

The chapters in this book do not aim to provide a definitive account of the phenomena of unsafe sex and teenage pregnancy. As a whole the text works to demystify, complicate and politicize our understanding of adolescent sex and teenage parenthood. Indeed this is one of the strengths of the collection. Discussing the levels of pregnancy and childbearing amongst Latina adolescents in the US, Sherraden, Gonzalez and Rainford, for instance, point out that whilst Latinas are less likely than other adolescents to have received sex education or discussed sex and reproductive health (p. 43), birth rates amongst adolescent Latinas are attributed to place of settlement and generation of immigration (p. 41), and not simply the absence of sex education. Other contributing social factors which lead to adolescent pregnancy and childbearing include a lack of high quality educational attainment, decent career opportunities, poverty and racial discrimination as well as ‘a cultural context that views pregnancy and childbearing as being favourable’ (p. 48). Incentives and avenues to greater opportunity, they argue, ‘are more likely to lead young people to choose school’ (p. 48). Addressing Hmong teenagers in the US, Lee et al point out that for this particular South East Asian community immigration has resulted in delayed marriage and childbirth ‘in exchange for education opportunities and socio-economic growth’ (p. 36).

The concluding chapters address teenage fathers. In Chapter 9 Speak provides interview data to expose some myths about absent fathers and the practical problems young fathers face. Whilst many of the 40 young fathers she interviewed in Newcastle upon Tyne did not have close contact with their children, Speak found that the majority of young fathers ‘hope to be better fathers than they feel their own fathers were’ (p. 151), and ‘felt that parenting should be equally shared between both parents and that parents should be “involved for life”’ (p. 152). However, the young father’s hopes and feelings were frustrated by a number of factors including reluctance from the child’s mother, unsupportive grandparents, unsupportive care professionals and inappropriate accommodation. In Chapter 10, Nyland identifies a further factor which inhibits active fathering – the construction of masculinity.

The only thing missing from this engaging, well written text is the story of children born to young parents. Will a generation of children with social and behavioural problems emerge? What will be the cost to society? The message in this book is that such issues can only be addressed once the problems of poverty and social inequalities are tackled on a much broader scale.

M. Sikand, *ASBOs: A Practitioner’s Guide to Defending Anti-social Behaviour Orders*, LAG Books, London, 2006, £45.00 Pb, ISBN 1–90330–741–4

Reviewed by Dr Dawn Stephen, School of Applied Social Science, University of Brighton, UK.

This book brings a refreshingly objective, reasoned and well researched legal perspective to an arena all too often clouded by populist political rhetoric, dry official guidance documents, or impassioned academic critique. Concurring fully with the praise offered

in the foreword by Edward Fitzgerald QC, I found myself immersed immediately in a cogently written, deeply engaging and informative book that exudes a standard of clarity to which all academics should aspire.

Skilfully each chapter blends extracts from pertinent legislation and case law, supported by firm sign-posting, linking commentary and acute points of critical reflection. Sikand is to be commended for incorporating Home Office sources alongside key concerns expressed by such organizations as asboconcern and the British Institute for Brain Damaged Children. On this basis, the first five chapters adeptly address the many concerns associated with Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Following an introductory outline of the context in which a number of core issues are explored including breaches, geographical variation, the lack of data on ASBO appeals, and the wide definition, Sikand moves on to explain ASBOs and other civil remedies available. The pre-ASBO considerations explained in Chapter 2 provide a lucid insight into the process and remind readers of legal obligations with respect to data protection, consultation and disclosure. Chapters 3 and 4 address the thorny matter of hearsay and 'equality of arms' in respect of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These chapters also explain key legislation and rules and thus afford a solid understanding of the legal referents.

Anyone looking for a coherent explanation of the processes involved need look no further than Chapters 5–9 which explore the mechanics relating to different types of ASBOs, culminating in Chapter 9 with a discussion of consequences of breach. Chapter 5 explains stand-alone ASBOs, Chapter 6, post-conviction ASBOs, Chapter 7, terms and duration of ASBOs, and Chapter 8, written by Rajeev Thacker, explains ASBOs in the county court. As with each chapter of this guide, statutory frameworks, case law decisions and informed analyses are synthesized. Chapters 11 and 12 provide information on appeals and costs.

Chapter 10, focusing on children and young people, will be of greatest interest to readers of this journal. It opens with a return to the troubling issue of ASBO breaches and the consequences thereof for children and young people. This establishes strong foundations for reproducing Gil-Robles' (UN Commissioner for Human Rights) concerns in respect of stigmatization (Gil-Robles, 2005), from which the reader is then manoeuvred through the specific issues that arise in relation to children and young people. Sikand explores the legal principle involved in ascertaining the 'best interests of the child', outlines the obligation to safeguard children's interests in the Children Act 1989, notably section 17 on ascertaining a 'child in need' (she also explores similar obligations in respect of adults under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 in Chapter 5), and explains the greater complexity of cases involving 'looked after children' especially the conflict of interest for local authorities in ASBO applications. An informed discussion on reporting restrictions provides an understanding of the background to lifting restrictions, whilst accounts of the role of the Youth Offending Team and court procedures add further dimensions to this chapter. Unfortunately, although a brief outline is offered, the lack of fuller engagement with Independent Support Orders (ISOs) and Parenting Orders is the only area where this chapter, and indeed the book might have been strengthened.

One hundred and forty-nine pages of helpful appendices include key sections of pertinent legislation, rules and ECHR articles, and examples of forms alongside a lengthy list of contact information for a wide range of statutory and voluntary sources. Sikand also includes a highly beneficial checklist for practitioners to ensure that the questions about their clients' needs are explored and all alternatives to ASBOs are considered fully.

The overwhelming, and indeed reassuring, aspect of this book lies in the way it underlines, despite the many misgivings about ASBOs, the way in which the legal profession is developing judgments and practice to ensure rights are upheld and due process maintained; in short, offering robust procedural safeguards against the potential excesses embedded in the legislation. Accordingly, akin to Sikand's suggestion to 'instruct a criminologist' (p. 142) to challenge 'hot-spot' theories, the book underlines why academics need to engage more with the legal experts involved in the day-to-day processing of ASBO cases to inform our own work. Moreover, the book provides a firm case for much greater legal involvement, especially at the pre-ASBO stage, but, as Sikand explains there is no legal requirement and 'those lawyers who are prepared to work on a *pro bono* basis are not usually welcomed by the legal authority – some have flatly refused to let lawyers be present' (p. 23).

In the light of the deficiencies she highlights in Home Office guidance (pp. 85–7), Maya Sikand is to be congratulated for this outstanding work which will be invaluable to all practitioners involved in 'defending ASBOs'. Moreover, if academics can look beyond the sub-title they will find themselves thoroughly captivated by the extracts from developing case law, statutory tests, and the informed accompanying narrative. I regard this to be crucial reading for anyone involved or interested in ASBOs.

Reference

Gil-Robles, A. (2005) Report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his Visit to the UK 4–12 November 2004, CommDH 6. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.