Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #2, August 2, 1995. © by CJEAP and the author.

**Towards an Archeology of Policy that Challenges   
Conventional Framing of the Problem of Violence in Schools**

by Hanne E. Mawhinney  
University of Ottawa

A common conception of violence is that it involves "a continuum of behaviour driven by a need for power and domination, often involving lack of respect for other's feelings, rights, property and bodies" (Ashford & Manley-Casimir, 1993, p. 2). Many believe that violence has become a cultural artifact of our times. They speak of our "culture of violence," as the defining characteristic of social relations in society and in social institutions like schools (Martinez, 1992). These views are held by a broad spectrum of Canadian society. Although the New Right has been particularly articulate in targeting young offenders, many other Canadians share the perception that youth violence is an escalating social problem that must be addressed. The recent federal government amendments to the Young Offenders Act aimed at toughening laws on youth crime are seen by critics as "partisan political concessions. . . bowing to public mis-perceptions about youth crime" which do little to deter young criminals (Howard, 1994, p. A5). One critic commenting on the revision observes that "the law-and-order interests are pretty demanding. . . although serious violent crime is only a very small part of youth crime" (Stanowski, cited in Howard, 1994, p. A5). In fact, statistics suggest that almost "80% of youth crime involves petty offences" (Howard, 1994, p. A5). Criminologists point out that despite the pervasive public policy rhetoric of escalating youth violence, "the juvenile crime rate is not spinning out of control" (Boyd, cited in Howard, 1994, p. A5).

Regardless of whether or not youth violence is, in fact, increasing, it is clear that during the past few years it has come to be perceived as a significant social problem, and one that occurs in schools. The general public, and more specifically parents and teachers have increasingly framed violence in schools as a "social problem." Media reports of an escalating violence problem in schools, the activism of teacher federations and other members of the educational policy community around this issue have further framed the parameters of the problem of youth violence for policy makers.(1)

In this article I examine the construction of youth violence as a problem requiring legal and regulatory responses by different levels of government.(2) I take direction for this effort from critics who argue that there is a need to examine the assumptions guiding the way in which the problem of school violence is framed at both macro (provincial government), and micro (school board) political levels (Matthew, 1992). Governments at all levels have been remarkably quick and forceful in responding with laws and policies that identify, mark, and track youth involved. The speed and coerciveness of responses to perceptions of violence contrast with the stalemate in policymaking to promote child and family wellbeing reported by Canadians like John O'Neil (1994) in his recent book: The missing child in liberal theory. O'Neil argues that:

the new conditions of risk [to children] flow from the loss of national commitments to children and family life, and the development of remedial rather than preventive approaches to care and support. [There is a] need to examine the intellectual and cultural foundations governing our collective relations with children and our response to their circumstances. Dominant perspectives, sometimes designated paradigms, shape commitments and strategies. (p. xiii).

Those who wish to understand the deep structures of meaning which undergird policy strategies on youth violence require conceptual approaches which make these paradigms more transparent. Traditional approaches to policy analysis do not make "visible the rules by which certain types of phenomena and social relations of schooling come to be the objects of reform, the conditions of power in these constructions, and the continuities and discontinuities that are embedded in their construction" (Scribner, Reyes, Fusarelli, 1995, p. 208). Conventional approaches to public policy analysis commonly adopt the assumption of liberal social theory that political actors act on the basis of a calculation that maximizes their self interest. The rational actor assumption undergirding conventional models of policymaking precludes critical analysis of how social phenomena are constructed as problems requiring particular policy actions. The effect is described by Scribner and his colleagues who observe that "much of the contemporary analysis of education reform ignores the history of education and takes as its rhetoric the definition of change. Scholars and policy makers have initiated education reform assuming that intervention is progress" (p. 207).

Without a critical analysis of the larger context of how problems are framed there is little chance of addressing fundamental issues of social justice raised by groups such as the Canada Council on Social Development in their report: Countdown 93: Campaign 2000 Child Poverty Indicator Report (1993). O'Neil (1994) argues that in the face of the expanding risks to communities, families and children, that such reports document, "Canadian social-policy research must reconceptualize the life chances and social pathways that enable/disable families, children, and youth in interaction with community and state institutions" (p. 19). Such reconceptualization is largely missing in conventional analysis of educational policymaking. Reassessments of the state of educational policy analysis now recognizes the need for perspectives which make transparent the social and political practices implicated in policy responses such as those which have emerged in response to public perceptions of youth violence in schools.

In addressing these needs, educational policy researchers are now seeking insights from traditionally ignored disciplines. Political sociology, for example, offers constructs such as social regulation and social epistemology which promise new understanding of the nature of educational policymaking. The legal policy responses of Ontario governments to a problem constructed as youth violence appear to be consistent with the social regulatory role ascribed to schooling by political sociologists (Popkewitz, 1991). Scribner et al. (1995) acknowledge that social regulation has not been well studied by students of educational policy. They suggest, however, that some new directions have been offered by critics of conventional policy models like Scheurich (1993, 1994), who has turned to the poststructural theories of Foucault (1972, 1977, 1979) to gain understanding of the influence on institutional practices of schooling of the "regimes of truth" that encompass the rules and standards that come to be used to define what is good and bad. This approach offers a means of gaining a broader understanding of school violence as a current public policy issue. In doing so the approach challenges conventional theoretical understanding of policy studies.

My intention in this article is, therefore, to set out some challenges for policy analysis and inquiry into the problem of violence raised by a recent proposal by Scheurich (1993, 1994) for a poststructural approach to policy studies drawn from Foucault's early writings on the archeology of knowledge (1972, 1977). This purpose reflects an ongoing preoccupation that I share with post-positivist critics who call for new approaches to understanding policy that pay attention "to the theoretical assumptions that structure political discourse, subtly shaping the perceptions of policy alternatives, unobtrusively altering available options, narrowly circumscribing the range of choice, and imperceptibly delimiting decisions" (Hawkesworth, 1988; p. 93). Scheurich (1994) does not claim to offer a new policy model, indeed the methodology he offers rejects the notion of a universal claim of authoritative knowledge implied in such models. Instead he offers a methodology for policy critique which attempts to make visible the assumptions underlying policies. Scheurich is not alone is offering new methods of policy inquiry which take into account these phenomenon,(3) however, his approach does focus inquiry on the forces at play in framing perceptions of youth violence as regulatory policy problem. The purpose of this article is to examine the potential of this new lens to inform critical understanding of these forces. I begin by demonstrating the need for such critical analysis by describing how Canadian policymakers, educators and the public at large have framed their perceptions of increasing youth violence as a social regulation problem, one requiring a range of coercive, regulatory-legal policy responses. I describe the conceptual challenges raised in attempting to analyze this framing of the perceptions of youth violence into a legal/regulatory policy problem. Finally, I discuss the potential of a poststructural approach to policy inquiry to address these and other conceptual challenges facing policy researchers

**Framing the Problem of Violence**

Although youth violence has been perceived as a problem in schools by generations of Canadians (see, for example, Curtis, 1988), it has recently become the focus of increased attention in communities, in the media, and in the educational policy community (see Orbit, 1993). Violence is a major concern in the United States where the "pervasiveness, severity, and permanence of the gang and school violence issue" are documented in research reports (National School Safety Centre, 1986; Chicago Board of Education, 1981; Understanding and Preventing Violence, 1992), in newspaper articles (DeWitt, 1993), and handbooks for educators (Curcio & First, 1993; Lal, Lal & Achilles, 1993). Studies of school-related violence in the United States identify a range of perpetuator-victim categories, and an array of types of violent activities. Student-to-student violence includes incidents of sexual assault, extortion, vandalism, interracial incidents, as well as hate crimes, weapon-related assaults, and potentially serious and violent behaviours such as fighting, bullying, gang activity, and property theft and disputes. Research also confirms that incidents of student-to-teacher violence are widespread in American schools (Curico & First, 1993). Schools in urban centers, have responded to increased violence with tougher policies, and with measures intended to enhance school safety. In New York City, for example, metal detectors have been installed and 3,000 guards are employed in the city's 1,000 schools (The Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 19, 1993, p. B6).

Most Canadian schools have not taken similar measures, although a recent article asked: "Are school security forces, radio checkpoints and locked doors around the corner?" (Auty, 1990, p. 33). In fact, schools are increasingly described as sites of acts of violence similar to those associated with urban American schools. Community groups in Canada are beginning to focus considerable attention on documenting violent acts by youth, and the media typically reinforces this focus with extensive coverage of violent incidents in schools. Stories of youth gangs swarming students and other violent incidents in and around schools are increasingly common in the Canadian media. Media coverage documents sexual and physical assaults of students by other students with headlines such as "Violence Rising in Schools, Educators Say" (Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 19, 1993, p. B6). These stories are often supported by statistics complied from criminological research (Frank, 1992), from school board data (Kasian, 1992), and from teacher federation surveys (ATA News, 1992).

In recent years, teachers' federations in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario have each surveyed their members to determine the severity of the "problem." The Ontario Teachers Federation found that major assaults, defined as physical abuse involving kicking, hitting and biting, increased by over 150 percent from 1987 to 1990, and minor assaults, including verbal abuse and profanity, increased by over 50 % (ATA News, 1992, p. 1). Similarly, a survey by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association revealed that both major and minor assaults more than doubled from 1988 to 1990 (Sevitt, 1991). At the same time a national survey by the Canadian Teachers' Federation found that opinion on the severity of the problem of school-based violence varied considerably from province to province (p.1). The chair of Ontario's Safe School Task Force, a collaborative group of twenty Ontario organizations including educators from the public and Catholic systems, concluded recently that despite the "substantial increase in the number of violent incidents in and around school property" the province's schools are basically safe (Sevitt, 1991, p. 22).

**Conceptual Challenges to Conventional Framing of the Violence Problem**

Closer examination of Canadian statistics suggests that caution must be exercised in assuming that violence in schools is an escalating problem (West, 1993). Analysis of the statistics has led some researchers to suggest that "the increased attention directed at the issue of violence in the schools has led to the perception that violent incidents have increased when, in fact, rates have remained stable" (Kasian, 1992, p. 5). Others confirm that there has indeed been an increase in recorded/reported incidents of violence in Canadian schools during the past decade, however this is to be expected "with increasing public sensitivity to violence as an issue to be dealt with officially; [but] whether there is any change in real behaviour is more difficult to determine" (West, 1993, p. 8). Reviewing the state of research on violence in schools to 1990, Schmidt, Paquette & Dickinson concluded that: "systematic national and provincial data on the incidents of overt or implied threats, intimidation, theft, robbery, assault, rape and murder do not exist" (p. 63). Canadian literature on violence, they argued, has tended to rely on local surveys, media reports and anecdotal accounts. Despite the fact that the "violence problem," remains an unclear, and a contested description of the nature of social relations in Canadian schools, a growing number of reports have outlined policies and practices to ensure school safety (Day, Golench, MacDougall, Beals-Gonzalez, 1995).

Some critics question the rationale for this "policy rush." West (1993), for example, argues "the issue of violence in the schools may threaten to assume the characteristics of a "moral panic" (p. 7). He cites Cohen (1972) in describing the state of moral panic as a situation that arises when "a condition or group of people becomes defined as a threat to the social order; mass media stereotypes [this condition]; right thinking moral entrepreneurs and interest groups defend the moral order; experts pronounce solutions; [and] ways of coping evolve' (Cohen, 1972 cited in West, 1993, p. 7). Seen in this light school violence is a "political issue, identified and understood through our discourse and language" (West, 1993, p. 7). Perceptions of violence are reinforced through the discourse carried on in mass media and in the political and public arenas of education. Given the pervasiveness of the paradigm of thinking it is not surprising that these very political dimensions of the perceived school violence problem are commonly overlooked by teachers' federations and school boards in their current policy activism on the issue. Brown (1993) concludes that there is a need to examine the social context which fans public perceptions of increasing violence in school (Brown, 1993). This view is shared by researchers who observe that "there is a dearth of research regarding the causes of the apparently escalating crime problems in Canadian schools" (Schmidt, Paquette & Dickinson, 1990, p. 68).

Many question the neutrality of common descriptions of the violent actor as an "anti-social deviant who does not belong in a school," and depictions of the violent act as "an attack on the normal, healthy, safe, and important daily functions of our school and community" (Brown, 1993, p. 20). Critics question the "criminality" implied in solutions and practices that are devised from this policy frame. There is a need to understand the various social changes that may lie behind the current concerns over the issue (Brown, 1993; West, 1993).

**Postmodernism/Post-structuralism**

Until recently this broader context of policy making received relatively little focused attention. The traditional model guiding analysis viewed policy as a process involving a limited number of political actors making calculated choices among clearly conceived alternatives (Dunn, 1981). The limitations of this model have been noted by many researchers investigating educational politics and policy making. In their recent review of the state of the study of educational politics, Scribner et al. (1995) comment: "we recognize the disillusionment prevalent in educational research with mechanistic models of human behavior and the attendant problem of values, universals and objectivity" (p. 201). Scribner and his colleagues call for theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches previously overlooked by those studying policy making processes. They recognize the utility for understanding the politics of policy making of the "poststructural" concepts developed by French philosopher- historian Michel Foucault (1979) which "question the relation of institutional practices. . . and the rules and standards by which individuals define what is good and bad" (Scribner et al., 1995, p. 208).

Foucault(4) is one of a group of French post-structuralists (e.g. Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida) who have challenged widely accepted conceptions that individuals are agents free of cultural or historical constraints; and that there is an overall pattern to history that can be discerned. Post-structuralists, question the structural-functional concepts underlying mainstream social science inquiry, particularly the concept of an objective reality. Beyond this commonality, however, the differing perspectives that leading post-structuralists like Lacan, Derrida and Foucault have taken in exploring the nature of knowledge, subjectivity and language qualify any supposition that there exists a unitary post-structural theory.(5) This diversity of perspectives may, in part, explain the association of post- structuralism with the "postmodern condition" in literary and social theory during the past three decades.(6) The diversity of post-structural theorizing reflects the "incredulity toward metanarratives" which has been associated with the emergence of a postmodern condition of knowledge (Smart, 1992, p. 170). This association further adds to the confusion among the terms postmodernism, post-structuralism and modernism, and requires a brief discussion of the distinctions among them.

Smart (1992) describes "postmodernity" as "a qualitative transformation in the experience of space and time, and exponential increase in the pace of social and economic life, and a growing sense of fragmentation and discontinuity" (p. 170). The diverse writings that have been termed postmodern reject the faith in universal reason that we have inherited from Enlightenment European philosophy. This latter set of beliefs have been linked to the beginning of the modern age, or with "modernity." Modernity has been associated with "the attempts of eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers to cultivate objective scientific inquiry and knowledge, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their respective inner logics, the principal objective being to . . . facilitate control of natural and social phenomena and forces, enhance understanding, promote progress, and increase the happiness of humanity" (Smart, 1992, p. 148). Social theorizing is fundamental to modernism, providing the framework for policies and practices to attain increasing freedom and happiness for humanity. It has become increasingly evident, however, that the "modern" promise of universal emancipation is no longer feasible. Smart observes: "it might be argued that in some respects our condition has deteriorated, that the accelerating development of techno-sciences is aggravating rather than alleviating our difficulties, introducing a destabilising 'obligation to complexity' that is unrelated to the needs and demands of individual and social life" (p. 176).

The concept of postmodernism signifies within social theory, cultural analysis and philosophy the limitations of possibilities of modernity. It reflects a rejection of not only grand social theories, but an "incredulity" towards the "grand narrative of the emancipation of humanity from poverty, ignorance, prejudice, and the absence of enjoyment" (Lyotard, 1988, p. 302, cited in Smart, 1992, p. 177). In exploring the implications of the postmodern stance, Smart (1992) observes that in seeming to "undermine the prospects for criticism, opposition, and resistance," it reflects a form of "neo-conservative politics" (p. 177). While Smart suggests that this criticism oversimplifies the anti-rationalism of the postmodernism, writers like Hartsock (1990) argue that postmodernism gives little guidance to those who "want to understand the world systematically in order to change it" (p. 159).

**A Poststructural Methodology for Problem/Policy Analysis**

The potential for postmodernism to provide a basis for social critique has galvanized the social science community. Some feminist writers find postmodernist discourses akin to their own explorations of notions of reason, knowledge and self (Flax, 1990). Other feminist writers reject postmodernist conceptions, finding in Foucault's post-structuralism a more useful approach to social analysis of power relations (Haber, 1994). Similarly writers like Scheurich (1993, 1994), and Marshall (1994) who are concerned with education politics find in Foucault's post- structuralism an approach that makes more transparent the "deep" regimes of discourse and practice that define a discipline such as education. Foucault's early work was concerned with the emergence of human sciences, and how certain new "technologies" became elaborated within a knowledge base of these sciences. In his study, Madness and Civilization, for example, Foucault described how madness, along with poverty and unemployment became perceived to be a social problem requiring the intervention of the state. He showed how madness became an object of certain forms of knowledge and a target of certain institutional practices. Other early works analyzed similar processes of modernization by tracing the emergence of specific institutions like medicine (The Birth of the Clinic). In later work, Foucault became more concerned with power and knowledge, and with the structure of elements such as laws, institutions, and the discourses that are supported by types of knowledge. Foucault's analysis of knowledge/power focuses on certain relations of power that are located within the "deep regimes of discourse/practice" evident under particular technical and institutional conditions. These power relations create individuals with certain identities defined by disciplinary knowledge. Foucault describes a number of conditions that must be fulfilled in order for power to be exercised within the institutional conditions he calls a "disciplinary block." Marshall (1995) describes these as:

concerned with the organization of space, time and capacities. First individuals are allocated to spaces and second, activities planned for them according to a timetable. The principles here are those of prescribing those activities appropriate to the discipline and establishing set regular rhythms for these activities. Third, activities are broken down into stages so that particular skills, abilities, or capacities can be developed in a given time through constant exercise. Examinations, classifications, promotions, and remedial treatments establish "normal" patterns of expectations.(p. 369).

This knowledge, itself produced by the exercise of power, is used to create "normalized" individuals, those who know "who" they are. Examinations, for example, are central in establishing for individuals their true identities. Marshall (1995) gives an educational example of the knowledge underlying the power exercised in that disciplinary block as that which permits statements such as "children with learning difficulties can be identified within the first year of formalized instruction" (p. 369). Using Foucault's analysis the educational needs and interests of the child reflect "values as to what is normal in the disciplinary block of the school. Eventually the child becomes just what the needs and interests classifications began to turn him or her towards---the slow learner, or the scientist, and the manager or the unemployable teenager" (Marshall, 1995, p. 371).

Foucault's work offers a methodology for historical critique for those who wish to understand the nature of this knowledge/power relation. In early studies (The Order of Things and the Archaeology of Knowledge), Foucault referred to the "archeology" of knowledge which concerned itself with discovering the set of rules that permit certain statements to be made. It is this notion of an "archeology of knowledge" that Scheurich (1993, 1994) has used to develop an approach to policy studies.

Scheurich describes the approach of policy archeology as one which questions "the existence of a particular social problem and looks more closely and carefully at its emergence" (Scheurich, 1993, p. 6). The intention is not simply to produce a historical analysis although historical documents can be used as evidence in this analysis. Rather, policy archeology examines the "grid of conditions, assumptions, forces, which make the emergence of a social problem possible" (p. 7). In this analysis the emergence of a problem is a social process to be examined, it is a social construction whose "empirical reality is contestable" (p. 7). Scheurich (1994) has chosen to adopt Foucault's early formulation of the concept of "archeology" to refer to the methodology for a critical policy analysis which does not accept a social problem a priori, but instead examines its emergence and investigates why it has come to be seen as a problem. He suggests that policy archeology offers insights into the construction of problems like youth violence in schools, and the disciplinary definition of the legal/regulatory treatment required. He places at the center of this archeology a concern with the "disciplinary character" of power and its strategic effects. As previously described, disciplinary power is a form of knowledge constituted "not just in texts but in definite institutional and organizational practices, they are 'discursive practices': knowledge reproduced through practices made possible by the framing assumption of that knowledge" (Clegg, 1989, p. 153). In Foucault's (1984) conception disciplinary power is not a "single, all encompassing strategy" (p. 103). Rather power is evident in the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus form a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them one from another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (p. 92).

In his later work, Foucault, came to refine an historical methodology he called "genealogical analysis" which focused on a critique of the disjunctions and contradictions of present social relations with past relations. Genealogy(7) is a methodology which focuses on "the discredited, the neglected, and a whole range of phenomena which have been denied a history" (Sarup, 1993, p. 59). Genealogy as a form of critique which reveals the multiplicity of factors that lie behind an event, extends Foucault's earlier conception of an archeology of knowledge, to focus more directly on power and knowledge.

Although Scheurich has chosen to retain Foucault's early conception of archeology, his proposition for this form of policy analysis, like Foucault's genealogical analysis, also identifies the "discursive regularities which make visible certain kinds of social problems and their policy solutions while others remain invisible (Scheurich, 1993, p. 10). Policy archeology considers whether there are patterns in society that filter what or who is identified as a social problem. It focuses on whether the identification of certain social groups, such as students displaying violent behaviour in schools, has a larger function for society. In short the approach problematizes social problems by disputing their empirical existence. Its asks why this particular social problem is constructed as a problem rather than other possible problems. It searches for the primary patterns or social regularities that shape what is accepted as a problem and what is not. It asks what the larger social function of the problems-policy axis is (Scheurich, 1993, p. 12).

From this perspective social problems are contestable: violence, for example, can be seen as a problem of racism or as a problem of youth alienation (Matthews, 1992). Recognition of the different faces of social problems is not unique to poststructural approaches to inquiry (see Allison, 1971). Rather, it is the emphasis on the coexistence of social patterns and on the "way in which they interlock or exclude one another, [and] the transformation that they undergo" (Foucault, 1972 cited in Scheurich, 1993), that suggests the possibility of a unique contribution by a poststructural approach to understanding the deeper meaning of social policy making.

**The Potential For Poststructural Analysis to Inform Policy Inquiry and Practice**

This brief overview cannot do justice to the complex concepts underlying the poststructural analysis proposed by Foucault, and the interpretation of those concepts by Scheurich (1993, 1994). The concepts are themselves often lost in a dense language which some have accused of being exclusionary. Certainly readers may wonder what an archeology of policy means for teachers, administrators, and superintendents of education who must implement the policies which are intended to deal with violence in schools. Can poststructural concepts inform their efforts when philosopher/historians of education are not in agreement on the potential for Foucault to inform their research? Some writers, for example, find fault in Foucault's failure to espouse a generalizable theory, others see his focus on particular analyses as a strength. His conception of power is acknowledged as important, but the lack of a specific ground or basis for power leaves the concept of resistance underdeveloped. Some feminist writers argue that Foucault is largely blind to issues of gender, others find his that in his later work Foucault acknowledged the disqualification of women in many aspects of the systems of social life which he analyzed.

Despite the density of language used by Foucault to convey post- structural concepts, educational researchers are now exploring his work. The proposal for policy archeology by Scheurich examined in this paper, is one of a growing number of efforts to draw from Foucault's work ways of understanding the complex issues of power and knowledge in education (see also Capper, 1993; Gore, 1993; Marshall, 1995; Mawhinney & LaRocque, 1995). In their recent conclusion to a review of the state of the study of the politics of education, Scribner and his colleagues refer to Foucault's work as a basis for inquiry into "which particular social actors maintain their positions of dominance and power, as well as the mechanisms which position them in power, and the elements by which such inequities in power may be eliminated" (1995, p. 209).

Although the interpretation of Foucault's theorizing by Scheurich outlined in this paper does not purport to be more than a proposal for a methodology for policy inquiry, I believe that the conceptual issues it forces us to consider offer new insights into how policy problems are constructed. Policy archeology, or perhaps more correctly, policy genealogy, if we wish to follow Foucault's thinking, offers a critical orientation to understanding the forces framing the nature of policies and practices for dealing with the social problem of violence in schools. It suggests that policy inquiry should be directed to understanding the strategic effects of disciplinary power.

I offer the following challenges for the kind of critical inquiry proposed by policy archeology into the problem of violence in schools:

- What perceived social changes lie behind the present concern over school violence?

- What reasons are given by members of an educational policy community for the need for policy intervention to deal with violence?

- What frames do members of the community use to define the problem?

- How are institutional structures and processes including laws and schools themselves implicated in the creation of the problem of violence?

- What is the nature of the social problem/policy solution link: what model of social justice is implied?

**Conclusions**

In setting out these questions to guide a policy archeology into the construction of a "problem" of violence in schools, I challenge other policy researchers to consider the power of the disciplinary knowledge that Foucault identified as they debate on best practices and policy making. This debate should consider, for example, that youth violence framed as a problem of criminality, and drawing from criminological research is often based on a narrow legalistic definition. From this frame, violence consists of actions prohibited under the Criminal Code of Canada which include forceful assault, threatened force, intimidation, openly carrying a weapon. Implied in this frame is a notion of "victimization, which occurs when a crime perpetrated against a victim (student or school employee) is experienced, or when they were threatened by the perpetration of some crime" (Schmidt, Paquette & Dickinson, 1990, p. 52). Youth violence framed from a criminality perspective often becomes a law enforcement issue that defines the problem as being the individual's deviance or delinquency. Policy responses to the problem of youth violence from the frame of criminality tend to focus on punishing the individual, and on directing the criminal justice system to punish and reform the deviance, often to little ultimate avail.

Critics like West (1993) argue that traditional policy approaches typically accept conventional problem framing of violence as a legal issue, and focus on how to ensure that implementation of policy options is successful. Typically policy is seen as a remedy for a social problem which develops somewhat like a "disease" requiring treatment (Scheurich, 1993, p. 6). Common "indicators" of social problems in liberal policy frameworks include the attention of the media, policymakers and practitioners. In this context social problems such as violence in schools appear real and their depiction as requiring a policy solution is generally uncontested.

The framework of questions which I have posed challenge policy researchers to resist the impetus to provide obvious policy solutions to apparent problems. The alternative offers no such simple directions, rather an a archeology of the violence problem/policy link raises many complex issues. It suggests that the current policy thrust is towards defining the problem of violence as one best addressed by marking youth as deviants. An archeology would look to poststructural theorists who argue that identifying certain youth as social problems requiring the intervention of numerous state agencies may "be more damaging for [those youth than if they] remained invisible to the state and its normalizing agencies" (Scheurich, 1993, p. 13). The kind of critical approach proposed by the questions I have outlined in this article would also recognize the critiques of conventional quick policy responses such as those that target deviance. These critiques suggest that there is a need to consider the broader social changes lying behind the current concerns over school violence. The approach I have suggested is concerned that many of the "measures proposed recently involve such approaches as 'target hardening,' increased surveillance and communication, and co-optation of students, while failing to address structural, background causes" (West, 1993, p. 7). The critical analysis implied in the policy archeology framework I have outlined challenges analysts to consider whether the problem is that many of the policy measures being developed in response to school violence focus more on technology and control than on examining the deeper issues of how schools are sites of contestation: ethically, racially, culturally, and economically. These deeper issues are the true domain of the policy framework I have set out in this article as a challenge to those engaged in policy making and policy inquiry.

**References**

Ashford, M. W., & Manley-Casimir, M. (1993). Education in a culture of violence. Paper presented at the Canadian Education Association Annual Short Course in Educational Leadership. Banff, ATA.

Allison, G. T. (1971). The essence of decision. Boston: Little Brown.

ATA News. (1992, March 24).Teacher associations survey members on issue of violence. p. 1-5.

Auty, S. (1990, Fall). Violence in your school. Education Forum, 33-35.

Brown, J. R. (1993). Reconstruing violence in schools.ORBIT, 24(1), 20-21.

Canada Council on Social Development (1993). Countdown 93: Campaign 2000 Child Poverty Indicator Report.Ottawa: Centre for International Statistics on Economic and Social Welfare.

Chicago Board of Education. (1981). The Chicago safe schools study: A report to the general superintendent of schools. Chicago: Author.

Clegg, S. R. (1989). Frameworks of power.Newbury Park: Sage.

Curcio, J. L., & First, P. F. (1993). Violence in schools: How to proactively prevent and defuse it. Newbury Park: Sage.

Curtis, B. (1988). Building the educational state: Canada West, 1836-1871. London: Althouse Press.

Day, D. M.,Golench, C. A.,MacDougall, J., & Beals-Gonzalez, C. A. (1995). School-based violence prevention in Canada: Results of a national survey of policies and programs.Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.

DeWitt, K. (1993, January 15). Teachers ask for help in fighting school violence.New York Times, p. A. 8.

Flax, J. (1990). Postmodernism and gender relations in feminist theory. In L. J. Nicholson (Ed.), Feminism/Postmodernism (pp. 39- 62). New York: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1972). The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1977).Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison.Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1980). Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977. C. Gordon (ed.) Brighton: Harvester Press.

Foucault, M. (1984). The history of sexuality: An introduction.Harmondsworth: Peregrine.

Frank, J. (1992, Fall). Juvenile justice legislation. In Canadian Social Trends, Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Haber, H. F. (1994).Beyond postmodern politics. New York: Routledge.

Hartsock, N. (1990). Foucault on power: A theory for women? In L. J. Nicholson (Ed.), Feminism/Postmodernism(pp. 157-175). New York: Routledge.

Hawkesworth, M. E. (1988). Theoretical issues in policy analysis. New York: State University of New York.

Howard, R. (1994, June 3). Youth rehabilitation loses priority. The Globe and Mail. pp. A1, A5.

Kasian, M. (1992). Report and recommendations: Safe schools survey. Ottawa: Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Lal, S., R.,Lal, D., & Achilles, C. M. (1993). Handbook on gangs in schools: Strategies to reduce gang-related activities. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Lyotard, J. F. (1988). An interview. Theory, Culture and Society, 5(2-3).

Marshall, C., & Anderson, G. L. (1995). Rethinking the public and private spheres: feminist and cultural studies perspectives on the politics of education. In J. D. Scribner & D. H. Layton (Eds.), The study of educational politics(pp. 201-212). London: Falmer Press.

Marshall, J. D. (1995). Needs, interests, growth, and personal autonomy. In W. Kohli (Ed.),Critical conversations in philosophy of education(pp. 364-378). New York: Routledge.

Martinez, A. (1992). Scientific knowledge about televison violence. Ottawa: CRTC Televison Programming Directorate.

Matthew, F. (1992, Fall). Re-framing gang violence: A pro-youth strategy. JEB-P, Fall, 24-28.

Mawhinney, H. B., & LaRocque, L. (1995). Women educators as school board chairpersons: Problematizing the public/private dimensions of leadership. In C. Reynolds & B. Young (Eds.),Gender issues in Canadian educational administration. Calgary: Detselig.

Mawhinney, H.B. (1994). A Poststructural Analysis of Policies and Practices for Dealing With Violence in Schools.Paper presented to the 1994 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Studies in Educational Administration. University of Calgary: Calgary, AB, June.

Mawhinney, H.B. (forthcoming). Interpreting the politics of policy change: Contradictions for a new generation of policy inquiry. Canadian Administrator.

National School Safety Center. (1986, February). Safe schools overview: NSSC Resource Paper. Sacramento: NSSC.

Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. (1994, March). Challenging problems, hard choices: Developing programs for students suspended or expelled for violent behaviour. Discussion paper. Toronto: Author. Also in ORBIT. (1993). 24(1).

Popkewitz, T. S. (1991). The political sociology of educational reform.New York: Teachers College Press.

Scheurich, J. J. (1993). Policy archaeology: A Postmodern approach to policy studies. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Houston.

Scheurich, J. J. (1994). Policy archeology: A new policy studies methodology. Journal of Education Policy, 9(4), 297-316.

Schmidt, Y.,Paquette, J., & Dickinson, G. (1990). Violence in the schools: A neglected research agenda. Education and Law Journal, 3(1), 49-89.

Scribner, J. D.,Reyes, P., & Fusarelli, L. D. (1995). Education politics and policy: and the game goes on. In J. D. Schribner & D. H. Layton (Eds.),The study of education politics(pp. 201- 212). London: Falmer.

Sevitt, C. (1991, December). How safe are our schools? The Reporter, p. 22-23.

Smart, B. (1992).Modern conditions: Postmodern controversies. London: Routledge.

The Ottawa Citizen.(1993, February 19). Violence rising in schools, educators say. p. B6.

Townsend, R. G. (1995a). How a few politicians and managers of education find policy success and happiness: Part I. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), Effective school district leadership(pp. 135- 181). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Townsend, R. G. (1995b). Plucking billard balls out of thin air or how a few politicians and managers of education hustle policy: Part II. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), Effective school district leadership (pp. 183-221). Albany: SUNY Press.

West, W. G. (1993). Escalating problem or moral panic? A critical perspective.ORBIT, 24(1), 6-7.

**Notes**

1 In Ontario surveys by the Ontario Teachers' Federation and the Ontario English Catholic School Teachers' Association and other groups have helped to frame a problem of school violence. In 1990 a Task Force established to study school violence by the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council identified a number of dimensions of the problem including legislative and legal issues.

2 I thank the reviewers for helpful suggestions for points requiring clarification. The article is a much abbreviated version of a larger study of Ontario school board policies and practices for violence in schools. I acknowledge support for that study by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Fellowship. Research findings and conclusions expressed in this article are solely my own.

3 See Marshall and Anderson (1995) for a discussion of feminist and cultural theories of politics; also Mawhinney (upcoming) for a discussion of an interpretive framework for understanding the politics of educational policy change; and Townsend (1995a,b).

4 Michel Foucault was born in France in 1924. He lectured in universities throughout the world, and held a chair at France's most prestigious university. In addition to his classic study: Madness and Civilization, hw wrote: The Order of Things, The Archaeology of Knowledge, The Birth of the Clinic, Discipline and Punish, and The History of Sexuality. Foucault died in 1984.

5 See Sarup (1993) for an introduction to Lacan, Derrida and Foucault.

6 Smart (1992) and Haber (1994) among others analyze the distinctions between post-structural and postmodern theorizing.

7 Foucault was influenced by Nietzsche's conception of a history called "genealogy" which attempted to delegitimize the present by separating it from the past, and which undertakes a critique through the presentation of the difference between what exists and what was.