edgework (and the retelling of it) to feel empowered (albeit temporarily in many instances, as it was for the young people in Hutchesson's (2014) study) and assert, negotiate and take up risky gendered (and racial) identities under the 'at-risk' label.

The evidence of edgework in the study by Hutchesson (2014) involved the young people's narratives and practices of risk-taking with drugs, alcohol, crime, the use of expletives ('profane' language) and the retelling of risk-taking in school classrooms, community programme settings and in sporting contexts (using drugs to increase performance and taking risks in the moves they make during football games to stand out in front of a crowd). Within the context of the PCYC programme, it appeared that the more 'at-risk' the boys were perceived to be, the more likely they were to gain fame/kudos from their peers and, further, this risk was believed by the boys to be key to becoming a 'famous' sportsperson. Here, we can see the notion of the seductive side of edgework (Lyng 2005),

where the taking up of 'risky' youthful identities in this regard can also provide temporary enabling aspects and affordances for the young boys. In Hutchesson's study, the young people were seen performing back identities that were preferred by youth workers' (in formal programme spaces and organised activities) and performing different 'risky' identities (e.g., retelling criminal acts) while in informal spaces, such as when travelling or having lunch on the bus. It could be viewed that the risk-taking engaged in by the young people (drugs, alcohol, crime, violence, self-harm, and acting in certain 'risky' ways in the school classroom) was a way to enter into controlled chaos within the *wild zones* (Miller 2005)—to negotiate the edge. The *wild zones* in this sense is a space where one can be ungovernable and disorderly to escape the effects of (neoliberal) governing of youth which can be oppressive, constraining and create social alienation/exclusion for certain groups of young people (Kelly 1999).

Therefore, we offer the argument that practices (often unintentional) within youth 'at-risk' community-based sports programmes and the notion of 'working the edge' (Lyng 2005), coupled with the media's overwhelming and sensationalised focus on the 'risky' or 'disadvantaged' aspect of a young person (Turner 2006), can position the taking up of a 'risky sports subjectivity' as the *only* way *out* of risk (not success in school or education; Hutchesson 2014); particularly for certain young people labelled 'at-risk'. For the young people in such school-partnered, community-based youth programmes, their engagement provided an opportunity to escape a schooling context where they were rendered knowable *only* through 'risky' labels, such as impossible/unsuccessful learners. At the same time, the space created within the youth programmes provided opportunities for 'risky' behaviour and identities to be idealised.

Concluding Thoughts

As the different narratives of the young people unfolded in Hutchesson's (2014) study of 'at-risk' youth programme(s), a common story was built. These young 'at risk' boys are told they need to change. They are managed and expected to self-manage along particular lines leading to a

conforming and productive adulthood. What is reaffirmed here is that they, not the system that they are alienated from, needs to change. Yet, without the skills to change, and without a youth programme that directly addresses these skills, these young people have no hope of succeeding in schooling spaces or the workplace. On the one hand it appears the approach of these 'at-risk' youth programmes is to use sport to make participants 'feel good' about themselves (perhaps as potential footy players and sporting superstars). These programmes are clearly about giving participants a break from school and having some fun too.

However, by youth workers acknowledging that certain groups of young people are defined by policy as 'at-risk' of failing or leaving school early, employing programmes that are about altering the young people's 'at-risk' behaviour, and reporting on youth using identity markers constructed though expert knowledge of youth (Kelly 2007), they (the programmes and youth workers) in effect, as Kelly suggests, render 'government more *efficient* and *effective* by facilitating earlier *identification* of those at-Risk, and by targeting *interventions* to those most at-Risk' (1998: 192 original emphasis). As with Curran's (2010) findings, Hutchesson's (2014) research showed that the programmes did provide for rewarding experiences for the young people participating (as a group), which moves away from a neoliberalised agenda focusing on individuals, yet overall, the measures of success from the youth workers (and often the young people themselves) were based around effective altering of individual behaviours and attitudes, irrespective of the fact that the youth workers expressed their thoughts on how school and current teaching strategies are not an inviting environment for certain young people. We agree with te Riele's argument that this finding does 'not necessarily warrant targeting these groups of young people for intervention, instead of targeting school systems and societal factors' (2006: 131).

Overall, we have highlighted the power/kudos sought by boys in a community, youth, sport-based programme, which indicated that they could (to a degree) resist the loser/impossible learner identity (or 'at-risk' label) placed upon them. Using Lyng's (2005) theory on edgework in combination with theories of governmentality (Kelly 1998, 2007; Foucault 1991), Hutchesson (2014) explained the seduction of youth to engage in 'risky' acts and how it can be viewed by participants as positive and enabling,

as well as how these 'risky' youth identities are, in the end, constrained by dominant discourses and structures in society. Therefore, we argue that this process of using sport-based programmes to engage and regulate boys, and (unintentionally) establish football stars as desirable selves, potentially works to further alienate and disengage these boys from school, given they have little or no history of success in the schooling space. Once these boys step outside the youth sports programme, and the particular 'powerful' subjectivity it affords them, they still do not have the education, skills or position to be recognised as successful learners or productive citizens.

Notes

1. In problematising and analysing the dialogue of the young people and staff, we are not discounting the benefits of these programmes for the young people, such as the potential for gaining a constructive sense of self-respect, self-worth and self-confidence.
2. Although all boys attended the same local high school, the older, 'riskier' boys (i.e., who had criminal records) were asked by the police to join the programme, while the teachers from the high school selected the other boys who attended the programme.
3. Lynne and Max both joined the police force at an early age and had lots of experience with young people who they consider to have difficult lives and are labelled 'at-risk'. There was obvious passion from both youth workers for running this programme and they connected well with youth, and all of the boys appeared to respect them.
4. Scott identifies as being Indigenous. He likes to be the centre of attention—and often tried to be the leader of the PCYC boys. He was very open to discussing anything Hutchesson asked about in great depth. As with MC, he is very reflective but not hypocritical, he accepts that he perhaps should not engage in illicit activities and tells the boys not to, but admits he continues to do so. He has some disdain for the police in general and discusses being pulled over and searched for drugs constantly or questioned in regard to break and entries.
5. Ben identifies as being Maori. His pale complexion, however, was the topic of many heated discussions between Ben and John (another member identifying as Maori). The group refused to accept Ben was Maori because of his pale skin colour. He played the role of a very tough kid which was

taken very lightly by the others. He was a loud personality, yet never really was heard by the other boys in the group. He disliked the police in general. He believed teachers are racist as they 'do not like Kiwi people'. It was for this reason that he believed he was singled out and ostracised by teachers. Ben was the only one in the group who professed his hatred of drugs and refusal to take them.

6. Jeff has an Anglo Saxon background. At the time of the study he had 11 people living at home with him: Dad and his girlfriend, 5 sisters, 3 brothers and a nephew. He is the second oldest. He was basically a quiet boy, but because of his solid size and age he sits on the top end of the pecking order among the PCYC boys. He really enjoyed playing football and wanted to play in one of the 'big teams' one day at the national level. Jeff had negative feelings towards police as he explained he used to get into a lot of trouble by them for engaging in criminal behaviour. He would cheer at the other boy's retelling of risky behaviour and boasted of taking 'speed' (an illegal drug) once to enhance his football performance.

7. MC was very charismatic and the leader of the PCYC pack. Larger and older than most of the boys, he controlled the dynamics when he was present. Hutchesson had contact with him outside the programme as he was an acquaintance of her son's. His dialogue appeared game-like, as on one hand it was reflective, suggesting to the adults that the other young boys in the group should learn from his mistakes. While on the other hand he acted tough and proudly revealed his engagement in criminal activities to the boys while the youth workers were not present. He would stir trouble between the boys without the youth workers knowing and then solve it to gain respect from the adults. Despite the boys and Hutchesson seeing this game play, no one confronted or challenged his control. He had some disdain for the police, but only to the ones who would catch him drinking and make him tip out his alcohol onto the ground or the ones who would constantly pull him over to check his bags for drugs. MC has had a lot of contact with courts and the police.

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