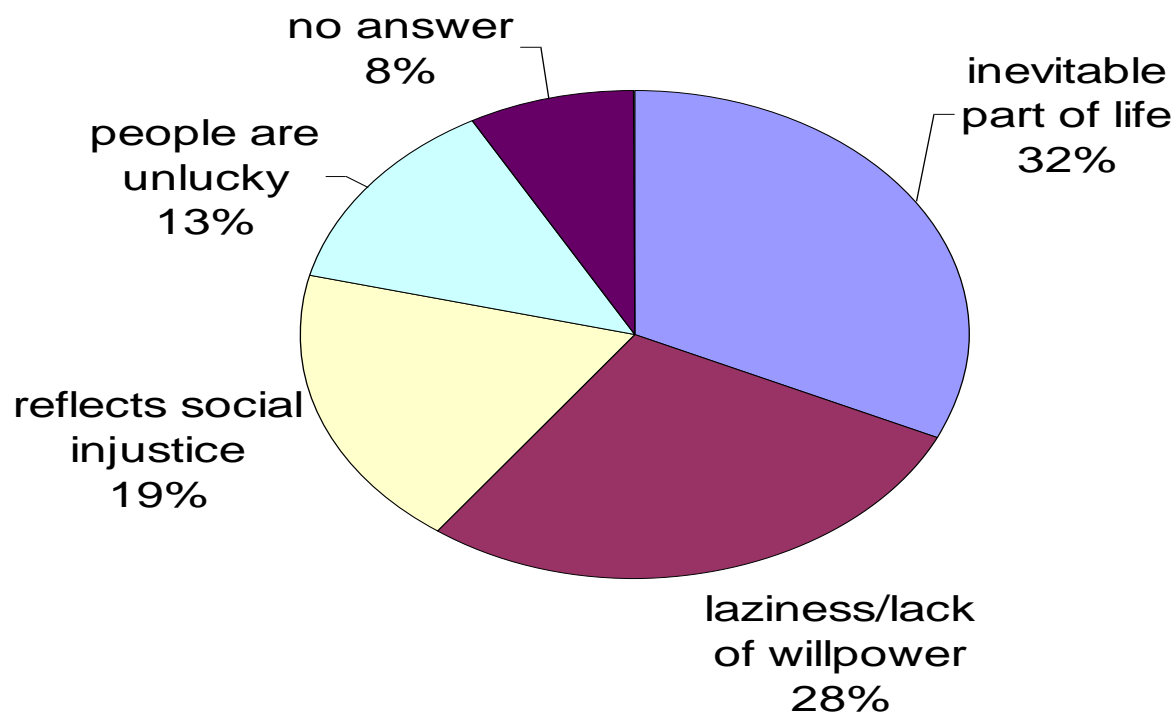


Public Interest in Poverty :

Attitudes and Communication

Professor Fred Robinson, Chad's College.
Teresa Hanley, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Understanding attitudes to poverty: Why do you think there are people in need?



Drivers of public attitudes

- ❑ Belief in social mobility opportunities for all
- ❑ Negative stereotypes
- ❑ Lack of awareness of obstacles people face
- ❑ Lack of informed public discussion

Focus on media

- Rapidly changing
- Major source of information and debate
- New media opportunities



MediaTrust

Society of Editors
fighting for media freedom
www.societyofeditors.org



BBC College of Journalism

Poverty IS in the media



Absences

- Experience
- Voice of people with experience of poverty
- Images



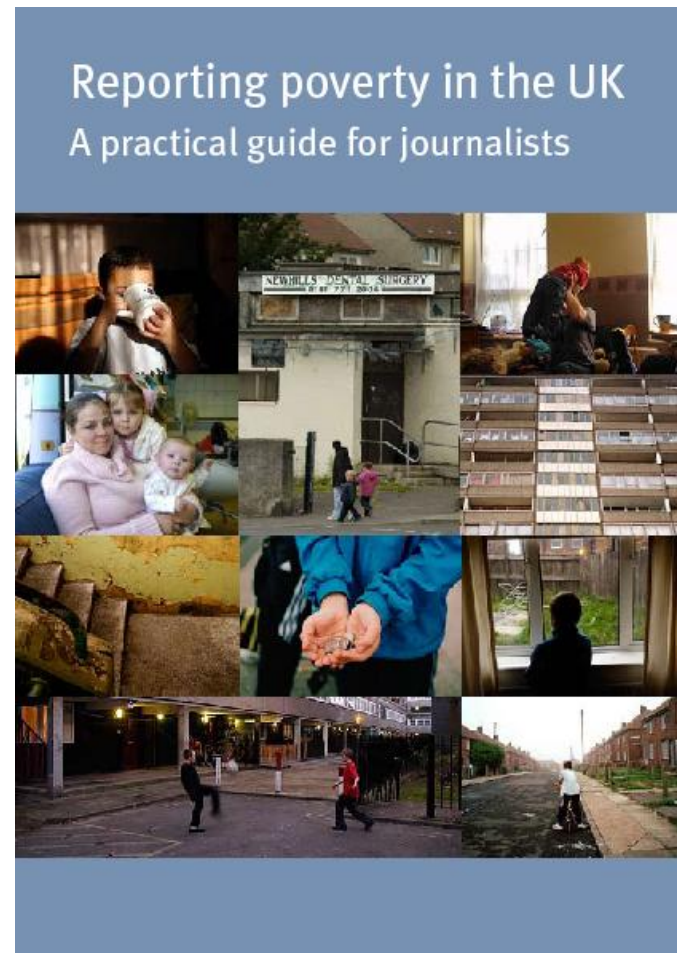
Further resources from JRF

www.jrf.org.uk/work/workarea/attitudes-poverty

- Reporting poverty – an online resource for journalism tutors and students



<http://www.jrf.org.uk/reporting-poverty>



Poverty in the media

Being seen and getting heard

How people who have experienced poverty in the UK can have a more effective voice in the media

Aim is to enhance public understanding about poverty and help generate pressure for action and change

Focus on opportunities for people to present their views, experiences and opinions

- **as ‘case studies’ in the press, on radio and television**
- **using ‘new media’ – self expression via the internet**

Traditional media

- **Inadequate - and often inaccurate – coverage of poverty. Stereotyping, labelling, focus on the extreme and sensational**
- **Poverty only ‘works’ as a story if it includes a ‘case study’. Personal accounts bring a story to life.**

Third sector organisations often get involved as intermediaries, finding case study individuals for the media.

Case studies present opportunities ...

- having a voice, reaching an audience

... and dangers

- exploitation, misrepresentation, consequences

Third sector organisations, faced with requests to ‘find a case study’ need to check out the media, what they want, how they’ll present the story.

Then, support and safeguard the interests of the individual involved:

- work through implications and consequences**
- offer support, eg accompany and train/develop**

Individuals need to:

- **consider risks and potential consequences**
- **negotiate the involvement**
- **think through how to present themselves**
- **consider what support they need**
- **appreciate that their contribution will be edited – and might not even be used**

Be careful, but recognise that:

- **good, accurate and sympathetic coverage is possible**
- **the media can give a voice to people whose views should be heard; can reach big audiences; can be influential**

New media, new opportunities

Big – and continuing – changes in the ‘media landscape’ – fragmentation, proliferation, technology, economic pressures

‘New media’ – centred on internet

Emails, websites, blogs, social networking

Easy and cheap to get a voice and little control.

But can be hard to get an audience.

Third sector organisations can help people with experience of poverty to use the new media by:

- **providing access to internet etc**
- **supporting people, including instilling confidence**
- **providing training**
- **hosting/publishing/promoting material – and develop awareness of outlets, eg media websites**

Production is good – but reaching an audience is necessary to influence public understanding of poverty.

Material has to be:

- interesting, attractive, concise, informative, well-produced**
- so good that people will want to pass it on**

Good examples:

- **Digital storytelling**
- **Guardian's Katine project**
- **Charity websites hosting stories, views and discussion**
- **Development of trusted websites and online communities**

Possibilities ...

- **A web portal with digital stories and serving as a focus for debate. Could be run by a partnership of third sector organisations. Trusted, reliable -- not propaganda**
- **A local demonstration project. Media and communications professionals working with a community experiencing poverty – producing quality material about everyday lives and concerns. Valuing people as experts through their experience; testing out potential of new media to bridge social and economic divides.**