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The editorial group have subsequently expanded activities to include the organisation of related conferences, research and book publication. Regular activities include the bi-annual 'History of Community and Youth Work' and the 'Thinking Seriously' conferences.

The *Youth & Policy* editorial group works in partnership with a range of local and national voluntary and statutory organisations who have complementary purposes. These have included UK Youth, YMCA, Muslim Youth Council and Durham University.

All members of the *Youth & Policy* editorial group are involved in education, professional practice and research in the field of informal education, community work and youth work.

The journal is run on a not-for-profit basis. Editors and Associate Editors all work in a voluntary and unpaid capacity.

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Building capacity in youth work: Perspectives and practice in youth clubs in Finland and Sweden

Torbjörn Forkby and Tomi Kiilakoski

Abstract

Youth work broadly aims to support young people's development, socially and personally, and promotes learning in non-formal settings. One of the best opportunities for youth work in Sweden and in Finland is via the youth clubs, which are staffed by professionals who respond to the needs of young people according to firmly understood policies. In this article we analyse the historical constitution of youth clubs, the connection of youth work to Nordic social policy, the current state of youth clubs, and the perceptions the workers have in respect of their work and professional status. Our comparison of Sweden and Finland provides an analysis of the role that youth work plays in Nordic welfare services for the young, the nature of youth work in general and current tensions. One ubiquitous tension arises from the fact that youth work aims to respond to the perceived needs of society, to the needs of the young, or to the needs of both simultaneously. This article shows that the societal motivation for youth work is similar in both Sweden and Finland, but that the scope, structures and policies vary between the two countries. Whilst youth work is an integral part of welfare policy in Nordic countries, there is no agreement on its scope or even the target group.

Key words: youth work, youth policy, Nordic countries, welfare state, young people, Nordic welfare state.

THE INCLUSION and development of young people in society is one of the major challenges faced by late-modern, knowledge-based economies. Societal strategies to promote the competence and competitiveness of young people have traditionally focused on formal education, from the early years in compulsory schools, through to university studies and vocational training. These foci remain as core strategies. However, in recent years, greater attention has been paid to non-formal learning. The importance of recognising youth work as a way of promoting extra-curricular learning has, for example, been underlined in discussions about lifelong learning at a European level (Partnership Youth, 2011). However, there remains a considerable lack of knowledge regarding the foundations and practice of youth work. This article presents the history of, and challenges faced by a core strategy used in Sweden and Finland to meet and cope with young people outside of formal settings or sporting associations – the youth club. Although this strategy has not always been conceptualized as youth work in policy or practice, we have used it as a tool to introduce and delineate the objective of our study.

Youth work broadly describes measures used to promote capacity-building and learning for young people in youth organisations, leisure activities, youth clubs, and other non-formal settings. Both Finland and Sweden have a long tradition of youth-directed strategies in civil society, religious organisations and local authorities. Throughout their history, and in different forms and with different names, youth clubs have been discussed in official youth policy, and seen as a response to perceived societal short-comings and as one of the more articulate reponses to the question of the intended purpose of youth work.

Here we will both present our own findings and review the relevant research that has taken place in Finland and Sweden. Our own research covers various aspects of youth work, including the perspectives of youth workers on youth work, pedagogical strategies (Forkby et al, 2008), participation as a key tool of youth policy (Gretschel and Kiilakoski, 2007; 2012), history of participation in youth work policy (Forkby, 2010b), youth participation in youth clubs (Andersson et al, 2010; Forkby, 2010a; Kiilakoski, 2011), participation in on-line youth work (Kiilakoski and Taiponen, 2011), and an overview of international research on youth clubs (Forkby, 2011a).

This article aims to analyse the translations and tensions between ideology, core ideas and the practice of youth workers in local youth clubs in Sweden and Finland. We tackle the question of the nature of youth work in general and its adaptation into different settings. Therefore, we analyse the specificity of youth work structures in the two countries and look for common ground and unifying factors. The issues we discuss are as follows:

> *What is the historical constitution of youth clubs?*
> *What do the significant similarities and differences tell us about the connection of youth work with Nordic social policy in general?*
> *What is the current state of youth clubs, and how do youth workers understand their work?*

Youth work in youth clubs

Youth work is carried out in both formal and informal settings. Outdoor youth work can take place for example, in streets, parks, and car parks, or in front of a shopping centre. Indoor youth work can be conducted in different institutional settings, such as schools, youth clubs or prisons, or in commercial settings such as cafés or shopping centres (Sapin, 2009). There are relatively few settings in which youth workers are able to gain control of both activities and context. However, within youth clubs, they have the capacity to limit the clientele, to request that people be in a certain condition or behave in a particular way to gain admittance, to limit the opening hours and to provide a variety of different activities. Youth clubs are virtually the only place in which youth workers do not have to adapt to the existing organisational culture (Kiilakoski, 2011). The material basis, the social interaction, and the desired behaviours have often been decided on, or at least

have been under consideration, before young people enter a youth club (Siurala, 2011). To use the philosophical language of Stanley Cavell (2005), the constituents of the youth club are selected and gathered together to serve a certain pedagogical purpose, meaning there are many choices around what to include and exclude. Therefore, many youth workers regard the youth club itself as having intrinsic value as an instrument of youth work (Kylmäkoski, 2006). Due to their pre-planned nature, youth clubs can be seen as manifestations of the ideals of youth work, indicating what the nature of the interactions between the workers and the youths should be like, how peer-group relationships should develop and the types of activities that are desirable.

If youth clubs are to attract young people, the relationship between participants and leaders as well as cultural issues, are important (Masclet, 2001). Furthermore, if the young people are to actually contribute to the learning of pro-social behaviour, then they must feel secure, have a sense of being connected to the values and norms of the centre, participate in exciting and stimulating activities that engage them, and be guided and supervised by the leaders (Andersson-Butcher and Cash, 2010; Hilton, 2005, Williamson, 1997). Mercier et al (2000) found that successful youth centres should be flexible in order to meet the needs of different youth groups; they should offer exciting activities, provide freedom for the participants to experiment and learn under guidance, recognise the potential of individual participants, offer free and gender-mixed activities, and give support and follow-up to participant learning. The aims include offering an alternative space to the street, families and school, enhancing social and personal learning and contributing to leadership-formation (Ministry of Youth Development, 2010). Youth clubs that achieve this have an open and welcoming atmosphere and provide opportunities for participation in learning. Other studies have also underlined the importance of the fact that learning should include social awareness in a broader sense, such as being a responsible member of society and contributing to societal development and mobilisation (Cheung et al, 2004; Wilson and Snell, 2010), as well as developing a non-discriminatory praxis with respect to ethnicity, gender and age (Wilson and White, 2001; Wong, 2008), and that learning should encourage participation (Andersson et al, 2010; Forkby, 2010b). In some countries, there are also partnerships between schools or other organisations and youth clubs. One goal is to support vulnerable young people in their school achievement (Deschenes and McDonald, 2003), and/or encourage transformative learning and social and personal development (Dahl, 2009).

Youth clubs in Sweden and Finland

Youth work in Sweden and Finland shares many common themes. Both countries relate to the same basic idea of the Nordic welfare state, with relatively high levels of welfare spending, an emphasis on equality, and large public sectors (Nygård, 2006: 357). Youth work is regarded as a separate and independent social entity, distinct from both school and social work. Youth clubs are an example of provision that is primarily funded by the public sector, but not extensively controlled by legislation. Instead, youth clubs are able to operate on the basis of their professional

tradition, with an emphasis on tacit knowledge or 'know-how', meaning that there is no formalised and articulated knowledge-base (Argyris and Schön, 1975). However, lack of legislation means that youth work has a relatively low professional status and there are considerable variations in the backgrounds of workers. Youth work is recognised as an independent professional activity and youth clubs are viewed as an important, even dominant, form of youth work which the state should provide, but there are no clear boundaries regarding its scope.

Legislation and governance

Because no specific legislation covers youth work in Sweden, it is up to local authorities to decide which activities should receive financial help and/or other means of support. Although local authorities play the primary role in running youth clubs, approximately one third fall under the responsibility of bodies other than those in the public sector, through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The National Board of Youth Affairs supports the local authorities and NGOs, primarily influencing policy and ideas (including publicising reports in different areas).

In Finland, youth work comes under its own legislation; the Youth Act of 2006, previously named the Youth Work Act, which first came into existence in 1972 (Youth Work and Youth Policy in Finland). Youth work is governed by the Ministry of Education and is viewed as a non-formal part of the educational system (Hirvonen, 2009). Local authorities govern all youth clubs, with the exception of 'Walkers: Children of the station', an NGO that operates in 13 towns.

Numbers of youth clubs and their target groups

In Sweden, a country with 9 million inhabitants, there are 1109 youth clubs and recreational centres in the 290 municipalities, but the number has declined by 30% since 1990 (SKL, 2011). In addition to these clubs, there are approximately 150 'youth houses', which are primarily for young people aged 17-25 years. The majority of the youth clubs are directed towards young people aged 13-16 and they attract approximately 5-10% of the target population (Elofsson, 2000; Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2006), often with a slightly greater numbers of boys.

In Finland, a country of 5.4 million inhabitants, there are roughly 1000 youth clubs in 320 municipalities, and their number has decreased from 1564 in 1989. In total, youth work reaches approximately 25% of the youth population (Myllyniemi, 2008), and it is estimated that 5-10% of young people regularly attend youth clubs (Kiilakoski, 2011). The target age group is 13-17 years of age. However, there are considerable differences: some youth clubs admit children aged as young as eight years, and some municipalities do not have an age limit. There are no 'youth houses' or equivalent for young people over the age of 18.

Vocational training, occupational group

In Sweden, while there is a vocational training programme for youth work, there is no focused programme in higher education. The standard of this training is considered to be of low and/or inconsistent quality. Most staff members working in Swedish facilities are trained youth workers (or 'recreational leaders') who have undertaken two years of vocational training at 'folk high-schools', but there are great variations in this training, and a sizeable number of staff members are lacking in formal professional education (Forkby et al, 2008). There are approximately 3,700 recreational leaders in different areas, half of whom are employed in municipal leisure and culture agencies. Individuals in this occupation are characterised by a relatively low mean age, low levels of experience and comparatively low pay. Therefore, there is room for enhancing the competence and status of youth work as an occupation (Gunnarsson, 2002).

Finland has a professional training programme with routes both in vocational training and higher education. Most of the staff trained before the twenty-first century have a higher secondary education degree. In the twenty-first century, 'educational inflation', due to training also being given in the polytechnics and universities, has meant that youth work requirements have risen and many municipalities prefer to employ workers with higher education. However, the situation varies. Some of the youth workers are not trained as such, for example, they may have a degree in social work. Approximately 3,400 people have been hired by municipalities (Nuorisotyö, 2012).

In assessing the content of the educational curricula for recreational leaders in Sweden (Forkby, 2011a), youth work appears to be relational (Laxvik, 2001), communicative (Kihlström, 1995) and participation-oriented (Andersson et al, 2010). However, since it draws on tacit knowledge (Svenneke Pettersson and Havström, 2007) and lacks an articulation of what it is meant to achieve (Gunnarsson, 2002), the personal skills and wisdom of the recreational leaders are fundamental to the practice of the work (Trondman, 2003). This resonates with the Finnish research, which implies that the activities, goals and methods of youth work remain largely undocumented (Cederlöf, 2007). Given that youth work is closely tied to local traditions (Hoikkala and Sell, 2007), the lack of documentation means that youth work might not remain connected to its past, thereby weakening the collective memory of the profession (Kiilakoski and Nieminen, 2007). Thus, youth work in Finland also appears to rely primarily on tacit knowledge (Kiilakoski et al, 2011).

Historical formation

Youth clubs in Sweden and Finland share a similar historical background. The first youth club in Sweden opened in 1931, but had a predecessor in the community centres that were organised by the settlement movement. The main growth took place post World War II, and had its heyday in the 60s and 70s; the 'golden years' of the expansion of the welfare state. In those days, youth clubs

could be quite impressive establishments, especially those that were built to meet the needs of inhabitants of newly constructed suburbs. Although there was never a political intention to exclude NGOs from running youth clubs, there was an understanding that local authorities had the prime responsibility for ensuring that these facilities were put in place. The political foundation for the expansion of youth clubs had already been established by the Youth Care Committee during World War II (SOU, 1945:22). Youth clubs were viewed as a response to the new 'youth' phenomenon, a way to counteract some parts of youth culture that were perceived as 'cheap', and, especially, as a way to meet the need of rowdy boys for structured leisure (Olson, 2008b). During this period, youth was a more visible social category in society, while many young people possessed at least some money of their own and enjoyed an increased amount of free time. Established youth organisations and groups did not perceive the changing social circumstances of youth as benign, and a discussion took place as to how young people could be enabled to cope with the new opportunities available to them. One answer was to support different youth associations; another was to establish youth clubs. It was believed that the proposed youth clubs should look and feel like a home, places in which young people would gain from meeting their friends in a comfortable milieu and be guided by empathetic and pedagogically trained leaders. The staff should avoid an authoritarian style, and instead should encourage the strength, capacity and initiatives of the young people themselves. The inspiration for these centres came from the English youth clubs. It was hoped that young people would engage in studies and handicrafts, would obtain information regarding a range of diverse subjects, and would take part in more unstructured activities, such as table-tennis and other games. However, it was stated that fostering ambition should not go too far, but rather must be balanced against young people's own interests.

Later, in the 1960s, it was thought that promotion, rather than prevention, should be the primary goal of the youth clubs; meaning that the interests and resources of the young people should be the focus, instead of what were held to be problems and dangers that could lead to maladjustment. From the 1970s onwards, different areas such as participation projects, gender-related issues, youth exchanges and drug prevention have been the focus of the youth work sector. However, the heritage of the traditional focus on the prevention of risky behaviour and keeping rowdy boys off the streets has never ceased to be an influence. There has always been a tension in the discussion around the aims and function of youth clubs. This tension could be summarised as the following question: Should youth clubs provide an open space for young people to come and socialise and have fun among friends without any demands for engagement in any pedagogical activity, or should they primarily be a place for learning and more structured leisure? (Forkby, 2010b; Olson, 2008a).

In Finland, considerable changes in youth policy came after World War II when the role of municipalities in youth work increased dramatically. Beginning primarily as bodies that allocated financial resources to the NGOs in the 1950s and 1960s, municipalities started to create their own sphere of work in the 1970s. This was connected to wider societal changes, such as rapid

industrialisation and urbanisation (the so called 'great move' from the country to town). The policy question of how to react to the 'youth problem' in urban settings found an answer in youth clubs, allowing the achievement of spatial control (keeping young people away from the streets in a controlled environment) and giving young people opportunities to learn and adopt democratic values. Today, the municipalities play the primary role in youth work, and are responsible for implementing official policy.

The first youth club in Finland opened in its capital, Helsinki, in 1957, to address the problems of street-gangs of boys and concerns about violence and anti-social behaviour (Vesikansa, 1988: 32). The premise was to establish an open youth club, an ideal that was strongly influenced by Swedish youth work. However, youth organisations offering structured services were doubtful about the idea of an open space, since it was seen as 'organised doing nothing' (Nieminen, 1995). In the 1960s, within the new suburban youth culture, young people sought activities beyond those organised by the Church or the NGOs, coinciding with the rapidly changing social conditions of the time. This paved the way for a great expansion of youth clubs, which primarily happened between 1972 and 1995 (Kylmäkoski, 2006). These establishments can be seen as a part of the building of the Nordic welfare state, in which social institutions function as key players in the vision towards securing equality. Compared to other Nordic countries, Finland can be seen as a late-comer, only building the principal instruments of a welfare state from the 1970s onwards. Youth clubs are still being built today, but the primary focus is on renovating older clubs.

The pedagogical ideas behind youth clubs have followed the same course as Sweden. From the mid-1970s onwards, the critical discussion regarding the nature of youth workers has brought with it an emphasis on community education. More recently, the discourse has changed from community education to participation and active citizenship. This shift is surprising given that the degree in youth work in the applied universities of Finland translates as community educator (yhteisöpedagogi), the first of which was established at the beginning of the last decade. Although the students are trained in community education, it seems that the communal status of youth clubs remain unchanged. There is evidence that the participatory activities in Finnish youth clubs have diminished, at least within the last 10 years (Gretschel, 2011; Kiilakoski, 2011). The diversionary function of youth clubs – that is, keeping troubled young people off the streets – has, however, remained as a public perception of their purpose.

The part that youth clubs play in the network of local authority provision is significant. There is evidence that the youth work ideal has changed from being an independent initiative conducted in isolation within youth clubs, to collaboration in networks in which youth clubs function as part of wider youth-directed services (Kiilakoski, 2011).

Comparing Sweden and Finland, it is clearly visible in both countries that youth clubs are seen as an instrument of social policy and as a non-formal learning environment. The rise of youth clubs

coincides with the emerging Nordic welfare state, which Sweden developed ahead of Finland and which influenced Finland accordingly. In the pedagogical landscape, two opposing social aims have influenced youth clubs. Their social justification stems from the fact that youth clubs have been seen as instruments for fostering participation, or, alternatively, as learning environments for a narrow conception of citizenship. The citizenship perspective emphasises the need to take rowdy young people away from the streets and give them learning opportunities, thereby normalising their behaviour, especially in the cities. The participation perspective emphasises supporting the ideas and desires of the young and helping them to define and give voice to their experiences. Youth clubs are historically seen as instruments for reproducing and renewing existing social relationships.

Target groups and attendance

The Nordic welfare system relies primarily on offering universal services. The idea behind this is that it is the role of a just society to offer similar services to different user groups, an idea that is internalised in the occupation of youth work. A youth club generally aims to reach a broad group of young people in certain age groups and neighbourhoods, but in reality the type of group identified does not always correspond to the group of young people who attend. On average, those who attend recreational centres are in more difficult life situations compared to other adolescents, having problems that include difficulties at school, being involved in crime and using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Although the youth clubs aim to prevent anti-social behaviour, it appears this can actually be increased, especially if the activities and organisation are unstructured, and lack goals and conscious planning. Rather than the promotion of positive capacity-building, there can be a negative interplay between the high number of vulnerable young people attracted to the youth clubs, an unclear role for the staff and a lack of constructive feedback to individual young people on their behaviour. This can lead to a situation in which a negative local youth culture provides a boosting effect to exactly the kind of behaviour and attitudes that the youth clubs aim to discourage. Therefore, youth clubs are at risk of having a contradictory preventative effect (Andersson-Butcher and Cash, 2010; Mahoney and Stattin, 2000; Mahoney et al, 2001; Robson and Feinstein, 2006; Feinstein et al, 2006). This process has been described as deviancy-training, meaning that those young people who are more experienced in anti-social behaviour inspire and work as role models for (often) younger teenagers (Dodge et al, 2006).

Youth club staff in both Sweden and Finland usually emphasise the open nature of the clubs and generally do not wish to see hindrances placed on entrance (Forkby et al, 2008; Kiilakoski, 2011). However, research has shown that some clubs become subject to an 'occupation' of the club by certain groups, such as young men presenting challenging behaviour, older young people, or males only (Pettersson, 1989). A fair amount of attention has been paid to gender and cultural aspects. When most young people attending are male, there can be a masculine atmosphere, which makes

it difficult for girls to attend (Honkasalo, 2011). However, perhaps the most obvious tension of today is related to the interplay between indigenous and migrant youth, whereby one or other of these groups can make the club their place, excluding the other. This reveals how young people themselves can limit and normalise a youth club's atmosphere and therefore contribute to how the club can fulfil its mission in youth policy.

Recent literature has emphasised this cultural control of youth clubs by young people and questions whether youth clubs really are open spaces where everybody can attend. The existing client group may control the space through ignoring or excluding new young people. This point was illustrated by a 15-year-old young woman from Finland: 'Youth clubs should be somehow changed. You can't go there, because it is attended by a certain gang that stares at you in an annoying way if you go there.' Studies on youth work have also revealed how racist discourses and symbols have kept migrant youth away (Perho, 2010), sometimes through the use of racist gestures and remarks that were recognised among the young people but not by the staff (Honkasalo and Kivijärvi, 2011). However, lack of knowledge of the purpose of youth clubs on the part of the migrant young people and their parents could also hinder attendance (Kiilakoski et al, 2011).

The use of working methods that aim to achieve strong social cohesion within groups can also unwillingly create an unintended practice of exclusion that builds barriers between groups of young people (Gretschel, 2011; Kiilakoski et al, 2011). A certain amount of social capital is required to enable a young person to be willing, or feel sufficiently comfortable to attend a youth club (Perho, 2010). It is linked with knowing people already attending the club and knowing the cultural preferences and practices inside the club. This shows that the way a worker operates to exert control in a club must consider the broad impact on young people.

Target group and practice

A comparison of youth work research conducted across both Sweden and Finland reveals great similarities in regard to what youth workers consider to be good practice. The opinion that youth workers have of their goal is closely linked to their perceptions of the target group and how they explain the situation of the young people. Whilst most youth workers believe that they invite a diverse group to an open space, there are differences in whether they really think that the group is entirely inclusive, or if it is a limited group which requires special consideration. The practical consequences of this can be shown using data from a focus group study, conducted with youth workers in Sweden (Forkby et al, 2008). The study raised the following question: should the primary target group of youth clubs be broad and inclusive, or an average amount of young people living in the area, or should it be narrower and aim at socially disadvantaged young people? Moreover, are the challenges faced by young people best explained by their psychological development or are they to do with their place in society?

These tensions are present within the traditions of youth work. Psychological and sociological expressions of youth work reflect the tension between youth work as personalisation or socialisation. This is usually the question of whether the work should aim at creating active citizens and operate on shared societal norms or whether it should seek to empower the young to express their voice and fulfil their hopes, regardless of whether they are for or against the norms of the society. The educational psychologist, Jerome Bruner (1996: 67), stated that the opposite forces of individual realisation (giving tools to express one's wit, skills and passion) and societal reproduction (ensuring that culture can further its economic, political and cultural ends) constitute a fundamental antinomy of education. In the context of youth this means that personalisation and emancipation is one obvious goal of the youth club but that there is also a demand to socialise the young to the rules, beliefs and narratives of society. Both poles of this basic antinomy have been historically upheld in Nordic youth work (Nieminen, 1995: 410).

Figure 1. **Perspectives on youth clubs with regard to target group and primary explanation of youth problems** (Forkby, et al, 2008).

	Explanation	
Primary target group	*Psychological*	*Sociologocal*
Broad and inclusive	Safe haven	Room of opportunities
Narrow	Behaviour training centre	Arena for empowered action

If youth workers direct their activities towards attracting the broad 'general' group and draw on psychological explanations, they tend to focus on dangers and talk about the threats that adolescents should be protected from. Unstructured 'hanging out' in neighbourhoods is perceived as a risk that should be counteracted by offering a safe haven in which young people motivate themselves and are guided by strong leaders. If youth workers are more oriented towards attracting a narrower group of troubled or disadvantaged young people, and still primarily draw on a psychological explanation, they are inclined to view their role as one in which they should foster behaviour that enables the young people to function in different situations. They focus on (some) young people who are considered 'rowdy' or in trouble at school and consider these issues as primarily due to problems in the family and personal arena. The role of the youth worker can be said to compensate for what the young person is missing in other circumstances.

If youth workers are more inclined to think in sociologically inspired terms and think that youth clubs should not have a broad target group, the practice they have often called for could be described as a room of opportunities. The youth club should be focused on providing room for

activities that really express what the young people want, and to a lesser extent, which allow them to see that aspirations can be fulfilled. The youth worker should act more as a working, producing partner than as a better, knowing leader. From the sociological perspective, a narrower group may be held as a primary target group; namely marginalised or exploited young people. By using explanations that are more likely to identify societal dysfunctions than individual problems, the youth workers maintain that a youth club must enable young people to partake in and affect how society works. This line of work stresses the importance of raising consciousness and taking action in order to address various shortcomings, be it locally in the community or via an international solidarity project.

The four perspectives outlined above relate to different roles of the youth worker (Kiilakoski, 2011). Youth clubs are seen as leisure-time spaces with little behavioural control or normative pressures. The method of the youth club is to construct a space that is both youth-culturally attractive and a viable pedagogical instrument for achieving the goals of the youth workers. The open access perspective tends to emphasise that youth clubs should be entertaining places for young people to hang out. The targeted approach often emphasises adult control of the club; the workings of the club should be pedagogically sustainable and should offer the workers ways to control the young, creating a safe environment and ensuring that the worker is accepted as an important part of the club. However, this appears to create tension. When the workers express the desire that a youth club should be 'an open city or an open space, where you don't have to tear your life open... You can talk, but you don't have to. … You can listen to music, you can play games or just hang out. You can watch TV' they view the youth club as a sanctuary, a place away from the surveillance and pressures of families, schools and streets (Jeffs and Smith, 2010: 5). However, increasing professionalism and a simultaneous emphasis in public management on measurability and controllability (Koskiaho, 2008) tends to mean that youth clubs should also be controlled yet non-formal environments where the young can learn different attitudes, skills and practices. This creates tensions such as 'hanging out vs. adult-led education' and 'letting the young be vs. participation'. In the daily life of the youth club this is most apparent when the workers have to decide whether the young should be obliged to attend to youth house meetings where the affairs of the youth club are decided.

Discussion and conclusions

In this article we have presented some core ideas behind youth clubs, including their historical background, staffing and actual practice. We claim that youth clubs represent an ideal picture of what youth work can be about, while being one of few areas that the staff can control with regard to target group and activities. We can identify several primary characteristics and challenges from our discussion.

There is a considerable lack of literature concerning youth clubs both not only in Finland and Sweden, but also internationally. As a result, there is no clearly defined description of their aims, or methods, or an evaluation of these institutions. The everyday practice of youth clubs is based on an often unarticulated professional tradition (Hoikkala and Sell, 2007; Kiilakoski, 2011). There is even variation in such a basic question as the nature of a target group. Although political management emphasises the importance of young people with limited social networks as a target group (Lanuke, 2007-2011), youth workers generally try to avoid labelling their target groups.

Although youth clubs are relatively well accepted as part of the welfare services and have a decades-long tradition, contradictory conceptions about the role of the youth club and its basic pedagogical mission still remain. Compared to work conducted in other public institutions, youth work has a relatively loose professional control over the workings of youth clubs. This creates room for pedagogical autonomy, but actually means that situations vary.

The concept and aspirations of youth work are broad, and could in some instances be contradictory: it is claimed that youth work helps young people find themselves (personalisation), but, in contrast, it is said to contribute to inclusion in peer-groups and to finding ways to engage with other youths (socialisation to significant others). Furthermore, while aiming to socialise young people to pre-existing values, structures and practices (socialisation), it is also said that youth work promotes a questioning of the status quo by young people, and encourages them to articulate their dissatisfaction with society (adoption and articulation of a critical perspective).

The historical expression of the policy of youth clubs in both Sweden and Finland is of broad and inclusive practice, which varies according to different agendas of hopes and threats concerning youth and their place in society. On a thematic level one can distinguish five themes: democracy, pedagogy, public health, social work and cultural work. Democracy concerns enabling young people to participate and influence the activities at the clubs. Pedagogy concerns the role of youth workers in enhancing young people's learning and the development of their talents. The public health perspective has gained greater influence in later years and is realised as promoting young people's sense of coherence about their circumstances and a comprehensive view of their life situations, for example their use of alcohol. Influences from social work practice are obvious from the time when youth clubs first were established until today, and can be articulated as compensating socially disadvantaged young people with offers of activity and providing positive alternatives to hanging about on the streets. Cultural work describes what many of the activities are about, for example, giving young people an opportunity to play and learn music, dance and practise theatre and, in its entirety, to provide a place where youth culture has a value (Forkby, 2011b).

In both Sweden and Finland, youth clubs are considered as instruments of youth policy, but the exact nature of that instrument or the professional qualifications of the workers responsible for using the instrument remains undefined. In practice, this has led to the formation of different

professional frameworks on the nature of youth clubs. A relatively weak profession has not been backed by research, so there is a lack of basic knowledge and even of a professional vocabulary in some cases.

Furthermore, youth clubs are viewed by the professional group as an open space offering learning, entertainment, things to do, and a safe environment with the possibility of having a relationship with an adult that does not represent pedagogical authority in the manner of parents or teachers. However, there is evidence that this ideological self-image might not correspond to the experienced reality of the young themselves, or that described in research.

There is a long tradition concerning the strategies employed to enhance young people's awareness of their role and to 'empower' them to partake in decision-making. However, while the discourse of participation is wide-spread, the actual practices can be quite different, depending on the underlying idea regarding the role of the youth worker, and the aims of different activities. If the aim of the youth club is for it to be a place of learning, then the young people are necessary participants in most of what happens, but, in contrast, if the aim is to realise a practice of offering specific activities, the young people are more likely to be invited to a more or less already-set agenda of what is supposed to be done (Andersson et al, 2010; Forkby, 2010a).

Two conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, since the majority of the research has concentrated on the workers' perspective, it is debatable whether the results reflect what is actually happening in the clubs. It might be more accurately described as offering an ideal type of professional image that could serve as a desired goal. When young people are interviewed or practice is observed, the picture of the daily life of a youth club tends to be different. Secondly, it raises the question of the individual and group dimension in the clubs. Both internationally (e.g. Sercombe, 2010) and nationally, workers usually see themselves in engaging with a young person as an individual, yet the group dimensions of youth clubs are evident. This seems to suggest that more attention should be paid to the social psychological dimension of the youth club.

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How do detached youth workers spend their time? Considerations from a time study in Gothenburg, Sweden

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Abstract

Detached Youth Work has been on the agenda in Sweden since the late 1950s. Since then the number of workers overall has increased, though there have also been periods of cutbacks and uncertainty about job conditions. For many youth workers documentation is a recurrent problem. This has to do both with the demand to account for the job in relation to management demands and with the need to use work experience for methodological reflection and development. The article describes a documentation project undertaken among detached youth workers in Gothenburg. Data was collected regarding how the youth work teams distributed their time on different work tasks. The result shows that the youth workers spent a lot of their work-time in direct interaction with user groups. Also a number of patterns developed, indicating differences among youth work teams regarding which work-tasks were emphasized.

Key words: detached youth work, documentation, time-use research.

COMMUNICATING and being accountable for what they do in their work has long been a central concern of detached youth workers in Sweden. Firstly, this reflects the knowledge and experience to be conveyed from their encounter with young people. Youth work meets young people at the crossroads of individual circumstances and structural conditions. Seeing young people as both subjects with individual life-stories and as members of collectives with different access to social resources, gives youth workers an opportunity to contribute to a wider understanding of young people's life conditions and to say something about social problems and possibilities for change. In this context 'youth work stories' (Davies, 2011:23) are often used. Written reports, photos and films are means by which this kind of experience can come to light.

Secondly, the importance of reporting work-based knowledge is connected to professional self-reflection and methodological development. Processes of mentoring have always played a crucial role in professionalising detached youth work; you learn the job from more experienced colleagues (Henningsen and Gotaas, 2008:58). However, there is also a long tradition of gathering quantitative data and presenting statistics. Such development in Sweden, as in so many other countries (Spence and Wood, 2012:2; Hansen and Crawford, 2012:71), has seen an increasing value placed on quantitative 'facts'. Detached youth workers are asked to present their knowledge

and observations in figures and numbers, and to produce 'evidence' for the effectiveness of their interventions.

There is a connection here to a third aspect of the importance of job communication: getting resources. The organization of detached youth work in Sweden has always been a responsibility of the public welfare sector. This makes the situation quite different from 'the funding lottery' which faces street-based youth workers in the UK (Crimmens et al, 2004:71) or the American dependency on 'individuals, businesses and non-profit agencies' (Hansen and Crawford, 2012:72-73). Nevertheless, short-term employment and temporary projects are also realities for public welfare organizations. In periods of cutbacks in public expenditure, detached youth work has often been seen as a voluntary commitment on the part of the municipality and thereby a possible saving measure. Thus, the existence of an insecure work situation and pressure to give grounds for the value of your own job, is part of Swedish youth work history.

From this it follows that managers and politicians from the local social welfare board are focal recipients of the job documentation that the detached youth workers bring forward. This can illuminate the issues of leadership and management of youth work. Typically, detached youth work is what Lipsky has labelled 'street-level bureaucracy' (1980). This is an intervention in the frontline of a welfare organization with a large amount of discretion when it comes to the design and content of job activities and professional relations (pp.13-23). This can cause problems of control at managerial level, which often translates into a challenge for better communication and transparency on the part of the youth workers. They are enjoined to provide the information that the managerial and political level wants in order to understand what the job is about and thus to keep the effort going.

The outcome of this communication is to a large degree dependent on the overall relationship between the parties involved and this varies a lot. Sometimes there is mutual trust and the workers feel that they are really listened to. On other occasions the relationship is strained and the workers' reports are treated with a lack of interest or judged irrelevant.

Such experiences were highlighted in a series of seminars that we arranged at the Department of Social Work, University of Gothenburg, during 2008-2009, in co-operation with detached youth workers in the Gothenburg area. The general aim of the seminars was to create an informal forum where theoretical and methodological issues in detached youth work could be explored. It showed that questions concerning documentation, communication and evaluation of the job were major concerns. As a result, a small project with a focus on job documentation was designed and carried through. The project resulted in both anticipated and unexpected outcomes that will be presented and discussed below. A significant argument to emerge from the project is that the description and analysis of youth work with an emphasis on quantitative measures should not involve large-scale efforts in the hands of research teams. There are quite a few things that can be done by the youth

workers themselves with just a little help from outside. However, before describing this project a brief account of the history of detached youth work in Sweden and its present condition will help to set the context.

How it started

The first appointment of a detached youth worker by the city of Gothenburg was made in 1958. The background was that local politicians and officials felt worried by a perceived increase in social problems connected to the lives of young people. To some extent the discussion was about long-established signs of youth marginalisation: criminality, drugs and prostitution. However, there were also reports of a range of newer problematic issues connected to cultural identities and large assemblies of youth in the city centre (Brange, 1982: 89-90). Among these groups the 'greasers' were perhaps the most significant. With their huge American cars, their greasy hair, leather jackets and their taste for American rock music, they were easily seen and heard and got a substantial amount of attention in the local press.

A former leader of one of the Youth Clubs in the city was employed to the detached youth work position and he spent a lot of time on outreach work in order to get an overview of the local conditions for young people. He also engaged in individual 'treatment' and group work. Contact was established with many of the greasers. About 200 of them were organised in a club of their own, 'the Road Jolly Rogers', and gained access to a centrally located meeting-place through their contact with the worker.

The idea of detached youth work was not new at the time. In youth clubs and local settlements the 'open line' had been practised for many years. Some years earlier the police had started a project where plain-clothes policemen roamed the streets of the city-centre in search for runaways, vagrants or otherwise wanted persons. They faced legal restrictions in their work with under aged people and therefore drew the attention of the social authorities to the need for a social worker who could work in the same way with young people. There was also some inspiration from Stockholm, Sweden's largest city, where detached youth workers had been employed two years earlier. The history behind these appointments was in many ways similar to the circumstances in Gothenburg. However, the idea of doing outreach work in Stockholm was mediated through contacts with youth workers from Cleveland, USA. Through this, the beginnings of outreach work in Sweden were in some sense connected to the American tradition of street-based youth work, emanating from the Chicago Area Project. This influence should not be exaggerated, but informal youth organisation was initially understood in terms of 'gangs' and so detached youth work in Sweden was for a long time labelled 'gang-work' (Andersson, 2005: 25-31).

On another level, the introduction of detached youth work was part of an increasing public

engagement in the social conditions and problems of young people. It was based on an idea of the active state taking responsibility for the social situation of vulnerable groups in society. This responsibility had both supporting and controlling effects. Detached youth work was seen as a method for intervening in acute problematic situations, as with the greasers, but was also understood as a preventative measure. It was a way to get in contact with young people and to start a supportive process to young people in need at an early stage (Olson, 1992:21-23).

Present situation

Starting from these first endeavours in the 1950s, detached youth work soon spread nation-wide. In the mid 1970s an investigation showed that 83 out of 278 local municipalities in Sweden employed detached youth workers. Ten years later this had increased to about 100 municipalities and the number of detached youth workers was estimated to 400 (Calissendorff et al, 1986: 39). Today the estimate is that there are about 500 detached youth workers employed all over the country (RiF, 2010:3). In a fifty-year perspective this development may suggest a linear increase in the number of detached youth workers. However, in fact it has rather been a history of ups and downs. Due to cutbacks, short-term employment and temporary projects the number of detached youth workers has been in constant flux.

Traditionally, detached youth workers in Sweden have been organised within two different sections of the local administration. Probably most common is employment within the social services. In this context detached youth work is seen as part of a preventative social work strategy to get in touch with risk-taking young people. The second option is to be employed by the leisure and recreation department. In this case, the outreach effort is often closely connected to youth clubs and leisure-time activities. On the whole, the organisational body tends to recruit detached youth workers from different educational backgrounds. The social services employ people with a three and a half year university degree in social work, while leisure departments engage persons who have undertaken a two-year course organised by the folk high schools. This difference in professional formation means that people bring with them quite different understandings of, and training in youth work. Level and length of education also have consequences for terms of employment including salary and the possibilities of advancement. This divergence is counterbalanced by feelings of professional togetherness amongst the detached youth workers themselves. Commonly workers stay for a substantial number of years in the position, though there are no reliable statistics concerning turnover. In larger cities with several youth work teams it is not unusual to move from one team to another. Detached youth workers tend to be young. One reason for quitting the job is having problems in combining family life with late working hours. Quite often youth workers try to find jobs in the social sector where they continue to work with young people and their families. The educational background is of importance when it comes to what kinds of jobs that are available. Workers with a university degree definitely have more options to choose from.

Detached youth work is not an expensive intervention; costs are mainly connected to staffing. Aside from that, most teams have at their disposal a budget for minor activities.

Since 1974 detached youth workers in Sweden have managed to sustain a professional organisation. This organisation arranges a national conference every year and supports regional meetings. In the Gothenburg area, for example, detached youth workers meet four to five times a year to discuss common matters. During the autumn of 2008 and spring 2009 this group had a couple of extra meetings in which this author participated to strengthen the discussion on methodological issues.

The documentation project

One topic much discussed during these meetings was the documenting of work content. This discussion had at least three sub-questions. The first was about what information should be recorded. The second was how the documentation should be designed. Thirdly, the discussion was to whom the documentation should be directed. This discussion ended up in a decision to carry through a documentation project where all detached youth workers would record their daily work using the same template. The goal was to achieve an overview of how the youth workers spent their working hours and to identify differences and similarities in how the work was performed.

I constructed a template for the documentation, which consisted of six different forms. One of them was designed to summarize the whole working day and was labelled: 'Time distribution of tasks'. Here the worker reported how the working hours of each day had been divided between different tasks. The worker filled in the form individually. However, if two or more workers had carried out a task together, this could be recorded collectively. There were five categories of tasks to be used: 'outreach work', 'activities', co-operation', 'internal work' and 'other tasks'. For each of these classifications there was an additional form.

The category 'outreach work' was intended to cover outside-oriented and contact-making approaches to reach members of the target group. This was both about making new contacts and keeping up old ones. On the form the worker should report where the outreach work had been done, how many people they had met, their sex, age and if it was a new or old contact. 'Activity' was about efforts to help and support. Often these have an organised and prepared character, but not necessarily. On the form the workers could report activities on different levels: individual, group or overriding/community. 'Co-operation' covers collaboration with other units and organisations. It is common for detached youth workers to participate in regular 'co-operation-groups' consisting of representatives from local bodies such as schools, youth clubs, the police and the social authorities. But co-operation can also mean working together on certain occasions and projects. On the form it was possible to report the kind of collaboration; its purpose, participants and kind of activity. 'Internal work' covered what is often referred to as 'office work'. Three

different types were distinguished: planning/preparation, supervision/managerial contact/collegial talk and documentation/reporting. The category 'other tasks' was intended to cover everything that did not fit into any of the other categories.

The collection and processing of data

The documentation project was carried out during the period from 25th of May to the 7th of June 2009. In all, thirty individual detached youth workers participated, representing ten different teams. Of these, eight belonged to different district councils in the city of Gothenburg, one team was set up by a non-governmental organisation and the final team represented a municipality located just outside Gothenburg. The vast majority of the then currently active detached youth workers in Gothenburg participated in the study. One district did not take part, due to being recently set up.

During the two-week period, the teams filled in the forms and afterwards sent them to me for processing. Together with the forms, each team received a written explanation on how to use them. Most of the participating workers had been taking part in the process of discussing and planning the project, so they were well aware of the purpose of the study. There were few questions from the youth workers during the documentation period.

The method of data collection makes it possible to map how each individual detached youth worker spends his or her time. However, the presentation and analysis of data is carried out collectively. So each account for daily working hours in a team was added together in order to identify a pattern of time-use for the whole group. This was calculated in three steps. First all working hours have been summed up in a total for the team. Then the individually reported hours for each task category has been added together and, finally, the sum for each category related to the group total and computed in percentages. That is, if one team reported a total of 100 working hours for the two-week period and spent in all 32 hours on outreach work, then the team used 32% of its working hours on outreach work.

One consequence of this way of counting is that differences between individual workers are evened out. If one worker spend a lot of hours on one task category and another worker very few, the result on the group level is medium. This kind of calculation does not separate what is done single-handedly or by two or more. If two workers during one day spend two hours on 'activities', the effect on the group level will be the same no matter if they work together on the same activity or if they work individually on two different ones.

The main reason for putting this emphasis on the team-level is that detached youth workers often act and present themselves as members of a team. In general, there is a feeling of togetherness between group members and detached youth workers are often understood and identified as a

team from the outside. However, since data is reported individually it is possible to give general comments on specific group patterns. I will briefly come back to this later in the text.

Results in general

One of the ideas behind the study was to get a picture of how detached youth workers in general allocate their time between different work tasks. The underlying assumption here was that the strong sense of coherence, often expressed by detached youth workers, would result in quite similar ways of spending their working hours. However, the general conclusion of the study is rather that there are substantial differences between the teams. From the material it is possible to recognize a number of different 'orientations', when it comes to how the hours are employed. These diverging patterns are presented below, but first a few observations about the general picture.

In all there were 1,722 working hours reported during the two week research period. Adding the work done by detached youth workers not participating in the study, a total of some 1,000 working hours is spent on professional detached youth work every week in the Gothenburg area. Obviously, this represents a substantial effort and offers a real possibility of making a contribution to the welfare of young people in Gothenburg. At the same time, it should be noted that there are about 55,000 young people aged 13-20 years, living in the area. So, of course, there are many to share the offer.

The reported working hours distributed between the different task categories are shown in chart no 1:

Chart 1
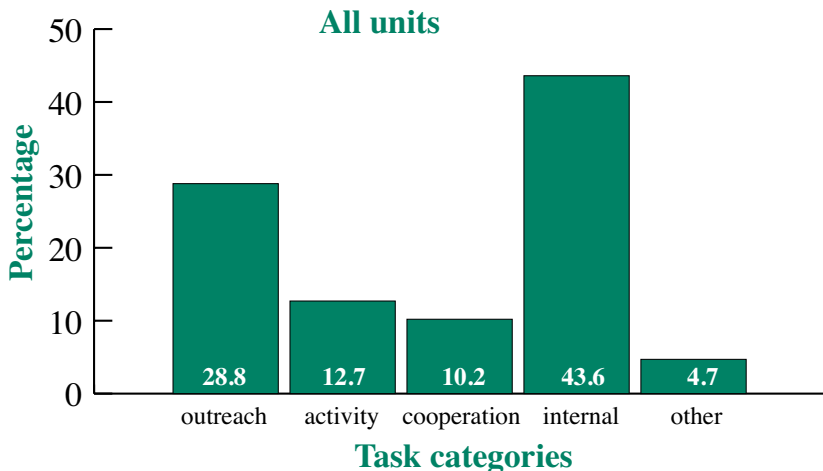
What we can see is that two categories dominate: 'internal' and 'outreach'. Considering the construction of the categories this outcome is to be expected. The specific job actions contained in these two categories are greater in number and take more time to pursue. To a large extent 'activity' and 'co-operation' covers organized endeavours and these are not so time-consuming. Also, all preparation work was coded as internal work.

One question that is illuminated by the figures is the relation between time spent in direct contact with target groups and time used for administrative work. This has long been an issue among groups involved in social work and there is a general feeling that paper work and internal meetings tend to take too much time away from direct work with user groups. In a Swedish context, the concept of 'user-time' has been introduced by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL, 2007). This is seen as a possible tool for measuring the quality of social service at the local level with the presumption that it is in the meeting between staff members and users that quality can be achieved (p. 11). In a project where user-time was measured among a number of social service units, the share of user-time shifted between 16% and 37% of the working hours (p. 22). One important factor that influenced the result was the character of the job. In general, units with high demands to carry out investigations and produce documentation spent less time in direct contact with users. Since this is not something that characterizes detached youth work, the expectation would be that this kind of method has a high level of direct work in relation to users. To get an estimation of this from the figures presented above, it seems reasonable to add the two categories 'outreach' and 'activities'. The result is a calculated user-time of 41.5%, which is high in comparison to the examples we have from other social work units. Now, it should be remembered that the study presented here was small and experimental in design, so figures should be considered critically. Still, it is an indication of a methodological user-orientation by the detached youth workers in the Gothenburg area.

The outreach work

The form used for reporting hours spent on outreach work was constructed in order to achieve a quantification of how many young people that the youth workers met during a week. There were also questions about age and sex of the young people involved, and if the workers had met them before. It turned out, however, that these data were difficult to register in a uniform way. For example, it was sometimes difficult to decide with whom they had made a 'contact', especially on occasions where a large number of young people were present.

What one can see from the information gathered is that the outreach work is carried out in a variety of settings. For one part the youth workers visit specific local places that are known to be hang-outs of young people. Here the youth workers, to a large extent, meet young people with whom they already have a contact. The outreach work is a way of keeping the contact going and the workers

are sometimes looking for encounters with certain individuals or groups. During such encounters the verbal exchanges often have a conversational and informal character, just confirming the existing relationship. However, sometimes more serious matters are dealt with and what seem to be an almost treatment-oriented dialogue occurs.

Sometimes the outreach work is directed to places where the youth workers expect to meet many young people, as well as those who are unknown to them. This could, for example involve a visit to public youth events or the city centre during weekends. Encounters with earlier unknown young people are of course more frequent on these occasions. Other arenas for outreach work are institutionalized settings such as youth clubs. Visits to local schools are also regular. The youth workers then concentrate on the semi-public space of schools: corridors, leisure-time spaces and the schoolyard. One benefit of this kind of outreach is that in schools the youth workers can make themselves visible to a large number of the young people in the area. This facilitates later contacts and is also a way to present themselves to young people who seldom make use of other public meeting-places.

One impression from the documentation is that the local public life of young people varies a lot between different residential areas. In some areas there are lots of young people outdoors and the youth workers can make contacts by just moving around in the neighbourhood. In other areas the public life seems restricted, less vivid and everyone that the youth workers come across is someone they already know. To a certain extent this may of course be related to how the youth workers perform the outreach work, but it is probably also connected to differentiated patterns of local social relations.

Internal work

The largest category was 'internal' work. This is often understood as the opposite of outreach work and other user-oriented activities. However, what becomes very clear in the documentation is the strong connection between administrative and organizational tasks on the one hand and direct work with youth and their families on the other. The outreach sessions often produce a large need to do follow-up work. A lot has to do with communication: people to be contacted, emails to be written and phone-calls to be made. Another part of the internal work has to do with planning, especially in connection with organized activities.

A lot of internal work is caused by the fact that the youth workers belong to a larger organization. There are unit meetings, information sessions and different kinds of educational gatherings. Most teams have professional tutoring by an external supervisor with regular meetings once or twice a month.

Finally, internal work includes a lot of documentation and writing reports.

Activities

As defined here, 'activities' covers all kinds of planned and organized work that is done in direct relation to young people and their families. According to the documentation from this study, a large part of this work is centred on the young person as an individual. The youth workers often have individual contacts, sometimes occasional, sometimes recurrent, where they talk things through with the young person and try to find ways to deal with problems and support sustainable solutions. This work sometimes includes contacts with the young person's family. Some teams structure the individual work by using generalized methods like 'rePULSE', which is a method for training social skills and impulse-control developed out from Aggression Replacement Training (ART).

There are also examples of group-work in the documentation. These include both temporary activities such as canoeing with a school-class as well as regular meetings in a girls group or playing football with a group of boys. Sometimes the work is directed to bigger groups. One team works with information on alcohol and drugs in a school and another team is planning activities with young people on neighbourhood-base.

The clear impression from this study is that the individual work enjoys a substantially larger proportion of the working hours, than does the group work. This is a change because traditionally, especially since the 'gang-work' era, detached youth work had been strongly associated with group activities. To some extent the outcome may be due to the fact that the collection of data was undertaken at the end of the spring. This is a period when some of the regular group work has been just concluded. However, this can only partly explain the difference. The study here probably reflects an actual shift in how detached youth work is carried out; a change that has also been identified among British youth workers (Crimmens et al, 2004:18).

Co-operation

All teams were involved in some kind of organized co-operation. All but one of those working for the city or a municipality are required to form a group with regular meetings. Participants are usually local schools, youth clubs in the area, the social services and the police. These groups may organize joint activities outside the group meetings.

Aside from this, the teams had quite a large network of contacts to a number of actors and organizations, often on a local basis. Every now and then they were doing things together. During data collection, it was sometimes complicated to decide whether an undertaking should be classified as 'co-operation' or as 'activity'. I decided to use a restricted definition of 'co-operation': tasks classified in that category are where co-operation was an obvious and independent goal of the activity.

The different orientations

So far, the general outcomes of the study have been described with emphasis on the common traits of detached youth work. Some teams have a distribution of work hours similar to the general one but there are also some interesting variations and these are presented below.

Chart 2

Outreach-orientation
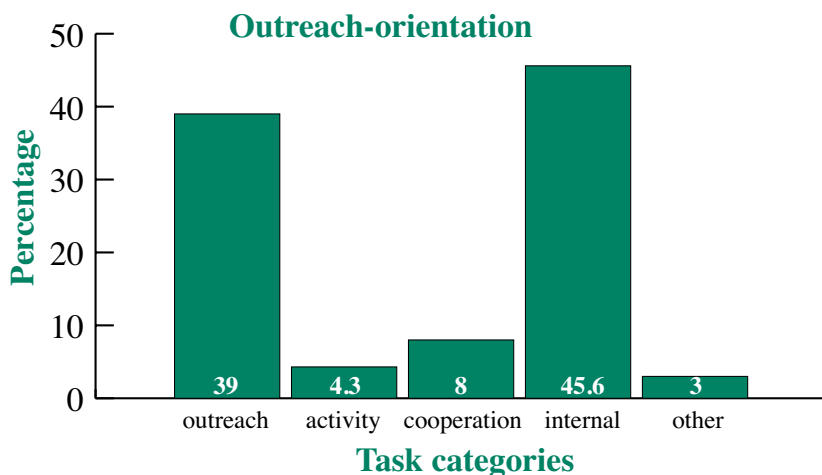
First, there is a team with a pattern that can be labelled 'outreach-orientation'. This team has the largest proportion of hours spent on outreach work. At the same time, the unit also spends a lot of time on internal tasks, while the activity category is low. As mentioned earlier, in the everyday understanding of detached youth work, outreach and internal work are often constructed as the opposites of one another. In meetings with managers and politicians in the field of social work, the belief is often encountered that many hours on the street and few in the office characterize good detached youth work. This idea is common among youth workers also. What the result here indicates is that the relationship between the two categories is more complex; sometimes they don't seem to substitute for one another, rather they belong together. Now, the unit behind these figures differs in two ways from the other units in the study. First, it is a mobile team with the whole city as its target-area. The team has a quite large bus at its disposition, which functions as a rolling meeting-place. The bus makes stops at both regular and occasional places and is well known to many young people in Gothenburg. The team also do outreach work by foot with the bus as a starting point. The second difference has to do with organization: the team is set up by a Christian foundation. This foundation carries out a lot of social work in different areas and combines professional and volunteer efforts. The youth work team is, however, purely professional and the members are employed because of their education and work experience. They collaborate

with the municipal detached youth workers and take part in its regular meetings.

What seems to characterize the work of the team is that they have a huge number of contacts with young people, spread over a large area of the city. They visit both suburbs and central parts of Gothenburg. In relation to the young people they meet, they have a lot of in-depth talks, individually or in small groups. However, it seems difficult for the team to transform these contacts into organised efforts, such as regular groups or community activities. Since they work all over the city, there is no particular neighbourhood where they can form long-term relations and work in co-operation with other local actors. It is hard for the team to form the generative relationship between outreach work and social change efforts that is typical of much detached youth work (Andersson, 2011:11).

It is interesting to compare this work-pattern with another one, labelled 'activity-orientation', that is shown in chart 3:

Chart 3

Activity-orientation

24.4	32.6	7.2	29.7	6.2
outreach	activity	cooperation	internal	other

Percentage (y-axis, 0–35)
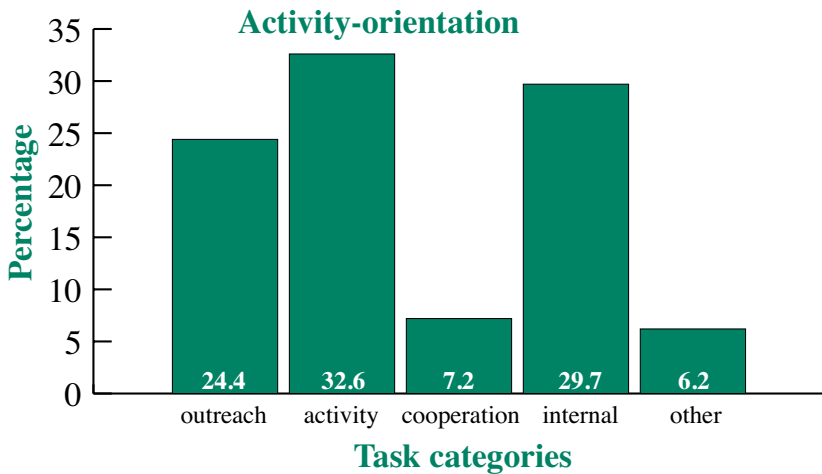
Task categories

The team in question here has a work pattern where 'activity' is the most time-consuming task category. This is a striking contrast to the other teams and again it has to do with working conditions and how different work tasks are structured. It is not uncommon in Sweden that detached youth work units, especially when organized within the social services, are given responsibility for work tasks that are only loosely connected to the role as a detached youth worker. This may be about such control-oriented measures as checking how local retailers comply with age limits when selling tobacco and beer, or handling short-term treatment programmes for young people with a criminal record. For the team with the 'activity-orientation' these kinds of responsibilities have been developed significantly and hence it functions as a support-unit to which other organized

actors, such as social workers or schools, can refer young people in need. Mainly it is about providing individual support, in the form of counselling and practical assistance.

The result of this situation is that the detached youth work is only a part-time occupation. As we can see, the team still manages to maintain a quite substantial outreach effort. One consequence of the work design is, however, that there is little connection between the outreach work and the activities that the team carries out. This is mainly due to the circumstance that the young persons, to whom the team is giving individual support, are not the same people that the youth workers meet during outreach sessions. Thus there is a tendency that the result of the outreach work is limited to superficial contacts with young people and does not function as the basis for relationship-building and further activity-formation.

When the 'outreach-oriented' team is set side by side with the 'activity-oriented' one, we can see resemblances, but also differences. Both share the problem with developing outreach contact-making into organized activities, but for quite different reasons. In the first case the work is diffused in too many settings and, in the second case, the work tasks are separated by different organizational rationales.

A third variation of time-use can be extracted from the collected data. This is shown in chart 4 and called 'co-operation-orientation'. What characterizes the work of this team is a comparatively high degree of co-operation. As mentioned, the most common task in the co-operation category is regular meetings with a local group of public sector actors: police, schools, social services and youth clubs. The co-operation-oriented team also participates in such a group, but the difference is that the members of the group don't restrict their joint activities to meetings. The activities that the detached youth workers do together with others are not of a different kind. The same kind of individual and group work can be found among all the teams.

Chart 4

outreach: 36.5 activity: 8.8 cooperation: 25.3 internal: 26 other: 3.3
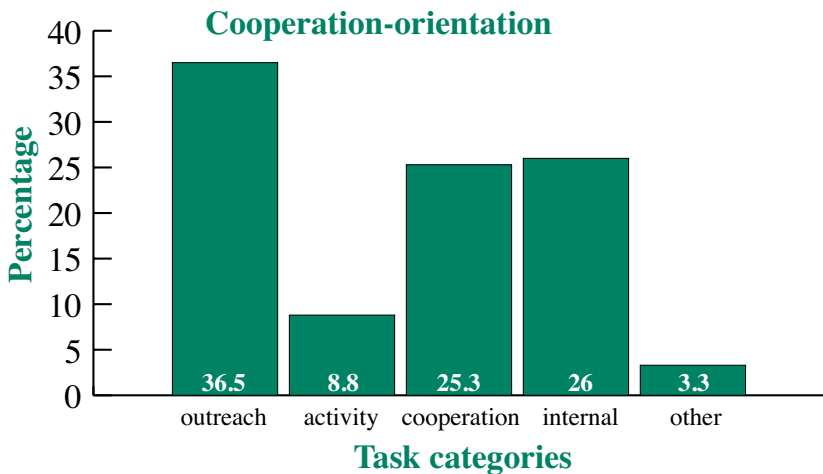
But what happens here is that a lot of the work is, in practice, carried out with other professionals.

There is a possible explanation for this situation. The neighbourhood where this team works had a very troublesome period some months before the study was made. Groups of young people protested against what they experienced as police harassment and a general sense of being excluded. There were lots of incidents and massive attention in the media. One response from actors working with young people in the area was to try to co-operate and to use existing resources in a productive way. The high level of co-operation in the work of these detached youth workers is a part of this. It can be seen as an indication of the flexibility of detached youth work.

Finally, a fourth pattern of how the working hours were used can be seen in chart 5. Here the internal work dominates and it is actually a picture of a non-functioning detached youth work. The team presented in the chart consisted of two youth workers. However, one of them had recently quit and moved to another job. So when the study was carried out, the process of recruiting a new team-member was going on and the remaining worker was engaged in this. This took a lot of time and it was also difficult for the sole youth worker to carry out several of the customary work tasks alone. So this is a detached youth work project whose engine is idling.

Chart 5
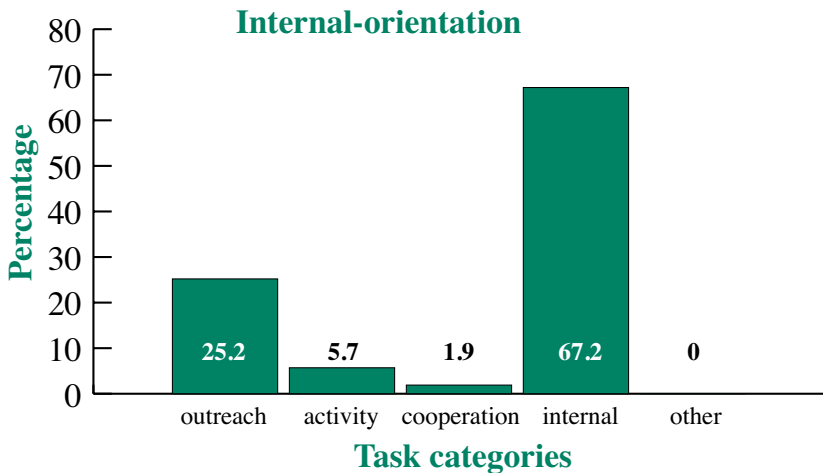
Two more teams were in a somewhat similar condition. For one of them this was due to cutbacks in budget and a possibility of being closed down. For the other it was a temporary situation connected to several members being involved in an extensive educational programme.

The general conclusion to be drawn from this time-pattern is that detached youth work can be quite

vulnerable to changes. The teams are often small and a lot of the work is preferably done in pairs. So if someone is missing, this can have huge impact on the whole work situation.

The calculation of working hours has been made at team-level. One question is whether all members of a team perform the same work tasks or if there is any internal differentiation. The general answer to this question is that in most cases the team functions as a collective; all duties are shared. However, there are a couple of exceptions to this rule. In two teams there was a worker with a specialized role. This worker was responsible for certain tasks or subjects and worked alone quite a lot. In one case it was a part-time worker.

Conclusion

What can be concluded from this small study of detached youth workers in Gothenburg? One thing it shows is that quantitative studies need not be huge in scope and can be carried through in co-operation between the academy and professionals in the field. This study was planned together and the youth workers took responsibility for the collection of data, while I have carried out the processing. The outcome was then discussed in seminars. It also shows that quantitative data can be used as a basis for qualitative understanding of job conditions and characteristics. This can give important information about what is happening in the field and add to better methodological and theoretical understanding of detached youth work.

The study indicates that in general, detached youth work in Gothenburg fulfils one important goal: in comparison to other types of social work it contains a lot of work-time spent in direct interaction with user groups. At the same time the notion of a 'general' detached youth work is questioned. When the use made by participating teams of their working hours were put together, several variations became apparent. Detached youth workers often act as a collective, but it seems to be the case that there are differences in how the job is performed. Some of these differences are connected to basic, often organizational, job conditions and have a stable character. The 'outreach-orientation' and the 'activity-orientation' are examples of this. Other variations are rather occasional: the 'co-operation-orientation', and the 'internal orientation'. Here temporary circumstances shape conditions that affect the work and when things go back to 'normal', these variations will disappear. They show two important traits of detached youth work. One is the flexibility that marks the method. Detached youth work can adapt to sporadic changes and develop temporal strategies. The other characteristic is that detached youth work units can be quite vulnerable to changes in work conditions and number of staff.

There is a link here to the question discussed in the beginning of the article: the possibilities which politicians and managers have to direct the work. To a large extent, it was the workers' experience that they selected interventions in relation to the situations they faced during the outreach work.

It is, however, clear that there is a regulating force emanating from other factors decided at the political and managerial level, that frame the work. In particular, this is obvious in the two patterns that I have called the 'outreach-oriented' and the 'activity-oriented'. Perhaps this type of steering has a greater impact in practice, than what is generally assumed among detached youth workers.

In their study, Crimmens et al (2004) identified a process of 'erosion' when it comes to the specificity of 'detached' and 'outreach' youth work in the UK and therefore decided to use the more general term 'street-based youth work' (p 47). Does the identification of the different 'orientations' in this study signal that a similar process is on its way in Sweden? 'Detached youth work' still functions as a label and symbol of professional identity to youth workers in Sweden. The comparatively privileged and protected position inside the welfare system is probably one reason for this. The long tradition of collective organization and methodological reflection is another. However, there is always a risk that conventional thinking and the support of collective identification actually disguise important changes. This must be investigated with the help of further research and the collection of experiences from the field.

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Gang talking criminologists: A rejoinder to John Pitts

Simon Hallsworth

Abstract

In 'Reluctant Criminologists', John Pitts (2012) attacks his critics on the criminological left by arguing they deny the reality of gangs and the destructive violence they occasion, and are beholden to an ideological position that holds that the gang is not nor should be a legitimate object of criminological enquiry. He concludes by restating his thesis that gangs today are both real, dangerous and constitute the new face of youth crime. As one of those subject to his critique, here I develop a rejoinder in two parts. I begin by repudiating the critique of gang denial. The article concludes by taking issue with the justification Pitts produces to substantiate his thesis. His thesis and those of his followers, I argue, is flawed on evidential, epistemological and methodological grounds.

Key words: gangs, gang talk, gang talkers, violence, street culture.

IN THE LAST decade, the UK has found itself under attack by urban street gangs which are apparently on the rise and everywhere around us. They have, or so it is claimed, armed themselves with various 'new weapons of choice' ranging from rape to 'weapon dogs', have evolved large corporate structures, are forcibly 'recruiting' members, and constitute a serious threat that we need to get 'real' about. This is the case at least according to British academic John Pitts (Pitts, 2008) who together with his followers, has identified gangs today as 'the new face of youth crime'. Though it would appear that his work has been well received by some members of the practitioner community (but by no means all), his work has not been that well received by the wider criminological fraternity, many of whom (myself included), have considerable difficulty accepting these sensational claims. In his paper 'Reluctant Criminologists: Criminology, Ideology and the Criminal Gang' (Pitts, 2012), he reflects on why so many of us refuse to accept his vision of this, the UK gangland thesis. As Pitts sees no problem with his vision, the problem, at least as he conceives it, must lie with his critics.

He could, of course, have made direct contact and asked people like me to elaborate on our differences. Instead, he brings his powers of deduction to bear in order to discern the reasons that lead us, in his words, to 'deny' the reality of the gangs and indeed their very existence as a legitimate object of criminological enquiry. As a member of (again, in his words) the 'hard left'

category of deniers, in what follows I will develop a rejoinder to his paper.

Let me begin by summarising the arguments Pitts presents against us. He begins by trotting out the left realist argument which holds that the critical left ignore the reality of crime and its impact on communities because they romanticise the youth cultures they would do better to condemn. Despite the fact that Phil Scraton is not, nor would consider himself to be a gang expert, he is nevertheless singled out as an exemplar of this position. Such 'left idealists', Pitts argues, 'wash their hands' of the real violence gangs perpetrate.

As I could hardly be criticised for romanticising street violence, having spent my career as a criminologist writing about it, Pitts adopts a different line of attack. I deny the reality of gangs because I am, apparently, a latter day Leninist beholden to a political position which holds that gangs cannot or should not exist as an object of critical enquiry (Pitts, 2012).

> For the dwindling band of latter-day criminological Leninists in Anglo-America and the European mainland, the party line dictates that the 'gang' is a fabrication of, what the, subsequently incarcerated, Marxist-Leninist philosopher Louis Althusser (1969) termed, the 'ideological state apparatus'; the purpose of which is to deflect attention from the real contradictions of capitalism towards allegedly problematic 'outgroups' (Pitts, 2012: 32).

Pitts develops his attack further by launching a somewhat bizarre, not to say, *ad hominem* attack on Deleuze and Guattari, based upon the fact that I had suggested in an article that their work might just be relevant to gang research. Pitts is having none of this. The work of Deleuze and Guattari have nothing of consequence to teach latter day criminologists. Their work, Pitts observes, is difficult to read which leads him to the conclusion that this must be because they have 'fallen under the spell of postmodernism' and taken too many drugs. He concludes this sophisticated demolition, including of one the twentieth century's greatest philosophers, by noting that although their work has been wholly 'discredited', people like me think them worth citing. The implication is that my judgment is suspect on all counts.

He rounds off his attack by reiterating again his version of the Gangland UK thesis. Gangs are on the rise; we have never seen anything like it before. As part of his justification he cites as fact that, even in cities like Derby, which, he intones, has never had a history of gang land violence, violence perpetrated by gangs is booming. The proof, he concludes, is overwhelming.

Let me begin by addressing the critique that my colleagues and I deny the reality of gangs, 350 or so of which are currently bringing misery to the streets of London. At least, that is according to police statistics amassed using a definition which, as Pitts points out, he was instrumental in developing.

> *A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, (2) engage in a range of criminal activities and violence, (3) identify with or lay claim over territory, (4) have some form of identifying structural feature, and (5) are in conflict with other, similar, gangs* (Centre for Social Justice, 2009 cited by Pitts, 2008: 27).

But wait a moment; let's look at this definition again. Yes it was produced by the right wing think tank The Centre for Social Justice, and yes, with John Pitts as an adviser. But if you look at the opening clause this was taken directly (without citation) from the definition of gangs that Tara Young and I developed for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) three years before.

> *A relatively durable, predominately street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity* (Hallsworth and Young, 2005: 66).

Quite how the authors of a widely cited definition of gangs come to be defined as gang deniers, given this, I find difficult to understand. We also helped the MPS define peer groups and organised crime groups in order to create a more complex heuristic of group based deviance. Unfortunately, with all attention now focussed on urban street gangs, this fact appears to have been conveniently forgotten in a world where everything group related is now conflated into the word 'gang'.

In our original report on gangs for the MPS (where we developed our definition – Hallsworth and Young, 2005), subsequently updated in a report for London Councils produced in 2011 (Hallsworth and Duffy, 2011), we are very clear that gangs exist that fit the terms of our definition. However, we qualified this by arguing that most groups (including many defined as 'gangs') might better be described as volatile peer groups. The lesson of this: be careful about the labels you use. In both reports we also emphasise the fluid and amorphous properties of gangs.

With Dan Silverstone, I went on to examine the gun related crime routinely being explained as 'gang related'. As we established, while gangs were responsible for some gun crime, they were by no means responsible for most (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). Instead of evoking the spectre of the 'gang' to explain gun crime, we studied instead the cultures of the gun users, distinguishing in so doing between the world of professional criminals and a more fluid and amorphous street culture we termed 'on road'. More recently, I have argued that we need to focus precisely on the imperatives that shape street culture (as opposed to gang culture) if we are to understand both street violence and why gangs behave as they do (Hallsworth, 2013). This is not the argument of a gang denier but someone who wants to put gangs in their place.

In part, the problem I have with gang talkers like Pitts is that they overstate the significance and novelty of the gang. In effect, they create a fetish of it. On the other hand, I am not convinced

that the violence currently blamed on gangs is by any means all gang related, nor do I believe that the permissive application of the term 'gang' to explain events as disconnected as sexual violence, the drugs trade, riots, 'dangerous dogs' and gun crime, is remotely helpful or accurate. Such arguments reflect more the fantasy life of gang talkers, not the truth of a violent street world whose complexity escapes such reductive reasoning.

Nor am I remotely convinced by the argument that gangs represent the 'new face of youth crime' and I repudiate this argument on the basis that groups that fit every element of whatever definition of gang you want to deploy, have been a longstanding element of working class culture; a point I develop in my own auto-ethnography where I reflect back on my experiences of growing up between the 1960s and 1980s (Hallsworth, 2013). A period of my life played out against a social setting populated by groups with names like skinheads, teds, grebos, boot boys, hells angels, all of whom were capable of extreme, collective, violent activity. To claim that the explosive violence that groups like skinheads were capable of was less violent than the urban street gang identified by Pitts today, I find absurd. For much the same reason I find some of Pitts' claims justifying the gang as the new face of youth crime difficult to accept. Take, for example, his claim that gangland violence is now making itself felt in cities like Derby which never had a previous history of gang violence. Is he really asking us to believe that a working class town born out of the crucible of the industrial revolution never had territorially affiliated groups of street fighting young men? As Pearson argues, such reasoning not only displays 'historical amnesia', it has all the hallmarks of living in what he terms 'the infinite novelty of the moment' (Pearson, 2011: 20).

The problem, as far as I see it, is not that gangs have suddenly arrived where once they were not present, my take on the argument is that they were always already there; they were always an inevitable and inescapable feature of street life in most working class areas. Given this, what I find intellectually interesting, is how and why a perennial feature of street life became identified as the 'new face of youth crime'.

To get to this, however, you have to go where gang talkers like Pitts do not go. You have to consider the potent symbolism with which the term 'gang' is saturated; you have to examine the structure of gang talk itself; and you have to consider how this has developed by examining the deviance amplification spiral with which it has been connected. Last, but not least, you have to study the vested interests of gang talkers and the developing industry of which they are a part. To a degree it would appear that Pitts does (albeit belatedly) recognise some of this when he writes:

> They do have a point of course. There are historical continuities between youth subcultures past and present and the, sometimes misplaced, social anxieties they engender (Pearson, 1983). There are also many adolescent groups in the UK characterised by fluid membership and porous boundaries, engaged in relatively innocuous adolescent misbehaviour that are wrongly identified as 'gangs' (Klein, 2008). It is also true that the term 'gang' is used

> *indiscriminately in popular discourse, the media and the criminal justice system and that, all too often, its use is stigmatising and racialising* (Pitts, 2012: 31).

The problem with Pitts and his gang talking colleagues is that they do not consider that the exaggeration and distortion, and not least processes of racialisation, that clearly form part of contemporary gang inventory, are worth examining. Worse, nor are they capable of recognising how far gang talk and the tropes around which it is organised is reproduced starkly in their own work. Let me evidence this further. Gang talk is by nature a paranoiac discourse predicated on the assumption that new subterranean hordes are mobilising against the good society (Hallsworth, 2013). In this discourse, gangs are always becoming more corporate, always larger, invariably arming themselves with what gang talkers like to refer to as 'new weapons of choice'. In this gang-talking lexicon, they always reach out to invade new territory, always engage in ever more horrendous crime. Even the most administratively inclined American gang scholars today recognise that the stereotypes underlying this teratology are myths (not least being the claim that the gang today is large and characterised by a vertical bureaucracy and complex division of labour). Pitts and co., however, simply and unquestionably accept the stereotype and try to pass it off as science. It's not so much the case that they capitulate to control discourse (the gang has arrived, it's taking over, mutating and arming itself etc), they are net producers of the fantasy. Clearly ignorant of the history of gang talking stupidity, it appears to be their destiny simply to reproduce it. And so Pitts discovers 'super articulated gangs' (Pitts, 2007; 2008); Toy, gangs that resemble contemporary corporations with boards of governors (Toy, 2008); Harding, gangs capable of orchestrating riots (Harding, 2012); and Firman, gangs populated by inveterate rapists and 'gang banging mother fuckers' (Firman, 2010).

Reading their work it becomes clear that every object lesson critical scholarship has to offer is lost on them. Not least the lesson which tells us that you cannot engage with deviant groups independently of looking at their social construction as such. The problem here is not just the flat ontology they work with but their failure to recognise, let alone consider, the epistemological and methodological challenges that researching groups like gangs invariably throws up.

Let me explain what I mean. The street world is a place where mythology is rampant (see Van Helemont, 2013). This raises huge problems when it comes to distinguishing gang truths from fictions. It is made even more difficult in a world where those who live gang lives, live them in very different terms to those deployed by control agents to characterise them. But the world occupied by control agents is itself a space where mythology and fantasy life abounds. Indeed, in control settings where knowledge deficits abound, where gang intelligence (if indeed it can be called such) is incredibly dubious, where dubious labels such as 'gang affiliation' are permissively deployed; fantasy life invariably becomes the replacement discourse. And this, I think, helps explain why gang talk takes hold so easily among the control fraternity. It works to make difficult chunks of complex reality legible and manageable. It puts the world of the street into convenient bureaucratic

categories which control agents believe they can manage and control. More than that, gang talk provides a false but intuitively plausible narrative that everyone recognises (of course they are getting bigger, more organised, more dangerous etc).

As an example of what I am talking about here, consider these research findings derived from a small project we conducted in Birmingham in an area regarded as 'gang afflicted'. When we interviewed police officers about the gang situation in the area, front line officers by and large found gangs to be responsible for most crime. They saw gangs everywhere. Intelligence officers found far fewer gangs. The young men we interviewed didn't think gangs were that big an issue. Indeed, though viewed as gang members they did not define themselves in these terms. A Home Office accredited 'gang expert' told us we were wasting our time as there were no gangs present. Some officers claimed some longstanding gangs were meanwhile transmogrifying into organised crime groups 'recruiting' from 'feeder gangs' (whatever they are) while ex members of the gangs they were talking about denied they even existed today. I have to admit that I was ultimately unable to work out how many gangs there were; as evidently different people had very different perceptions of the same reality. Lacking any sense of uncertainty, however, Pitts feels able to map gangs with absolute precision even to the extent he can give them risk scores (Pitts, 2008).

Whereas critical ethnographers like Conquergood (1994) and phenomenological thinkers like Katz (Katz and Jackson, 1997) recognise how myth and fantasy intersect in the production of the gang, this lesson is starkly lost on Pitts and his followers who unquestionably accept any and every evocation of the gang they are presented with and who, unsurprisingly, reproduce fantasy life as gang reality and truth.

In this process, common sense goes out of the window. Take, for example, one of the claims now being routinely made about gangs today, namely that they now number groups in their hundreds. Where I wonder do they all meet? Do they hire out the local council chamber? Take another claim Pitts makes, namely that around a third of gang members are forcibly recruited – 'reluctant gangsters' to use his terminology. To test this hypothesis, in recent research conducted in Birmingham, we asked various young men defined as 'gang affiliated' a set of questions designed to tease out how they formed. Unsurprisingly, they knew each other because they grew up together and shared a common history and biography. They were at heart what Tara Young and I long ago termed peer groups. They had no real leaders and when questioned about issues such as 'recruiting' members or 'forcing' people to belong to their group, they simply looked at us incredulously. Why, they asked, would you make people join who you wouldn't be able to trust in the event of trouble? Ever in search of the sensational truths in which gang talk trades, Pitts and his followers invariably ignore less sensational but perhaps more plausible interpretations. In the process, often exceptional events become treated as the norm while absurd exaggerated claims are taken at face value. This, not least, by way of an example, goes for claims made by Rota such that gangs 'rape mothers'. A claim advanced and widely reported but with no supporting evidence (Firman, 2010).

The problem here is that whereas critical ethnographers, and not least cultural criminologists, carry with them a sense of epistemological doubt, the Pittites are incapable of such introspection and reflection. They remind me in this of western safari hunters walking out to shoot big game without ever once considering that any of this might be remotely problematic. And so it is with these gang talkers. They walk out into the urban jungle already knowing what it is they will find; then return having netted their prey which funnily enough fits every American stereotype in the gang talking cannon.

Another recurrent problem with the gang talk people like Pitts produce is that it draws on the ontological assumption that the radically informal groups that populate the street world can be comprehended by imposing upon them the conceptual categories used to define the operational properties of formal organisations. And this leads them to invariably corporatise the street world of gangs in what I would consider a wholly problematic way. And so gangs are described in terms that attribute to them elaborate divisions of labour and vertical control structures in what is presented as a pyramidal organisational unit. This (very American not to say 'arboreal') stereotype of the corporate gang is then compounded by using a variety of corporate terminology to further denaturalise the world of the street. Instead of spontaneously forming, gangs have 'recruitment strategies', they 'groom' would be victims, members undertake 'promotion routes' (career pathways) and engage in 'branding strategies' conducting 'impact assessments' as they go.

The reason I originally evoked the work of Deleuze and Guattari was precisely because they recognise the ontological and epistemological fallacies inherent in this mode of reasoning. In a nutshell you cannot comprehend the life of informal organisations like gangs by imposing upon them arborescent categories that define formal organisations. Informal organisations such as gangs require a different ontology, and not least epistemology, if we are to understand a street world that runs along very different lines to that of corporations. In Deleuzian terms, such nomadic life requires a 'nomadology' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988), not the formal sociology of organisations in which gang talkers like Pitts trade.

A final reflection on Deleuze whose work, as we have seen, is repudiated by Pitts on the basis of the devastating critique that their work is difficult to read (he simply does not get it) all because they have taken too many drugs. Foucault writing in his forward to Deleuze and Guattarri's 'Anti Oedipus', famously defined the twentieth century as 'Deleuzian' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977). Habermas, who Pitts invokes to criticise Deleuze, expends considerable effort debating with Deleuze (see Habermas, 1987) as indeed more recently does Žižek (2004). In criminology, Deleuze's work on the emerging 'societies of control' has been hugely influential on the writing of criminologists such as Haggerty and Ericson (2000), Katja Aas (Franko Aas, 2005), and McGuire (2008). Pitts' *ad hominem* attack, considered against this, does not warrant the label 'critique', he is simply being pedestrian.

Finally, to return to Lenin and the Party line I am apparently obligated to follow, let me conclude by making the following very obvious observation. John, it might have escaped your attention but there is no Leninist Party. There is, consequently, no party line to follow. You are right in one thing however. Yes, I do view the state as malevolent and many state agents as dangerous fantasists. Gang talkers of the world, yes, you too fall into this category.

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Enclavisation and Identity in Refugee Youth Work

Martyn Hudson

Abstract

Publication of the government's strategy on integration for new communities poses questions about the nature of 'Englishness' and how to do what amounts to top-down integration work. This article looks back to the pioneering refugee youth work study of Norton and Cohen and at the critical questions that identity work poses for young refugees and what kind of youth work practice we need to develop in the future. In order to overcome isolation and enclavisation of communities, it argues we need to support integration strategies from below, from NGOs but importantly from the lived experience of the young people themselves and their participation in project design and politics.

Key words: Identity, enclavisation, integration

THE LAUNCH IN 2012 of the UK Coalition government's most recent integration strategy may mark the end of a debate about integration that began with the development of the original support package for asylum seekers in 1999. Whilst this strategy is not purely refugee-focused, much of the debate contained within it is about the emergence of new communities and ways in which they can be supported into integration and subsequently into more formal citizenship. At the same time this strategy has been complemented by the emergence of a much more punitive asylum model which is more 'returns – or deportation-focused' than it was during the previous Labour administration.

The integration debate itself has largely been shaped by a two-fold process. On the one hand there was a recognition that for communities to feel safe and enfranchised there had to be some form of induction into society and the wider community. On the other there was a fear that violent extremism could find a foothold in new and emerging communities if they felt disenfranchised or dispossessed. Linked to this, there was a more generalised fear that new communities, separated into 'enclaves' often did not understand either the values or the laws of their new country. This was seen as a significant problem in terms of issues such as honour crime and gender-based violence accompanied by an unwillingness to learn English or expected rules of conduct beyond the question of legality.

The eruption of social difficulties in British towns and cities through the last decade and the rise of violent extremism on the Right has been seen as a response to a militant Islamism being transported

into the UK by many of those seeking asylum. This understanding is largely based on a fiction promoted by the media. In many ways it has been the affluent and the enfranchised individual rather than the opposite, who has been recruited to the cause of extremist narratives (Fekete et al, 2010:3, Kundnani, 2012). Moreover, many of those entering the UK as asylum seekers have been themselves fleeing violent, misogynist and incipiently totalitarian Islamic regimes in places such as Iran, Yemen and Somalia. If anything, they often displayed more of a commitment to UK values and society than the average UK subject within the host community (see the Cantle Report, 2002). Yet the question of enclaves and how to overcome their problematic nature has become a significant part of the debate, both from those who want to impose integration from above and others who want to examine integration from below (Hudson, 2013).

One of the critical conditions of integration is the overcoming of the 'enclavisation' process by which communities self-enclave or are forcibly enclaved from above – physically and socially in terms of housing and social spaces and fundamentally in identity itself. In other parts of Europe such as the district of Rosengard in Sweden, whole areas are almost entirely comprised of refugees and migrant workers, often highly welfare-dependent as a consequence of Swedish migration policies. At the same time, for security and physical safety many people want to live alongside and with others with similar identities and often this can imply little active engagement with other communities. Clearly, the historical fate of many enclaves and ghettos demonstrates that creating meaningful, integrated relationships amongst communities is important. However, there are different levels and types of integration and a difference between a forced code of Englishness or Britishness imposed from above and an explication of already integrating, meaningful relationships which can take place without the intervention of the state (Smyth, Stewart and Da Lomba, 2010; Strang and Ager, 2010).

Young people have been central to the debate about integration. The discursive construction of the young person as rioter, scrounger or extremist militant have been central to many of the debates about what integration is and how we should do it. At the heart of this debate about young people is what kind of integration and whose integration we are talking about. As Sivanandan notes in Fekete's study of the integration problematic in Europe, 'the problem of integration lies in the interpretation of integration itself' (Fekete et al, 2010:1). Certainly the integration programmatically outlined in the recent government report is profoundly at odds with much of the integration work on the ground. Whilst at times it seems programmatically similar it is clear that imposed integration has very different implications from integration by choice. This raises the critical question of what kind of youth work practice is possible within this integration framework – one shaped by the divisions (and the fictional monsters) of the last decade. As Fekete argues, for both asylum seekers and more settled Muslim communities – Europe and the UK seem:

impervious to the high social cost of excluding young second-and-third generation black and Muslim Europeans from poorer backgrounds from the debates that concern them. It is surely

time to consider the lasting impact of policies that marginalise, exclude, criminalise and, ultimately, alienate youngsters. (2010:3).

This question of youth work for refugees and asylum seekers was comprehensively reviewed by Norton and Cohen at the very beginning of the National Asylum Support Scheme launched in 2000 (Norton and Cohen, 2000). Their work has significantly influenced the way practitioners have hitherto engaged in youth work around the issue. It has 'accompanied' youth work through informed debates about the question of integration in the last decade. Norton and Cohen raise key questions about practice and how this can be linked with a social justice (if not emancipatory) approach to working with young people in communities Yet reviewing the historical territory of asylum seeker and refugee integration over the last decade would support a rethinking of the premises upon which that original work was formulated, and a questioning of how integration works for young people and how it might work in a future largely shaped by the current government's recommendations about the nature of Englishness and the question of new identities.

It is necessary to problematise the question of identity theoretically and practically with reference to the ways in which young people themselves have engaged with and thought about identity. It is in that relationship between integration, identity and new communities and the enforcement of particular governmental visions of integration against those counterposed amongst young people in communities, living their life and thinking their own lives and routes through it, that we can begin to map a new programme for youth work and youth activism with and for young asylum seekers.

Creating conditions for integration?

The vision of current governmental integration initiatives set out in *Creating the conditions for integration* (2012) reprises much that was central to the cohesion policies of the previous administration and in many ways summarises clearly the failures of previous initiatives whilst seeking to consolidate a new programme. Central to the new vision is the concept of an England which has always been a haven of migration and tolerance (2012:3). The central thrust of the document describes the problematic status of new or 'outsider' communities and their inability to conform to this vision of Englishness. Linked to this is the social cost of integration failure, specifically in terms of the narratives of violent extremism that can be taken up by young people in new communities as a result of political disenfranchisement and economic dispossession. As Fekete and the Institute of Race Relations argue, however important the integration issue, the debate around it has often been used as a way of attacking new communities for their failures. An approach that diverts attention from the failures of the government:

Over the last few years, the debate on integration has ceased to be a two-way process based

on dialogue, consultation and mutual respect. The daily diet served up by many politicians and much of our media is one that stigmatises minorities and blames them for failing to integrate. The media are most likely to portray minorities as holding on to alien customs that threaten Europe's Enlightenment values, and depict 'immigrants' as choosing to self-segregate in parallel societies. If you listen only to the politicians and the press, you may even come to believe that the biggest threat to the EU today – as well as to the 'national identity' of its member states – lies in immigration and cultural diversity. But what happens if we throw away the newspapers and stop attending to the politicians? What happens if we listen to other voices, particularly the voices of those who are the butt of the 'blame game' in the integration debate (Fekete et al, 2010:2).

Within the new government agenda the status of 'Englishness' is best recognised as one of 'common-sense' and crucially, through the concept of 'common-ground' – the space or place in which England offers itself to a new community and the specific gift to the new community of 'a clear sense of shared aspirations and values, which focuses on what we have in common rather than our differences' (2012:5). This common-ground becomes the meeting place in which extremism and intolerance are tackled and a sense of participation, responsibility and social mobility are expressed. But this sense of common-ground is not simply a space wherein differences become fused and equal in a new culture but one in which there is clearly enforcement from above. For it is a specific version of an English culture and an English mainstream; one to which new communities must conform: for as it explains 'there are too many people still left outside, or choosing to remain outside, mainstream society' (2012: 6). These community discourses of difference and resistance retain their enclaves, enclaves where the 'mainstream' has no constituency or power – separate, segregated and self-disenfranchised. For the authors of the *Creating the Conditions for Integration* there has also historically been undue focus on integration projects and activities without sustaining integrated day-to-day activities and a moral enforcement of English culture and to which new communities should aspire.

There are three broad issues that make this governmental programme problematic. First there is the question of the definition of integration. Whose idea of integration is it? In this sense the government perspective is integration from above, a view little different from some of the old assimilationist narratives of the 1970s (Hudson, 2013). Against this can be counterposed a real, living integration that is symptomatic of the best of youth work practice, and the 'lived experience' of migrants in emerging communities who are 'doing' integration for themselves without an interventionist programme from above.

Second there is a demonisation rhetoric, often Islamophobic, in the debate that is set out within the government agenda. In this the most disadvantaged become the enemy. The aim of preventing violent extremism in new communities which previously had little experience of any kind of extremism has led to prevention agendas which focus on difference. However, some communities'

lack of integration is more the consequence of UK and US Imperialist ambitions in their lands of origin, the lack of access to ESOL classes, and the absence of economic well-being, or in the case of asylum seekers themselves a ban on work and often on the right to study in schools and colleges. All of which can be viewed as a consequence of governmental policies rather than an absence of any will to integrate on behalf of young people from those communities.

Third the focus on some constructed core sense of English identity is counterposed to the established and emergent identities in new communities. This creates a discursive territory in which disenfranchisement can take the shape of a reversion to older ethnic and faith identities which are not compatible with the master-narrative of the government agenda. The consequence is a recourse to some sense of unshared, monolithic (potentially extremist) identity which self-enclaves in the face of as government agenda which cannot accept multiple and hyphenated identity, let alone approach it in any sense of equality, which can lead to feelings of frustration and powerlessness. It is also worth pointing out that many of the things perceived as 'foreign' or non-English or non-European have actually been central to the growth of English and European culture such as Islamic traditions of science, literature and architecture, South Asian food and musical culture, African dress and so on and without which young people's sense (if not the government's) of Englishness would be hugely diminished.

In this context the territory of identity becomes the battleground over which rival dogmatisms and orthodoxies wage war – against others in foreign territories, against others in English territory and most crucially against the other within – an 'other' with which we struggle inside our identities and make conversation with at every moment of existence (see Hudson (2012) for a historical study of this). It has the potential to create what Fekete has called a 'parallel society' at odds with the 'mainstream'. It is this question of the parallel society and its dangers that has been one of the major spurs to governmental ideas of integration. It has become a bogeyman argues Fekete (2010:34) but the demonisation of enclaves does not mean that they are less real. Certainly a focus on identity and self-narrative and how they can overcome enclavisation is profoundly different from the kind of assimilation from above doctrine perpetuated by the present administration.

Subjectivities, structures and youth work

Identity is the story we tell ourselves and others about us, what we share with others and what our differences are. It can be exclusive or inclusive, it can be fairly stable, static and unchanging as well as dynamic and ever changing. It can contain multiple elements which are shaped by social structures, place and migration across territories. Fundamentally it is a narrative about ourselves and who we are. As O'Neill notes:

Recovering and re-telling people's subjectivities, lives and experiences are central to better understand our social worlds with a view to transforming those worlds… Biographical work represented poetically, visually as well as textually, can help illuminate the necessary mediation of autonomous individuality and collective responsibility. Biographies help us to understand social relations, the processes, structures and lived experiences of citizenship and lack of citizenship and the experiences of humiliation, vulnerability and loss (dominant experiences for some asylum seekers/refugees). They highlight the importance of engaging with the subaltern other, creating spaces for voices and narratives to make sense of lived experience, trauma, loss, but also the productive, creative, generative dimension of forging identities and belonging in the new situation, as an 'asylum seeker' or 'refugee' (pp. 22-23).

Those narratives structures, about our journeys, and about who we are shape young people's politics and their routes into the future. It is clear that serious levels of disenfranchisement and self-enclavisation are often the consequence of an unjust asylum system, trauma in lands of origin and racialisation and isolation in the UK and elsewhere (Auerbach, 2010; Beirens et al, 2007: Fekete et al, 2010). This abdication of active citizenship as a consequence of dispossession can mean the retreat to older narratives of identity which can sit uncomfortably with the values and mores of wider UK society. This process can be exacerbated amongst young women from newer communities who can be at once too integrated into patriarchal structures in their communities and too socially isolated at the same time – issues which can be exploited by community leaders to ensure the continued denigration and dispossession of women's narratives about themselves and their ideas for their future leading to new forms of segregation (Cressey, 2006, 2007). Certainly narratives about children and children's experiences have to be understood in a wider context of crimes against young people and the silencing of their narratives about themselves – particularly around building social bonds and friendships (Hek, 2005:37). As Hek (2005: 25) notes there are often profound contradictions between ideas of past, present and future in refugee children's lives particularly those who have undergone experiences of trauma.

The origination and persistence of social networks which allow for the hybridity, dynamism and extension of new kinds of identities, freedom of expression and identity experimentation is crucial to thinking about youth work with young refugees. But structurally this can be extremely problematic where civil society, citizenship, leave to remain, and lack of access to education and language facilities are so restrictive and molecular and where the only sources of social support can be the very ethnic and faith enclaves that young people can find so restrictive. Language and identity can be the most challenging aspect of building new social networks in the UK for creating social networks and making friendships are about modes of identity and belonging. Kilbride et al in their study of young refugee experiences in Ontario have argued that the very multi-dimensionality of young people's needs create complex networks of dependence and social isolation which often only enclaves can support – certainly professional youth work has to understand the process of identity formation and be 'reflective of the integration they seek, not the marginalization they

neither want nor deserve,' (2000:17). So in the context of the multiple needs of young refugees and asylum seekers what should refugee youth work look like?

The best explication of what refugee youth work should look like today is to look at how it was best expressed at the beginning of the national dispersal scheme throughout the UK and the start of what might perhaps already be seen as the golden age of asylum seeking in the UK. Norton and Cohen's (2000) was an attempt to understand the challenges faced in the integration of young refugees and to look at the kinds of youth work practice, committed to social justice, that might aid that integration and support. There was a clear recognition in their interviews with young people and youth work practitioners that:

> *Many want to integrate with dignity into British culture and society while at the same time being free to value and cherish their own particular culture and identity.* (2000: vii).

Indeed they argue that the dialectic of integration and difference was often central to their lives as they faced the challenge of a new life in the UK. The Asylum and Immigration Bill of January/ February 1999 provided the spur for and the context of the book. The message remains central to contemporary practice – namely that far from new communities being defined as a problem 'for whom and to whom things should be done' – those very communities, and young people specifically, were creating hugely positive futures for themselves, making friendships and so on often in contradiction to official 'integration', structural racism, and an unjust asylum process (Norton and Cohen, 2010:2). As Norton and Cohen state, the pivotal question for refugee youth work is that of self-determination (2010:9-10). The book is both a document of what refugee youth work looked like in 2000 and a manifesto for what good practice could be developed. The work Norton and Cohen document in London during the 1990s and their research into practice still holds up well and large parts of the text should be required reading for practitioners. However in some ways there is a focus on what might be called bonding rather than bridging experiences that not only stands in opposition to the current strands of government thinking but also to the kinds of work that subsequently developed around integration projects in non-governmental organisations, refugee community organisations and in local authority youth work. The question of how to build bridges between communities and to bond within communities is a central debate in the practice of community development. Ideas developed by Putnam in his studies of Italian and American communities have reasserted the centrality of bonding/bridging and it is certainly a resonant motif in recent government debates both in the United States and the United Kingdom (Putnam, 2000). A critical focus of the text was upon the support that youth work had to give to bonding and self-enclavisation which reflected a clear response from the respondents in the research. This argued that only community enclaves could provide the kinds of social capital that young people require:

> *All stressed how important it was to be able to meet and be with others who spoke their language and with whom they could share their experiences. Most found early advice and*

comfort from members of their own communities, either informally or in a facility such as a community centre. (2000:21)

One area of importance for youth workers was the facilitation of 'Mother-tongue classes' (2000:29) in which the language and cultures of lands of origin could be preserved and the young people initiated into and into the kinds of identities which were often acceptable to the community leadership. As Norton and Cohen recognised this was a profoundly 'inner-directed' Refugee Community Organisation (RCO) culture (2000:35). Also at the time the text was written RCOs were the principal providers of youth work in London (2000:49) largely on a volunteering basis or, if short term funding was available, via the employment of members of the community, often without any qualifications. These were expected to initiate and promote 'inner-directed' youth work which was more concerned with internal support and bonding activities designed than any kind of bridging activities to prepare communities for their future life in the UK.

In many ways the dispersal process from 2000 onwards militated against the success of much of this inner-directed culture – as Norton and Cohen could see clearly at the beginning of that process. For many asylum seekers were dispersed to highly deprived, often racialised areas of UK towns and cities where 'it is likely there will be no community of earlier arrivals to smooth the path for more recent arrivals' (2000:54). It was in this context that we began to have small communities dispersed throughout the UK that had no other route but to be outer-directed and engage with other new and more settled communities. It is clear that as this process developed throughout the last decade the identity of communities and young people have explicitly changed around issues of regionality, sexuality, music, fashion and so on. This process has been so profound that for many from previous new refugee communities their identities have a multiplicity which is often at odds with those of the community leaders speaking and legislating for them and acting as mediators between young people and local services, politics, and the state (see Murad 1996 for a discussion on why segregation for Muslim young people is a good thing).

Clearly the early work of Norton and Cohen threw up some interesting issues about where we currently stand regarding refugee youth work. First, the contradiction between enclavisation, the social-bonding inner-directed refugee cultures and the actual practice and integration of young people 'being-in-the-world'; with their multiple identities which will include religion, sexuality and class. The kinds of nuances that come from living on specific estates, accents, downloads, digital networking, politics, faith, sexual orientation, economic dispossession, self-defining genders, and multiple others structurally threaten a sense of being which is monolithic. It is clear that this is one consequence of contemporary life in the UK but it also mirrors the complexity of existence in places like Iran and Iraq where huge questions are being posed that challenge theocratic regimes. These include self-defining sexualities in Iran to the burgeoning Iraqi punk music scene which digitally connects young people in solidarity across states and is reminiscent of young people 'doing it for themselves' in the recent wave of North African and Middle eastern

uprisings, perhaps best exemplified by Gaza Youth Breaks Out. The sheer connectivity between a young person on an estate in Northern England and a young person in a prison cellar in Iran for honour crimes illustrates well that sense of potential global solidarity and identity.

Second Norton and Cohen raise the critical question of participation and active citizenship by young people in communities. It is clear though that far from that citizenship being directed for a 'monolithic' sense of community or a citizenship for enfranchisement in the UK state's version of civil society it is often directed against them and youth work has a pivotal role to play in this, particularly if youth work is rooted in non-governmental organisations and achieves some sense of independence from local authority control (see Newman, 2005). Fekete points to the case of 13 year old Asiya Hassan who organised a forum on the detention of asylum seeking children – as Asiya says 'Young people need to speak up for themselves if they want their voices heard, which is what I'm doing right now. In order to get our point across we need to organise many more events like this. And we will be heard, no matter what it takes,' (Fekete et al, 2010:67). This active engagement with forces outside exclusivist faith and ethnic communities signify not only that anti-racism has to be central to the integration problematic but that young people's passions, creativities, and struggles have to be the molecular basis upon which any integration project is grounded – a basis which, it should be noted can be profoundly hostile to the kind of integration agenda being developed by the government. It also signifies that social bridging experience is absolutely essential in ensuring enfranchisement, social struggles against deportation and against economic dispossession and destitution.

Third the question Norton and Cohen raise about who does refugee youth work has also changed significantly in the intervening period. As they noted most refugee youth work was situated within RCO structures and this was clearly then the case in the North East. By 2012 however in North East England out of the 63 documented RCOs in the region only a minority employed sessional youth workers and some of these were committed to inner-directed activities such as teaching Farsi to children. There was effective participatory and campaigning work done through Youth Voices through the Regional Refugee Forum but by far the largest employer of youth workers was the wider voluntary sector comprised of national, regional and local organisations who had links to RCOs but had their own agenda around issues such as preventing violent extremism in new communities, refugee health and sports integration. Organisations such as the Children's Society were committed to support work with unaccompanied minors but the largest set of youth workers undertaking work with refugees was located within the North of England Refugee Service, which was linked to the national Refugee Council. All of these projects were very much situated within a participative, outer-directed framework committed to an integration agenda which was anti-racist and explicitly counter-posed itself in relation to government agendas on integration (see Wootten and Hudson, 2012; Hudson and Ganassin, 2010). Certainly refugee youth work within local authorities has diminished substantially over the decade with very little dedicated detached or community work with refugees now in existence.

Creating new narratives

The new context of refugee youth work and the initiation of a new integration agenda on enforced 'Englishness' then elevates specific questions about the kinds of identity work we can do in contemporary refugee communities. If we are to take seriously the challenges of refugee youth work since the publication in 2000 of Norton and Cohen's study, practitioners, policymakers and funders have to think about implementing a programme based on the following themes:

- First we have to do refugee youth work in white, working class communities. This may seem contradictory but it is clear that much political hostility towards refugees from the nationalist far-right finds its audience in parts of these communities – often linked to a rhetoric that sees 'Our' troops fighting Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan and relating this to 'Muslim bombers off our streets' in the UK – as if the streets are 'Ours' and belong to the 'English'. Tackling extremism and racism means ensuring that conversations and projects that look at refugee experiences are part of 'mainstream' youth work.

- Second we should support any projects based around heritage, geography, and history work that challenge exclusivist identities by making the concept and practice of identity problematic. One project supported by the North of England Refugee Service and Tees Valley Museums looked at uncovering the migrant histories, through art and photography, of local children who had no concept of themselves as having any kind of migrant history. In fact many of them subsequently uncovered Cornish, German, Irish and Huguenot heritages – making empathy and solidarity all the easier towards contemporary migrants and refugees.

- Third any meaningful anti-racist integration project has to take seriously the question of racist narratives. This is impossible without having some form of understanding of, and dialogue with, these narratives in terms of their context and specifically how to dismantle them and present counter-narratives. Condemning racism and no-platforming it in youth projects is often counter-productive and refugee youth work is best served by trained staff with expertise in how to dismantle extremist narratives.

- Fourth we have to understand and examine the narratives of identity that young people present. We need to listen to their stories, support them in exploring identity and facing the challenges of living in a multicultural society. It means defending any explorations of their identity against those who want to reassert monolithic, exclusivist and oppressive identities against sexual freedoms, freedom of dress, and so on, often, it should be stressed, against self-appointed community leaders. Linked to this is the question, already raised over a decade ago by Norton and Cohen, and Hek more recently, that youth work practice needs to support young refugees in thinking through the relationship between their past, their present and their future and to map transitions and routes for themselves which are based on their own fluid and multiple conceptions of themselves.

- Finally, the complexities of identity do not sit in a vacuum – the social and political context of migration, warfare, human rights abuses, racism and so on demand recognition and the kinds of political ventures made possible by migration (Hudson, 2002). Thinking through these structures means looking at the hierarchy of need which young people present, understanding that even before they can think about their narratives they need to be clothed and fed, offered advice, supported, made welcome and safe – in fact offered both physical and crucially existential safety by projects and practitioners. All the better if their experiences can then become part of campaigning work to challenge the structural difficulties that refugees face and also to point to the problems of disenfranchisement and dispossession in white, working class communities that can be such breeding grounds of racism and extremism.

Central to the life and routes of young refugees is still that pivotal question of self-determination. Fundamental to that sense of determination and the trajectory of young people's lives is that of self-expression and self-definition – determinations, expressions and definitions that are the province of young people themselves and not states, communities, and authorities that seek to subdue and oppress and it is the task of youth work with refugees to support young people into that future.

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Aristotle's *Phronesis* and Youth Work: Beyond Instrumentality

Jon Ord

Abstract

This paper attempts to address some of the fundamental problems which underlie current attempts to bring youth work to account. Firstly it is argued that the accountability agenda with its emphasis upon outcomes and outputs misunderstands the process by which they emerge. Rather than youth work being portrayed as a linear process it will be proposed that there is an indirect 'incidental' relationship between what youth workers do and the outcomes that emerge out of a process of engagement; such that simplistic accountability measures are inadequate. Secondly it is argued that given the essentially 'moral' nature of youth work interventions and the resulting outcomes, ie. whether their decisions and actions enable young people to live 'good' lives. We need to develop a methodology for youth work evaluation which reflects this. It will be suggested that much can be gained from an application of Aristotle's concept of Phronesis, not least because of the importance placed on 'context'.

Key words: Youth Work, Phronesis, Outcomes, Process, Context

IT DOES NOT need me to point out that the recent history of youth work is one of increasing compartmentalisation, accountability and an increasing emphasis on its outcomes. This is however the context for this paper, which attempts to answer some of the questions about why such an exclusive focus on outcomes is particularly problematic for the practice of youth work, and what we can try and do about it. Youth work does have significant and profound outcomes for the young people who are engaged in its process, but an exclusive focus on outcomes independent of the process that produces them is at best putting the 'cart before the horse', if not expecting the cart to pull itself. Before exploring this problem however, as well as suggesting why Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* offers a solution to it, I want to remind us of some of the key drivers of this current policy context, from an English perspective, though I am sure much of it will resonate with many of you outside of this national context.

Policy Context

Attempts to draw youth work into a specific outcomes-focused practice are evidenced as early as

1979 by Bernard Davies in his seminal paper 'In whose interests…' (Davies, 1979) where he refers to a fundamental shift in youth work from an open ended social education model to 'social and life skills training'. Davies' early warnings seemed to have been merited when within the following decade, the infamous ministerial conferences of 1989 – 92 had been established, a significant focus of which sought to identify what the then Minister referred to as: 'the priority outcomes which the youth service should seek to provide (NYB, 1990: 34).

This shift in focus for youth work coincided with the election of the Thatcher government and corresponded to a wider sea change in policy characterised by Clarke, Gewirtz and McClaughlin (2000) as a shift from welfarism to post-welfarism. Welfarism was underpinned by a commitment to social democracy, whilst post-welfarism has been driven by an emerging neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is underpinned by a commitment to the pre-eminence of the market and the conception of individuals almost exclusively as consumers. In educational policy terms, neoliberalism brought about an emphasis on 'utility' or usefulness, what Ross (2000) refers to as the establishment of the utilitarian curriculum. This has resulted in an almost exclusive concern with outcomes, a focus on what education provides in tangible terms, as well as the rise of vocationalism and the skills agenda in education.

The rise of neoliberalism and the associated specific changes in educational policy have been accompanied by a wider assault on professionalism, and the disappearance of a situation where, 'the professional was trained to a high level and largely to use his or her judgement in the delivery of services. This can be characterised as the shift from 'trust me (I'm a professional)' to 'prove it (and if you cannot I will sue)' (Ford et al. 2005: 110). Alongside this, the establishment of a managerialist culture (Ord, 2012) begins to redefine how judgements about 'quality' are made in the public sector (Cooper, 2012), as private sector business practices characterised by the three E's of efficiency, effectiveness and economy become the dominant discourse (Farnham and Horton, 1993).

Ironically for those who thought the arrival of New Labour might herald a return to the Social Democratic tradition, it was under the influence of New Labour that youth work really began to experience the impact of neoliberalism. Youth work was brought in line with other social welfare services under the auspices of Connexions (DfES, 2001) in England and Wales; and then more specifically with the arrival of Transforming Youth Work (DfES 2001, 2002), with its targets for recorded and accredited outcomes, its imposed planning cycles and its emphasis on the delivery of programmes. Mark Smith argued strongly at the time that this was the end of convivial informal education-based youth work (Smith, 2003). Specific targets for both accredited and recorded outcomes (DfES, 2002) went some considerable way in re-prioritising youth workers' practice. Outcomes and product-focused as opposed to person-centred and process-focused youth work had arrived (Ord 2007; Davies 2008).

One of the latest examples of this 'quest' for outcomes arose out of the Education Select Committee Report (House of Commons, 2011) which expressed the belief that: 'there is no good reason why robust but sophisticated outcome measures should not be developed to allow services to demonstrate impact…'(2011:26). As a direct result the Young Foundation produced 'An Outcomes Framework for Young People's Services' (Young Foundation 2012) but more about that later. The neoliberal policy drive is continuing with an emphasis on the importance of the market and competition resulting in outcome-based commissioning. As a lecturer in Youth and Community Work, I received a stark reminder of this complete reframing of practice when a current student requested a module on 'results based practice'.

Returning to the problem of outcomes for Youth Work

I would argue strongly that outcomes-focused practice is necessarily problematic for youth work, not least because outcomes themselves are problematic for youth. Not that I'm arguing youth work does not have significant outcomes for young people but that outcomes-focused practice tends to fail to comprehend how those outcomes are produced.

Outcomes-focused practice tends to conceive of learning and the resulting outcomes in a linear fashion. An example of this is provided by Merton and Wylie (2002). Commenting on the traditional educational goals of youth work both within their own statement of a youth work curriculum and via their influence on the production of the *Transforming Youth Work* document they argue that:

> *Such broad goals need to be expressed in a set of more specific outcomes if they are to be helpful in the planning and in practice. The more clearly we can specify the ends, the better we will be able to choose the means for achieving them* (Merton and Wylie 2002:2; and DfES 2002:11).

This approach is often characterised in educational terms as a 'product approach' (Kelly 2004, Ord 2007), that is, one which is premised on the pre-specification of outcomes and an emphasis upon the necessary inputs required to achieve those particular outcomes. This approach places an emphasis on the educator and has parallels with what Kelly (2004) refers to as 'education as transmission' or what Freire (1972) refers to as the 'banking approach to education'.

This approach is not totally alien to youth work and it is possible to plan some youth work in this way, for example, the almost ubiquitous sexual health awareness sessions about how to put on a condom and avoid sexually transmitted diseases, or drug education sessions which focus on specific knowledge about harm minimisation, and the effects and the potential harm of particular drugs. However, I would argue not only that the profound and transformative outcomes that youth work enables are not produced in this pre-planned and pre-specified fashion, but also that insisting

that youth workers plan their work in this way actually has a detrimental effect on their ability to produce significant outcomes for young people.

Mark Smith (1988) following Brookfield (1986), suggested that many of the outcomes in youth work are 'incidental', that is, arising by pure chance and yet distinct from 'accidental'. They are rarely a product of what Smith refers to as: 'planning and managing instruction so that the learner achieves some previously specified object' (Smith, 1988: 125). They are produced through a complex set of processes and particular circumstances which unfold in practice, as the late Jeremy Brent (2004) explains in his excellent depiction of the emergence of such outcomes in his paper 'Communicating Youth Work: The smile and the arch'. Within the paper he portrays the transformation that a young woman undergoes as a result of becoming an active member of a youth club. He describes how at the outset she was 'a shadowy appendage of her boyfriend' (Brent, 2004: 70) and despite attempts at identifying specific problems that she appeared to be dealing with such as a housing issue, or her lack of attendance at school, none of the specific interventions seemed to be particularly merited. She did however throw herself into the life of the club, for example taking responsibility for organising a trip. Over time she began to smile, a visible transformation taking place in her demeanour and her sense of self. Brent argues this significant outcome could not have been planned for in any pre-specified manner but it emerged out of a process of engagement with both workers and young people:

> There has been no product, no target met, no plan completed, yet all the evidence points to there being a profoundly important personal outcome for Kelly (Brent, 2004: 70).

It is important to acknowledge that such outcomes 'emerge' (Ord, 2007) out of a process of engagement which is purposeful and has educational intent, but is not pre-planned. The process of learning and the production of such outcomes are not pre-specific and linear. Neither is there a one-to-one correlation between what the youth worker does and the outcomes young people achieve with many of the most significant outcomes in youth work.

That is not to say that youth workers do not have educational aims but that their aims are broad and not specific and importantly are grounded and developed in responses to the young people's aspirations, intentions and interests rather than immutably pre-set in advance by 'others'. Contrary to Merton and Wylie's (2002) claim that we can only achieve our aims if we are more specific, I would argue that on the contrary we can only achieve our aims if we remain broad in our educational intentions. This is well illustrated with the example of confidence. I admit to being more than mildly irritated by evaluations of youth work sessions which boldly claim improvements in young people's confidence as a result of the undertaking of particular activities. How can confidence be produced in this manner? On the contrary I would suggest that confidence is built over time with appropriate interventions, such as guidance, encouragement and support or the setting of surmountable challenges. It cannot be rushed and can be easily undermined. It is

difficult to produce a genuine growth in confidence. Youth work does enable young people to grow in confidence (DES, 1987) but the reframing of youth work into specific sessions akin to a series of lesson plans is not likely to assist this process (Smith, 1988; Ord 2007). Not least because it is often not the confidence itself which youth workers directly focus on but what is 'going on' for young people – what is pertinent to them, at that particular time.

The Problem of causality

To explore this a little further I would like to spend a few moments reflecting on causality, and offer a rudimentary distinction between three types of causation;

- Direct causality: All things being equal, doing A is both necessary and sufficient; eg. Turning the key in my car starts the engine.

- Non-causality: doing A bears no relation to the production of B, eg. No amount of talking to my tomatoes will have any bearing on how well they grow;

- Indirect causality: one can be reasonably assured that all things being equal Doing A consistently and appropriately over time is likely to assist in the production of B, but in itself it is not a guarantee. Whilst the same time the absence of A, or doing the reverse of A, is likely to have the opposite desired effect. Doing A may be necessary in certain circumstances but it is certainly not sufficient. eg. Watering my tomato plants in the greenhouse to make them grow.

The importance of indirect causality is that the action is 'a factor' in the causal process, ie. it is 'a part' of the whole picture, but in itself it is no guarantee. If we follow the example of watering the tomato plants – I could over-water or the water could be contaminated or other factors may override my watering. It may be too cold and not sunny enough, or other factors may play a greater causal role, for example a disease or a pest may affect the plants. Either way, my watering of the plants in this instance has not produced an abundant crop. The amount and regularity of the watering is dependent on a number of other factors which cannot be pre-specified eg. how hot it is. Importantly a judgement is required based on the complex interplay of a number of variables, or 'what is going on' at that particular time.

Youth work is in the main not directly causal. It may provide some specific solutions to designated problems and specific youth work interventions may produce specific outcomes. For example, a young person approaches a youth worker for advice on filling out an application form and, as a result of the assistance provided in filling it out, the young person is offered an interview. Or two young people are involved in a dispute and, as a result of responding to a request to sit down and talk it through, the young people resolve their dispute. Yet the relation between youth work and

many of its more profound and transformative outcomes, such as those described by Brent (2004) above, is not one that is correctly characterised as 'directly causal'. Neither of course is it entirely non-causal; it would be foolish to say there is no relationship between what youth workers do and the outcomes that emerge. There may be some merit in conceptualising the process of youth work as being 'indirect causality'.

If we follow the example of confidence we reflected upon earlier: there are a number of factors which come into play in terms of what a youth worker may do to try and increase a young person's confidence, such as provide opportunities for taking an appropriate level of responsibility, set surmountable challenges, offer guidance and support, and provide appropriate praise and recognition. And of course in order to undertake these interventions it is necessary to have a good relationship with the young person concerned in order to know what their interests and capabilities are so as to be able to provide appropriate opportunities and challenges. It also goes without saying that this process takes time. We need to trust and have faith in the process, and trust is something which is in short supply in the current climate (O'Neill, 2002). The process cannot be easily broken down into separate parts, and needs to be seen holistically, youth work often only makes sense if it is seen in the context of its progression over time; and the concept of distance travelled goes some way to ensuring an appreciation of this.

Aristotle

Whilst the distinction between types of causality is useful and enables us to start to distinguish between different ways of conceiving of youth work and its complex processes, the very notion of causality itself is potentially problematic. What is needed is a different way of conceiving of youth work independent of notions of causality, as causality itself is located in a particular way of seeing the world. To illustrate I want to introduce a distinction proposed by Aristotle, a Greek philosopher of the fifth century BC.

Aristotle offered a threefold distinction between different forms of knowledge:

- *Episteme*
- *Techne*
- *Phronesis*
  (Aristotle circa 5th Century BC, in Irwin 1999)

Episteme equates to scientific knowledge (Irwin, 1999; Flyvbjerg, 2001) and is found in the modern words epistemological and epistemic. It relates to knowledge that: 'must be the conclusion of a demonstration, a deductive inference in which the premises are necessary truths explaining the conclusion' (Irwin, 1999:347).

Episteme thus concerns universals and the production of knowledge which is invariable in time and space and which is achieved with the aid of analytical rationality. *Episteme* corresponds to the modern scientific ideal as expressed in natural science (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 55).

Techne equates to craft and is defined as: 'a rational discipline concerned with production' (Irwin, 1999: 321). It is found in the modern words technological and technical. Craft or *techne* is concerned with 'bringing something into being' (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 56). Aristotle provides an example: 'building, for instance is a craft, and is essentially a certain state involving reason concerned with production' (Aristotle 1140a 7-9 in Irwin, 1999: 88): Flyvbjerg sums this up:

> The objective of techne *is application of technical knowledge and skills according to a pragmatic instrumental rationality… episteme concerns theoretical know why and* techne *denotes technical know-how* (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 56)

Phronesis is difficult to translate directly. Irwin (1999) suggests that wisdom would be a suitable translation, however the Greek word *sophia* is already translated as wisdom. Flyvbjerg (2001) points out that unlike *techne* and *episteme*, *phronesis* has no direct translation into modern terms, but that is not to say it is any less important. The word prudence is most often used to translate *phronesis* (Irwin, 1999; Flyvbjerg, 2001) but it is sometimes also referred to as practical wisdom, or 'practical common sense' (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 56). *Phronesis* translated as prudence can lead to confusion as Irwin suggests prudence is not meant in the sense of:

> narrow and selfish caution… [going on to suggest that] *the prudence in jurisprudence comes closer to Aristotle's use of* phronesis. *Since it is deliberative, prudence is about things that promote ends but it is also correct supposition about the end'* (Irwin,1999: 345).

Phronesis or prudence is therefore essentially ethical. As Aristotle suggests: 'virtue is similar to prudence' (Aristotle, 1144b: 2 in Irwin 1999: 99). Or as Irwin points out, Aristotle is arguing that 'prudence is necessary and sufficient for complete virtue of character' someone cannot have it and fail to act correctly' (Irwin, 1999: 345).

In contrast to *phronesis*, *techne* or craft is amoral. Aristotle uses the example of a stone mason and points out that whether or not he is a good stone mason bears no relation to whether that particular person is regarded as 'good' in the moral sense ie. is virtuous or leads a 'good life'. *Techne* can be applied correctly or incorrectly, while *phronesis* cannot. *Phronesis* is necessarily a kind of action which leads to a good life. (Irwin 1999: 345). *Phronesis* or prudence is therefore 'concerned with action' (Irwin,1999: 345), action being a translation of the Greek work *praxis*. In its strictest sense, praxis is rational and deliberative action based on a decision, but which: 'is its own end and is not done exclusively for some end beyond it. It aims at 'doing well' (or 'acting well' – *eupraxia*) for itself' (Irwin, 1999: 315). This is what further distinguishes *techne* from *phronesis*: 'craft must be

concerned with production, not with action (Aristotle 1140a: 18 in Irwin 1999: 89). Aristotle sums this up:

> *Prudence is a state of grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about things that are good or bad for a human being* (Aristotle, 1140b: 5-7, in Irwin 1999: 89).

One of the few 20th century commentators to embrace the notion of *phronesis* is the political theorist Hannah Arendt who interprets it as the ability to judge or have insight. She cites its importance in relation to the development of political thought, as it entails:

> *The ability to see things not only from one's own point of view but in the perspective of all those who happened to be present; even that judgement may be one of the fundamental abilities of man as a political being in so far as it enables him orient himself in the realm… the Greeks called this ability* phronesis (Arendt, 1961: 221, in d'Entreves, 2008).

There are immediate parallels between Arendt's description of *phronesis* and youth work, given the importance she places upon discussion in the development of judgement or insight and the importance of conversation in youth work practice (Jeffs and Smith 2005; Batsleer, 2008). As d'Entreves (2008) a contemporary commentator on Arendt, claims, *Phronesis*: 'debate and discussion, and the capacity to enlarge one's perspective, are indeed crucial to the formation of opinions' (d'Entreves, 2008); these are also notable features of youth work practice (Young, 2005). Arendt argues this is a 'representative' process:

> *Political thought is representative. I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them … The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion* (Arendt, 1961:, 241).

It is important to point out that Smith (1994) provides a notable, if brief, exception to the absence of references to *phronesis* in youth work related literature. He cites the importance of *phronesis* or practical wisdom, which entails an appreciation and commitment to the 'good or right rather than the correct' (1994:76) in the formation of dispositions in the informal educator.

Phronesis and Youth Work

Of the three aspects of knowledge Aristotle presents, I would argue that *phronesis* provides a sounder basis for understanding the process of youth work than either *techne* or *episteme*, despite

the fact that both *techne* and *episteme* appear to be increasingly utilised. Admittedly this is dependent on what we mean by youth work, which is acknowledged as contested practice. The above assertion is most clearly evidenced if we look to the definition of youth work provided by Young (2005) who argues:

> *The core purpose of youth work is to engage young people in the process of moral philosophising through which they make sense of themselves and their world, increasingly integrate their values actions and identity, and take charge of themselves as empowered human beings* (Young, 2005: 59).

Although Young does not explicitly link her description of youth work to Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (or prudence) there are implicit parallels between the approach she advocates and Aristotle's concept, not least in her claim that youth work: 'supports young people's disposition towards virtue' (Young, 2005:45). Other clear parallels exist with her suggestion that youth work's job is to assist young people to negotiate the 'morally textured landscape' (ibid) as well as enable young people to 'make judgements and take action' (Young, 2005:45) within it. The only writer to explicitly argue for the relevance of *phronesis* to youth work is Smith (1994) who suggests:

> *Local educators think 'on their feet' ...broadly guided in their thinking by their understanding of what makes for the 'good'; of what makes for human well-being... this mode of thinking comes close to what Aristotle describes as 'prudence or 'practical wisdom'* phronesis (Smith, 1994:76)

Less morally explicit definitions of youth work include that presented to the Education Select committee by Janet Batsleer (chair of the Higher Education Training Agencies Group for Youth and Community Work) that:

> *youth work is there to produce opportunities for the personal, social and spiritual development of young people so that they reach their potential outside of the school system through activities that they join in their leisure time* (House of Commons 2011:10).

This definition does not differ greatly from that offered by the National Youth Agency:

> *Youth Work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning... Their work seeks to promote young people's personal and social development and enable them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and societies as a whole* (NYA, 2011)

Even if we accept the latter definitions, *phronesis* is a suitable and positive frame of reference for youth work. To explain this further we need to look at some more recent commentaries and

applications of a 'phronetic understanding', such as that offered by Bent Flyvbjerg (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Flyvbjerg attempts to argue that *phronesis* offers a better foundation for a social science than *episteme*. He argues that what are often considered the failings of social science, such as its lack of predictability or its inability to produce universal laws, are in fact a result of an unhelpful comparison between the social and natural sciences. He goes on to argue that they operate on a different basis, and until that is fully acknowledged social science will never be fully appreciated for what it is. It is not necessary to follow all his arguments in order to learn some of the lessons about the usefulness of *phronesis* to an understanding of youth work, but one which does need to be considered is the importance of context.

The centrality of context

One of the primary distinctions between *phronesis*, and both *episteme* and *techne*, is that *phronesis* is context dependent, where as *episteme* and *techne* are context independent. *Techne* and *episteme* strive for context independent explanations of actions, behaviour or wider social practices upon which generalisations, laws and predictions can be made. What constitutes rules governing production or the laws of science are independent of the context in which they are applied. Indeed it is a: 'requirement that a truly explanatory and predictive science must operate independent of context' (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 46). Similarly the rules governing production are independent of what is actually produced (for example, the principles of building such as providing a sound foundation). *Phronesis*, by contrast, is essentially social and as Flyvbjerg suggests, context-independence seems impossible in the study of social affairs (ibid). Citing Giddens, Flyvbjerg (2001:32). suggests the difference in the study of social affairs is that: 'The object is a subject…'

An appreciation of the importance of context has profound implications for both youth work and its associated outcomes. Context dependent explanations are of a different order. They are not reductionist, but multi-layered and unique to both individual social subjects and their specific circumstances. Such explanations are qualitatively different, again as Flyvbjerg points out:

> *Context dependence does not mean a more complex form of determinism. It means an open-ended, contingent relation between contexts and actions and interpretations. The rules of the ritual are not the ritual, a grammar is not a language, the rules of chess are not chess and traditions are not actual social behaviour* (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 43).

Given the importance of context, it is therefore the 'particular', that is important within *phronesis*. As Aristotle emphasised, *phronesis* concerns 'knowledge of particulars, since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars' (Aristotle 1141b, in Irwin 1999: 92). Aristotle also emphasises the importance of experience in understanding the particular. In a discussion about healthy eating he argues that theoretical knowledge of light meat alone will not necessarily mean a

healthy diet unless one has experience of eating chicken: 'people who lack [theoretical] knowledge but have experience are better in action than others who have knowledge' (ibid). As Smith (1994: 10) points out: 'practical wisdom [phronesis] is grounded in experience'.

If we return then to an application of this thinking to the understanding of youth work we can see how Aristotle's phronetic knowledge resonates with an approach to youth work which is grounded in an appreciation of young people's lived experience. Youth work is rooted in the personal, social and spiritual development of young people which has to be understood in the context of their 'particular' lives and therefore their 'experience' (Jeffs and Smith, 2005; Batsleer 2008; Ord, 2011).

To illustrate, consider the following example from the national Choose Youth lobby in London. A young man gave an impassioned account of his personal transformation as a result of his engagement with his youth worker. Throughout much of his school life he had been labelled as awkward and difficult, and had been increasingly getting into trouble. A profound change took place as a result of the engagement with his youth worker. In recounting his story the young man described how, through their conversations Sam had helped him redefine who he was. He now saw himself not as difficult but as passionate, not as problematic but as energetic and committed. Importantly he came to see his previous problems at school as a result of the school failing to provide an appropriate outlet for his energies. The young man is now the chair of a youth forum and a credit to himself and his peers.

This example, like the Jeremy Brent one recounted earlier where Kelly begins to smile for the first time, is not only rooted in the 'particular' and the context of the young person's life. Equally importantly it is founded in an understanding and appreciation of the meaning of young people's lives – the context in which they live and how they construct their own lives. Such an example embraces a phronetic approach to youth work one which is concerned with questions of what it means to live a 'good life', to make moral decisions which result in actions (praxis) which are both informed and deliberative (Aristotle, in Irwin 1999). Let me illustrate with an hypothetical example. Within the neoliberal technocratic and epistemic approach to youth work a particular agency or project might be expected to collate the number of young people entering work as a result of undertaking a particular youth work programme or attending a project. However what would be considered a good outcome in this respect? What if a young person held down a job at McDonald's for six months? Would this be considered a good outcome? The answer to this question is entirely context dependent. If for example the person had been rehabilitated from a drug or alcohol problem, had few if any educational qualifications, had challenging behaviour, and had never had a job before this would be a remarkable achievement. However if a young person in question had none of these 'problems' and had ten A star GCSEs, holding down a job at McDonald's alongside school may well be considered a problem in itself, and not as 'outcome' at all.

The dominance of *Techne*

As we saw earlier with what was described as a product approach to the framing of youth work, with its emphasis on programmes, planning, and a linear specificity between educational intention and outcome, it is easy to recognise the dominance of Aristotle's *techne*. It is no surprise that what tends to be emphasised within this approach is the acquisition of tangible knowledge and skills. Indeed as Stenhouse (1975) (an ardent critic of the product approach to education) admits, the product approach is suitable when dealing with tangible outcomes, but that these make up a minority of suitable foci for education, given the value laden and controversial nature of knowledge itself.

The transformative and life changing outcomes of youth work, such as genuinely building confidence, encouraging aspiration, or facilitating changes in young people's beliefs about themselves and the world around them, do not lend themselves to this 'product' approach. As we saw with our earlier reflections upon causality, youth work, though purposeful and intentional, is an open ended educational process with what can be described as indirect causality. *Techne* emphasises rules, rationality, objectivity and universality whereas *phronesis* emphasises context dependent interpretations of social practices, which require an appreciation of both the meanings and values of the social actors involved. As a practice, youth work rooted in *phronesis* would be concerned with providing opportunities which necessarily contain a degree of uncertainty, fluidity and unpredictability, not least because they need to be 'played out' in the real lives of young people.

Arguably the dominance of *techne* is all pervasive (Smith 2002, Davies and Merton 2009, Davies 2010, Batsleer and Davies 2010, Ord 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2012; de St Croix, 2008, 2010). The effects have been profound, from the micro to the macro: from how individual youth work interventions are framed not as part of an overall educational aim but justified in terms of specific outcomes, to how rigid youth work plans are required to link directly to tangible outcomes, and how our overall services are conceptualised in a 'fix-it' fashion. Young people arrive with identifiable, observable and rectifiable issues or problems which workers are expected to resolve, or if they are unable to resolve them, they are expected to refer on or signpost to someone who can.

I have argued that one of the roots of *techne's* dominance is the issue of causality. Causality originates from a technical and scientific (*techne/episteme*) approach to the world, one which emphasises predictability, universality and rationality above context dependence, unpredictability and complexity. *Phronesis* implies that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, i.e. a qualitative difference is achieved which is not reducible to a succession of stages. As Flyvbjerg (2001: 43) argues, '[*phronesis* is not] a more complex form of determinism, it is of an entirely different order, one concerned with, and underpinned by, values, judgements and meaning.'

To illustrate the differences let us consider two alternative approaches to a common youth work issue: challenging racist language. It is widely accepted that racism is contrary to the fundamental values of youth work (NYA 2001), but how to effectively challenge racism is a complex matter. An approach derived from *techne* would prioritise a tangible outcome from a specific intervention, such as young people ceasing to use particular words which were deemed racist. This however provides no guarantee of a change in attitude or belief and may reflect mere compliance to avoid further consequences. Attitudinal change is complex, unpredictable, and context dependent. The context of young people's racism might be embedded in familial beliefs and attempting to change such beliefs and resulting attitudes will take considerable time and require the youth worker to engage in a dialogue about how the young people see themselves and other people. The approach must maintain respect for the young person, but open up alternative ways of seeing the world and other people within it. This is an approach driven by *phronesis*, and has the potential to facilitate significant change. Indeed we may be better off limiting the use of such terms as 'intervention' with its strong connotations of specificity and use notions of engagement instead.

Episteme and the question of measurement

Alongside *techne*'s dominance of youth work has been the increasing presence of *episteme*, what Aristotle refers to as scientific knowledge, with its emphasis on the quantifiable, measurable and generalisable, as well as the establishment of universal laws. There has been a noticeable correlation between the rise of *episteme* and the demands for youth work outcomes. The starkest example of this approach was presented by Dr Louise Bamfield (2011), ex-advisor to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in the Blair government, who advocated the need to provide an evidence base and even suggested the performance of randomised trials to measure the effectiveness of youth work. Only by doing this, she argued, could a sufficiently robust evidence base be provided upon which future claims for funding could be based.

The latest example of epistemic thinking can be found in the recent *Education Select Committee Report on Youth Services* (House of Commons, 2011) where they claim:

> We find that many services are unable or unwilling to measure the improvements they make in outcomes for young people. The lack of a common measurement framework across the sector makes it extremely difficult for authorities to decide which services to fund (House of Commons, 2011: 75).

Indeed one of the recommendations of the committee was to produce such a framework which resulted in *The Outcomes Framework for Young People's Services* (Young Foundation, 2012). This Framework:

- *Proposes a model of seven interlinked clusters of social and emotional capabilities that are of value to all young people, supported by a strong evidence-base demonstrating the links to longer term outcomes.*
- *Sets out a matrix of available tools to measure these capabilities, outlining which capabilities they cover and key criteria such as net cost and the number of users.*
(Young Foundation, 2012: 4)

What is clearly evident in the framework is a desire for objectivity, universality, and predictability, the purpose of which links directly into the framework of commissioning. This framework, whilst not wholly unsurprising given the dominance of *techne* and *episteme* is nevertheless disappointing given that the committee appeared to have a genuine appreciation of youth work, both the way it works (its processes), and its benefits (its outcomes). They did arguably grasp the 'particular', and perhaps therefore appreciate at least implicitly the importance of *phronesis*, acknowledging:

> *There is little doubt that good youth services can have a transformational effect on young people's lives and can play a vital role both in supporting vulnerable young people and in enriching the lives of others without particular disadvantage* (House of Commons, 2011: 75).

The Select Committee also appeared to grasp the importance of context in making judgements about the quality of youth work:

> *We accept that the outcomes of individual youth work relationships can be hard to quantify and the impact of encounters with young people may take time to become clear and be complex. In that context, it is hard to reject the basic tenet expanded by a range of such representatives and young people themselves, that 'you know good youth work when you see it'* (ibid).

It is therefore frustrating and with considerable irony that whilst acknowledging the importance of context and the 'particular' – an implicit appreciation of *phronesis* – that the ultimate suggestions and recommendations ran totally counter to it.

What we see here is evidence of the universal trumping the particular. The desire for the objective rides roughshod over the importance of the subjective. Despite even the best efforts to acknowledge phronetic knowledge it is technocratic and epistemic (instrumental or scientific) approaches which inevitably dominate. As Fairfield (2011:95) points out in his comments about education as a whole, we seem to be 'profoundly beholden to a single conceptual framework – 'science-technology'' so that approaches which are rational, quantifiable, measurable and generalisable always take precedence. As a result:

> *The rational perspective has been elevated from being necessary to being sufficient, even*

exclusive. This has caused people and entire scholarly disciplines to become blind to context, experience, and intuition, even though these phenomena and ways of being are at least as important and necessary for good results as are analysis, rationality and rules (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 24).

The very notion of measurement asks the wrong kinds of questions and looks to provide the wrong kind of answers. We would be better off talking in terms of 'demonstrating changes' rather than 'measuring outcomes'. This would more accurately reflect and bring to life the process of youth work. Measurement is derived from technical and epistemic conceptions of the world where everything is quantifiable, rational and universal. Einstein reputedly had the following quote on his wall in his Princeton office and knew the important message it conveyed: 'Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted' (Einstein in Anon, 2007).

The problem is that with the domination of *techne* and *episteme* over *phronesis* 'we tend to count what we can measure, and what we can measure counts' (Bennet, 2005:30), thereby denigrating that which can't be quantified and measured. 'Aristotle is arguing that natural and social science are, and should be, different ventures' (Flyvbjerg, 2001:3) and the process of bringing youth work to account must reflect its essentially phronetic nature.

A way forward…

We must be able to articulate the practice of youth work with confidence. It is not intellectual laziness that the practice cannot be pre-specified with any degree of certainty beforehand or brought to account objectively, but it can be demonstrated afterwards. Quite the contrary, openness or uncertainty is a prerequisite of enabling a practice to develop which ironically is more likely than not to be able to meet the unfolding and emerging needs of young people. Indeed, the recent parliamentary Education Select Committee acknowledged this (House of Commons, 2011).

We have also been shown a way forward in the recent publication from In Defence of Youth Work: *This is Youth Work: Stories From Practice* (IDYW, 2011). This booklet provides 12 accounts of 'particular', 'context dependant' examples of practice – 'stories'. The communication of important narratives like this provides a powerful evidence base of practice, but the fact is we have very few accounts of young people's stories. Rather than spending time devising outcome measures and attempting to apply technocratic and epistemic thinking to an essentially phronetic practice we would be better off spending our time communicating and celebrating stories from practice, locally and nationally. In isolation they are separate raindrops which may quickly evaporate but together they may combine to produce powerful rivers which have the potential to erode immovable objects.

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Attachment, adolescent girls and technology: a new marriage of ideas and implications for youth work practice

Diane T. Levine and Caroline S. Edwards

Abstract

Technology is part of the fabric of young people's lives and yet we have little understanding of the ways technology use relates to social cognitive development. This paper shares a small-scale pilot project exploring two adolescent young women's use of Facebook™ and Maximum Ride™ . The study suggests that the socio-cognitive construct of attachment can provide a useful framework for analysing and exploring online relationships. For youth workers and researchers wishing to understand young women's technology use, a significant implication is the need to adopt a robust language that can be used in three ways: first, to describe adolescents' online relationships; second, to help adolescents articulate and explore the ways that relationships evolve; and third, to describe their significance in the light of offline relationships. Thus, despite the limitations in sample size and timescale, it would appear that the approach is of value.

Key words: adolescence; attachment; technology; practitioner; safety

WIDENING INTERNET access, increasing ease of interaction and the growth of user-generated content have contributed to an increase in adolescents' use of social networking over the past ten years (Eynon, 2008; Livingstone et al, 2011). This use has been discussed from a range of perspectives. For some, the focus has been on the educational potential of social networking sites (SNS) and future trends (eg. Luckin et al, 2008; Cliff et al, 2008), and the broader context of child development and technological environments (eg. Goswami, 2008). For others, the focus has been on the relationships between the unique features of technology-enabled communication and the ways we interact with one another in adulthood (eg. Zoppos, 2009; Amichai-Hamburger, 2005).

What these studies have in common is a desire to identify, illuminate and address concerns about our relationships with technology and with one another. For example, in the UK, young people have received particular attention in the media with regard to child safety, arguably resulting in significant policy intervention at the macrocosmic level (Byron, 2010) and a range of 'fairly effective' monitoring and mediation practices within the microcosm of the home and school (Livingstone et al, 2011: 18). This article carries forward this concern within a particular context; that of a small pilot project with two adolescent girls.

It is striking that those researching technology and its uses with adolescents have made little use of established psychological frameworks. This article addresses that gap by making use of the attachment construct (Zoppos, 2009), albeit in an exploratory small scale way. Amichai-Hamburger's work in adult attachment and internet use suggests that this framework provides us with the opportunity to understand the 'contradiction between the very shallow relationships and the deep serious relationships' (2005: 32), and here we explore whether this principle can be applied to adolescents' online behaviours and relationships. The purpose of the study was to stimulate debate and further investigation on a timely and important topic rather than to be a discrete piece of work. The study focuses on young women in particular for two reasons. Firstly, because of a secondary interest in the decreasing age of puberty in girls (Maisonet et al, 2010), and the resultant hypothesis that a pubescent girl aged 9 uses the internet differently, and establishes different types of relationships than her pre-pubescent age-peer. Secondly, because the evidence suggests that parents are more likely to speak with their daughters about online safety (Livingstone et al, 2011).

What is attachment?

There has been some debate about the definitions of attachment (Goldberg, 2000), but for the purposes of this exploratory study, attachment has been broadly defined as 'the relationships between individuals'. This definition encompasses the ways in which relationships originate and develop, are sustained or discarded, their nature, and their impact on wider societal behaviours (Goldberg, 2000).

The study investigated whether benefits could be realised if, firstly, we establish whether the construct resonates for young women, and then use it to explore their online and offline relationships. Possible benefits include the provision of a shared language with which to describe our online behaviours, software design that is more conducive to productive social cognitive development, and a more nuanced dialogue about child safety within families and wider society. We started from the premise that attachment could provide a framework in which to analyse adolescent girls' interactions with others. Although this construct has not previously been applied to technological worlds in the context of adolescence, it has a seventy-year history that has been tested in a variety of international contexts.

Bowlby and Ainsworth, the pioneers of attachment research, provided the conceptual and methodological foundation upon which contemporary theory linking family life and emotional development is built (Goldberg, 2000). Bowlby's work drew together research from across psychology, psychoanalysis, ethology and information processing to derive some core principles on the way children develop relationships with their mother, and what happens when those relationships are disrupted. Ainsworth's research had its origins in mother-child separations during

the 1950s. What emerged from her early experimental and observational work was the classic 'strange situation' sequence, in which separations between mother-child dyads are explored. This enabled Ainsworth to identify the systematic patterns of behaviour still observed in contemporary times of 'secure', 'avoidant', 'resistant/ambivalent' and subsequently 'disorganized' (Ainsworth, 1969). In research with older children and young people these patterns are also called 'balancing', 'limiting', 'preoccupied' and 'disorganized' respectively (Goldberg, 2000).

Although sub-categories have been developed over more recent years to enable more nuanced assessment, Table 1 summarises the characteristics of the main attachment patterns.

Pattern	Characteristics
Secure	Has a secure base within the home, enabling risk-taking in a safe environment Comfortable speaking on a range of topics Easily comforted and with a range of coping strategies for dealing with relationship challenges
Avoidant	Does not use a secure base to explore environments and relationships After separation or disappointment does not turn to parents Does not seek comfort or draw on a range of coping strategies for dealing with relationship challenges Can be more comfortable with strangers
Resistant/ambivalent	Engrossed with a small number of people, unwilling to explore Severe distress at separation from trusted people Fury/apathetic emotional engagement Resists comforting
Disorganised	Does not demonstrate persistent strategy, although a number of behavioural patterns are present, such as contradictory behaviours, disorientation or indications of unhappiness about the parent and other trusted people.

Table 1: Characteristics of common attachment patterns (adapted for adolescence from Main and Solomon, 1990; Cassidy and Shaver, 2008)

At the heart of our understanding of attachment lies Bowlby's argument that constructive relationships with others are key to one's mental health. The idea of the 'secure base' led to an

initial strong focus on mother-child relationships, but is extended to other relationships as children interact with a wider range of people as they get older, and as the research base has broadened.

However, it is not sufficient to define human relationships only by measurable behaviours and the physiological changes that represent them in one instance (Fox and Hane, 2008); the ways in which those relationships are represented and extrapolated into other contexts are key to understanding our attachments (Bretherton and Munholland, 2008). Bowlby (1969) called this representation our 'inner working models' (IWMs) of relationships. IWMS can be thought of as the representational frameworks in which we can conceptualize our interactions with others, based on our previous interactions. Their key function is to 'anticipate', 'interpret' and 'guide' interactions with others (Bretherton and Munholland, 2008: 103), whether parental or otherwise.

Significantly more evidence exists on attachment in the adolescent years than on those of middle childhood, although the focus shifts away from categorizing or dichotomizing attachment organization types and relationships, and towards the functions and development of attachment during adolescence (Allen, 2008). The nature of the evidence for this life stage tries to take account of psychosocial, cognitive and physiological changes taking place within the young person (Keating, 1990), perhaps encouraging us to think differently about the nature of attachment for this group.

Allen (2008) characterizes a number of 'developmental transformations' experienced by the adolescent that both influence, and are influenced by, attachment. The changing relationship with the parent features heavily in a number of these, as the young person transitions from a concern with the proximity of the attachment figure, to growing independence and developing attachments outside the parent/carer relationship. The importance of peer relationships for adolescents cannot be overestimated, because they are associated with a number of societal outcomes, including engagement in delinquent behaviours (Boykin McElhaney et al, 2006).

That said, parental and youth worker influence continues to be important; secure adolescents are more likely to adopt problem-solving approaches to conflict, rather than feeling conquered by it (Kobak et al, 1993). They are also more likely to communicate comfortably with others about challenging issues, or issues that are important to them (Cassidy, 2001). It is worth noting that there appears to be no research on what young people think about this construct; this is something this preliminary work sought to address, albeit in a simple way, and we shall return to it later in the discussion.

There has been aq significant critique of attachment from within the psychology community. These mainly surround whether attachment is a construct applied to a context, or whether it exists a priori, and can therefore be empirically investigated. By taking a pragmatic approach to attachment, the data gathering focus for this study moved from testing tools within tightly defined boundaries in

an experimental context, to attempting to observe the functions of attachment (Allen, 2008) within two particular environments – in this case online.

Research Design and Methods

The impetus to the study was to explore whether attachment theory could help in understanding adolescents' online behaviour, and stimulate further research in the area. The resultant pilot study addressed five key questions:

1. Can the construct of attachment provide a framework within which to better understand and articulate the young women's online relationships?
2. How can we better understand the relationships between users and technology?
3. Can young women be reflective in respect of their use of technology?
4. What are their attitudes and behaviours associated with risk-taking?
5. What are the implications of this study for youth workers?

The small sample arose opportunistically and aimed to gain insight into the two young women involved as a preliminary step to a larger piece of work. Methodologically, this could be considered to be a case study in that it was bounded and focused on gaining a deep understanding of their online context, and a range of pragmatic data collection methods were used (Yin, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data were not gathered beyond the two cases reported here.

A brief profile of both cases will now be given. All names, including screen names, have been anonymised.

Rachel (aged 15) is of white British origin, and lives in the UK with both her parents and a younger brother. Her parents both have higher degrees, and own their own home. Rachel attends drama and dance classes, and enjoys going to the cinema with friends. She estimates she uses her personal laptop for two hours a day, inclusive of time spent doing homework. Rachel's primary use of technology is a website that enables collaborative writing in a role-playing fan fiction context. The Maximum Ride® website offers users a community, forums, blogs, information about the books and images (http://www.max-dan-wiz.com/forum). Some of the writing on the site reflects experiences the authors are encountering in their daily lives. Rachel has never met any of the people she writes with online, most of whom live in English-speaking countries abroad. There are a core group of around five people with whom she corresponds more regularly than others, including a particularly close friend, E (pseudonym Winter). Maximum Ride also offers a messaging facility which Rachel makes use of to correspond with this close group. The site is strictly monitored for breaches of protocol, such as the sharing of personal information.

Carey (aged 15) is of Asian/Scandinavian origin, living in the UK. Her parents are separated, and Carey lives part time with each of them, her younger brother, and two step-siblings. Both Carey's parents have degrees. Carey also enjoys an active social life and goes out weekly. She attends extracurricular netball and drama. Carey uses technology every day via her mobile phone and on her personal laptop. She estimates that she spends two hours a day using these devices, inclusive of time spent doing homework using them. She uses Facebook ® as her primary means of sustaining online interactions with her peers, the majority of whom she knows face-to-face. Facebook is a social networking site in which users can register for a personalised profile page, connect with others and share content (www.facebook.com). Carey also makes extensive use of the chat facility the site offers. Carey estimates that she corresponds regularly with 30 of her 728 Facebook 'friends'.

Data collection and analysis

Internet communication was used to collect data in a range of ways, consistent with the case study methodology. Methods comprised:

1. Observation of online interactions for half an hour, once a week. This was always with participants' agreement.

2. Delivery of the short Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire (West et al, 1998), a questionnaire (see Appendix B), already established within the attachment literature in order to ascertain each participant's attachment orientation. The AAQ gathers data against three attachment-related dimensions, and was chosen for its brevity (ie. lack of intrusiveness) and because it has already been tested for robustness (West et al, 1998). The 'Angry Distress' dimension measures levels of anger towards others. The 'Goal-Corrected Partnership' dimension measures the extent to which the respondent reflects on others' perspectives, differentiates those perspectives from their own, and works with others to construct the relationship. The 'Availability' dimension measures the extent to which the respondent believes that the attachment figure is available to them, and vice versa. The questionnaire was adapted to include questions on online and offline friends. In this adapted version each dimension comprised 3 pairs of questions, each rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Both Availability and Goal-Corrected Partnership are reverse scored. Sub-scores for each dimension are produced for each potential attachment. The higher the score, the higher the likelihood that there is some challenge on the dimension under review. The survey was sent to each participant using 'Kwiksurvey'.

3. Semi-structured interviews, which took place intermittently, via email and over a three-month period. These interactions were classified loosely as interview because some of the questions were specific to the individual case, and individuals within the case, rather than applying generically across a broader population, and because the questions ranged from pre-decided questions to questions that arose from ongoing discussion. The participants were contacted

once every two weeks. Each email contained a maximum of five questions arising from the observations of their online activity, and building on their responses to previous emails. Each email gave the participant the opportunity to respond via telephone or by return. Both participants chose to correspond only via email.

4. One face-to-face thirty minute interview of a parent from each site.

5. A face-to-face activity designed to access and make explicit each participant's inner working model (IWM) by drawing on their generic event representations (GERs). Participants were asked to draw a notated mind map for stories they told about online and offline relationships. The stories were prompted through an informal interview schedule.

Informed consent and parental approval were both obtained prior to the start of the study. The researcher's interpretation of the findings were checked with the participants on three occasions, and via moderated coding (Parker, 2005; Robson, 2002; Coolican, 2009; Baxter and Jack, 2008). This was to ensure the account was coherent and trustworthy. Data were then analysed by pattern matching (Campbell, cited in Yin, 1989) and grouped around the themes of attachment type, the articulation of personal perspectives in an online context, and links between type, behaviours and inner working models.

To say that young people's use of technology can be embedded in their lives, and that they do not explicitly distinguish between online and offline lives is to say nothing new (eg. Luckin et al, 2008). However, just as a young person might distinguish between school and home life, so the intention in analysis was to bring the same mechanisms to bear in exploring online and offline lives.

Findings

We will consider each of the cases in turn here, reflect on the emerging evidence, and then go on to consider what the analysis can tell us about the research questions. For reasons of anonymity, examples of online interactions have not been given.

Rachel
Data relating to Rachel are reported here. First we will consider Rachel's attachment type, then her personal perspectives of online attachments, and finally the links between her inner working model of attachment and associated behaviours.

Rachel's completed amended Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire (see Table 2) suggest that she is likely to have secure attachments with her parents and friends. This was supported during the

interview with her father about levels of mutual trust:

> *We completely trust* [Rachel] *to be safe. They did a superb thing on cyber-safety in her drama class last year, and we found some of it harrowing.*

	Mother	Father	Online friend	Offline friend
Angry Distress	6	6	5	5
Goal-Corrected Partnership	5	5	5	4
Availability	4	5	6	6

Table 2: Rachel's attachment type scores as measured by the amended Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire

In respect to the differences between her online/offline relationships online and offline friendships, Rachel suggested that the discrepancy in scores was a function of the instrument, rather than relationships per se; she felt that the nature of the questions did not include sufficient positive categories and that this might have yielded a different response. She was also asked whether the description of a securely attached person was something that resonated for her.

> *Yep, that makes sense! I get on well* [sic] *me my parents and my friends (or they wouldn't be my friends) and I feel I can tell them most things. Of course there are some things that I prefer to keep to myself but doesn't everyone?*

The IWM activity was used to explore these ideas further through the prism of attachment, and as a way of exploring the contrasts with Rachel's offline friendships. During the activity Rachel repeatedly discussed the way in which her online friend, E, was able to 'understand what I'm going through' in a way that her closest offline friend (a boy called 'J') struggled to do. Rachel queried whether these differences were as a result of gender characteristics, rather than as a result of whether they communicated online or offline

> *…I don't know. I really don't know. Maybe he's just a bit behind because guys … you know …don't always get emotional stuff. Although my dad …I think it probably more because E is so far away, and we only communicate through the internet, and I see J every day at school that the differences are so big.*

This suggests that Rachel perceives her relationship with E to be a secure base – more so than her main offline friendship. She believes her relationship to be an 'attachment', rather than a simple friendship.

Rachel suggested that her secure relationships with her parents were interpreting or guiding her relationships with her online friends, or leading her to anticipate their feelings, experiences or behaviours. For example, during the IWM activity during a conversation about 'respect', Rachel said the following about her friends

> *I respect both of them but in different ways and for different reasons. They respect me but again for different reasons and in different ways. It isn't like family, where you all respect each other because everyone's proved themselves lots of times. But if a secure base is someone you can always turn to, then E is a secure base for me. Not in the same way as my parents, but in a different way.*

Rachel believed that her secure base at home had also led to her having clear views about the kinds of social media she is happy to engage with, and what she prefers to keep private. The secure base of her parental relationships have guided her in developing this attachment online, and she applies what she has learnt about relationships at home to the online context.

> *I'm not interested in Facebook. I don't want everyone to know what I'm feeling all the time. I can talk to my family if I need to. I don't want people to read what I'm thinking. Want them to read what I'm creating.*

We explored Rachel's perspectives about her relationships with others and, at her prompting, the ways in which those perspectives influenced her writing. The most recent piece of collaborative writing Rachel and her closest online writing friend have undertaken reaches, at the time of writing, 1,217 pages, 10,000 exchanges, and has continued for five months.

Rachel explained that she tended to write dramatically in order to keep a story-line vibrant, and as such she did not believe that she wrote her personal experience into her character's lives.

> *On the whole, I don't go through the things my characters do (thank goodness) seeing as most of their lives are pretty messed up. If we do share a situation, in the roleplay, it is often exaggerated (eg. an argument in my world could become a fight in the roleplay).*

She did not see this as quite so simple a distinction for her main writing collaborator, however. She discussed some of the challenges that 'Winter' has experienced, and suggested that the story was a way for her American friend to externalise some of her negative experiences.

I don't think Winter is a cutter [self harmer] like Skye… [a story character] but I know that the two of them can be quite similar. I think some of Skye's problems are based on Winter's own (I don't know details, but I know Winter is adopted) but not all.

This interaction suggests that Rachel is making inferences about Winter's writing and life, and was further explored in a later interaction in which Rachel demonstrated that an online experience had influenced her later exchanges (implying IWM).

I have never been cyber-bullied and I hope I never do. People on that website do chat to each other out of character as well. There have been a few things people have said which made me stop and think. Probably the best example is when Winter told me that she was adopted and that she hadn't exactly had the best of times beforehand. This made me feel really guilty because Shadow's past isn't exactly the best either, but she told me not to worry about it.

Rachel appreciates the 'time to think' that the online environment offers her, the possibility of connecting with others far away, and some level of privacy, if self-imposed. While the temporal and physical possibilities of the online world have been recorded since the introduction of synchronous vs. asynchronous chat, this study has revealed their potential importance in developing healthy online attachments for young people and warrants further investigation.

Carey

As with Rachel, Carey's contributions to the study were considered in terms of her attachment type, the ways in which she articulated her online attachments, and associated behaviours.

Carey's response to the questionnaire (see Table 3) suggests a varied picture, with more secure relationships with her friends than with her parents, particularly her father.

	Mother	Father	Online friend	Offline friend
Angry Distress	9	11	3	3
Goal-Corrected Partnership	5	6	6	5
Availability	6	11	3	5

Table 3: Carey's attachment type scores as measured by the amended Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire.

Carey felt that she had secure relationships with her mother and friends, and believed this to be an accurate reflection of those attachments. Carey, like Rachel, rejected the idea that she cannot have an attachment with a friend at this age.

Carey recognised this asymmetry between her relationships with friends and parents in an online interaction.

> … I do generally FEEL more secure around my friends compared to around my parents, not in a like security way, more in a brother sister type way (it's kind of hard to explain) … When I'm around my parents, I have to sort of hold back a bit … Whereas, when I'm with my friends I can be just who I am because we became friends in the first place because we are quite similar.

Carey felt there were aspects of her friendships that she would class as attachment (and indeed felt that it would be a disloyalty to suggest otherwise), although the security offered by her mother in particular was not something she felt was replicated within her friendship group. This endorses Allen's hypothesis that a focus on the functions of attachment is likely to be a more productive route for investigation with adolescents than attachment style or category.

Carey reflected on the variations between Availability and Goal-Corrected Partnership in terms of her offline and online friends, and suggested that there is complexity in terms of the directionality of her interactions with others. She reported finding it easier to tell others about her feelings online, but less easy to trust others when offline. However, given that both Carey and her mother said that she is not especially comfortable discussing any upsetting feelings, this could reflect this wish to keep her feelings private. Carey saw herself as a very private person and expressed a reluctance to share any deep or potentially negative feelings with others via any online medium. For her, online interactions were about having fun.

> I find it easier to talk about difficult things offline than online, when I do want to talk about them … but you can still pick up on things online. I broke up with my boyfriend and was talking to a friend and she knew I was upset without me telling her [on Facebook chat].

Carey's online and offline friendship groups overlap considerably, so our discussions were largely around the nature of the ways in which she finds herself interacting online vs. offline. No one friend, however, seemed to emerge as a prominent attachment for Carey. Rather, she operates within a close-knit group who spend time with one another in different contexts. She sees this group as a single unit that has attachment characteristics within it. She felt that she had had online experiences that had guided and influenced the ways in which she interacted with her friends both online and offline.

There was this one thing that I done online involving an older lad which results the whole of his year knowing about me and that was pretty much when I became 'known' to other years because rumours travelled around the whole school. It wasn't really that bad that the whole school knew, but I would much rather they didn't know, but it was more the fact that I trusted this guy and he was completely the opposite of how I thought he was. So that's why I think it's easy to trust people over the net, but now obviously I'm more careful.

Carey uses her experiences with her peers to influence, guide and anticipate her relationships online. Although she will turn to her mother for guidance, her GERs are based on prior online, rather than prior offline, experience.

Carey had mentioned briefly that she and her mother had discussed the parameters within which she was trusted to operate online, while agreeing not to be Facebook friends so that each could maintain some 'personal space'. They both speculated that being able to discuss problems within the boundaries of their relationship had meant that Carey was more confident to define the boundaries of her own interactions with others, both offline and online. This suggests that they believe there is some trust within their relationship, although this was not tested in this study.

I'm really proud of Carey… She's learnt from mistakes, and is looking after herself. She wants to do well at school and so I know she balances doing fun stuff online with working hard. I don't know how she does so many things at once, but she's doing well, so it must be working! I don't give her a computer curfew – I don't think there'd be any point – but I did insist on knowing her password when she got a Facebook account so that I knew she'd be safe, and she was fine with that.

Discussion

Some tentative conclusions can be drawn from this study.

1. *The psychological construct of attachment appears to provide a useful framework for analysing online relationships, and communicating with young people about them.*

    A key question for this study was to establish whether attachment could provide a framework within which to better understand and articulate online relationships. While this question has been explored in adult settings to some degree (eg. Amichai-Hamburger and Furnham, 2007) it has not been attempted with adolescents. In addition (and relating to the second of the two research questions), adolescents have not been systematically asked whether the construct resonates for them. For both of these cases, attachment 'made sense' as a way of describing their relationships; a small contribution from this work to the wider literature.

The evidence shared here suggests that attachment can provide researchers, participants and youth workers with a language with which to describe their online relationships. Given the complexity of describing relationships this may be of significant use to those attempting to understand and work with adolescent lives. For the individual youth worker, observing struggling adolescent relationships in an informal, young person-led setting, there is a unique opportunity to take the time to explain what we know about relationships and to help them understand and articulate some of their personal challenges. We hypothesise that developing a shared language about online relationships and a better understanding of the roots of our behaviours could lead to reduced isolation and an improved atmosphere of openness and honesty in the youth work setting.

2. *Not all adolescent girls are drawn to take unnecessary risks online.*

It is not the first time that the evidence has illuminated this issue of adolescent risk-taking online (Byron, 2010). However, it is the first time that we have had the language of attachment to help us begin to understand what is happening when young women develop relationships with others online.

Carey is a young woman carefully balancing a wide range of relationships in online settings. She applies certain criteria to some settings and not to others in order to maintain her preferred modes of being in different spaces. As she maintains these balances, she is explicitly questioning her own conceptual understanding of relationships, for example asking whether conversations she sees as 'meaningful' can be 'childish'.

Rachel, on the other hand, is very selective about her relationships. Rather than drawing on a large number of people to service different relationship needs, Rachel chooses cautiously, then cultivates her relationships with a small number of individuals.

Both cases appear to have developed the sorts of relationships with their peer groups that one might expect from young women of this age, and that have been reflected elsewhere in the literature (eg. Luckin et al, 2008). However, the caution and careful balancing that both cases engage in while managing and developing their online relationships runs counter to the popular image of the indiscriminate adolescent taking unnecessary risks.

It is possible that mutual trust with parents and a secure base in the home modifies and moderates this risk-taking behaviour, and that these positive experiences lead to more secure friendships as adolescence progresses, and provides an insight into the concerns about child safety touched on in the introduction to this paper. Future studies will need to explore whether what we know about other factors of adolescence (particularly pubertal onset) could be brought to bear on what we know about attachment to enable us to make predictions about online behaviours.

In the interim, youth workers may wish to regularly review the online protection policies and practices in club settings in particular, in order to ensure that risks are managed appropriately. They may wish to use an attachment framework with young people to better understand peer pressure and the sense of being 'wrapped up in the moment' when engaging with others online.

3. *Young women can be reflective about their use of technology.*

Existing research suggests that one of the motivators for operating in social networking environments is finding 'like-minded people', that is, the development of homophilous groupings (Mesch and Talmud, 2010). However, we also know that geographical closeness and similarity are still important factors in deciding whether to form or maintain friendships.

This study illuminates the complexity of this research environment. Like Rachel, Carey sees the temporal nature of the web as important to developing and maintaining her attachments, but in a quite different way. Whereas Rachel enjoys the time offered to consider responses, Carey prefers the immediacy offered by online activities. Livingstone et al (2011) found that European young people are more careful than we might expect, and this work supports that finding; both cases had thought consciously and carefully about the kinds of privacy they wanted to maintain online – who they would bring into which online circle, who they trusted, and what information they would divulge. As youth work practitioners we cannot assume that the young people with whom we work will automatically operate in thoughtless ways. Rather, this small scale study suggests that helping young people to externalise and operationalise their thinking on the subject of online privacy would be a productive policy to introduce in clubs and other youth work settings.

4. *Young women can have complex and paradoxical relationships with technology.*

This study raises a number of questions about our relationships with technology. For Rachel in particular, technology is neither deterministic nor a vacuum (Oliver, 2011). Rachel engages in activities she would not be able to do as easily without the internet (for example, developing international friendships). Those activities are, in turn, impacted on by the technological medium; her role playing collaborative writing is perhaps more immediate and personal, yet distanced and dramatic than it might be were she to see her collaborators face-to-face. However, considered within the framework of adolescent attachment development, her online relationships are predictable and reinforce a sense of her identity. The question emerging from this analysis is whether technological affordances can have a predictable role to play within this triad of adolescence, technology and attachment, or whether the variation between individuals is so great as to make such predictions meaningless.

Youth workers have a unique contribution to make to helping young women understand

and resolve their complex relationships with technology, and with technology-mediated relationships. Provision of excellent formal teaching on this in the school curriculum is patchy (Becta, 2010). As such, youth workers may be able to use attachment theory as the basis for a non-judgmental language to describe relationships with technology and one another. They are also able to mediate with parents in a context where a detached voice can facilitate a productive conversation that might otherwise be emotion or value-laden.

Conclusion

The study discussed in this paper was undertaken to stimulate discussion and further research and, as such, is small scale and exploratory. However, the work has suggested that the construct of attachment, building on the foundations of social cognition, provides a helpful conceptual framework within which we can analyse adolescents' online relationships. For those wishing to understand online environments, a significant outcome is the adoption of a robust language that can be used in three ways: first, to describe those relationships; second, to help adolescents articulate and explore the ways that those relationships evolve and are maintained; and third, to describe their significance in the light of offline relationships.

The participants themselves felt that the descriptions and processes described by the attachment literature, and applied to this project, resonated for them. The construct of attachment seemed to 'make sense' and prompted them to think in deeper ways about their own relationships. Thus, despite the limitations in sample size and timescale, it would appear that the study is of value.

We have also suggested ways in which the attachment theory might provide youth workers with a language to discuss online relationships and practices with young people, helping to illuminate our behaviours towards one another.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: Measures

Key Measures and Indicators

Measures	Indicators
Technology Affordances	
Measure TA1: (Key question) What are the characteristics of the physical design?	TA1i: Immediacy TA1ii: Communication TA1iii: Collaboration TA1iv: Reflection TA1v: Diversity TA1vi: Access
Measure TA2: (Key question) What are the characteristics of the symbolic design?	TA2i: Interface layout TA2ii: Interface structure TA2iii: Level of control TA2iv: Accessibility TA2v: Multimodal/non-linear TA2vi: Fragility/uncertainty
Measure TA3: (Key question) What are the characteristics of the user?	TA3iii: Level of interaction TA3iv: Nature of interaction TA3v: Expressed relationships with others TA3vi: Fragility/uncertainty TA3i: Expression of the inner working model of attachment in online contexts TA3ii: Attachment style
Attachment	
Measure A1: Attachment type indicated by the Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire (West et al, 1998)	
Measure A2: Attachment type validation via the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987) embedded in IWM activity	

Measures	Indicators
Measure A3: Articulating expression of personal perspectives of attachment in an online context	A3i: indications of interpretation of a relationship in light of another relationship A3ii: indications of anticipation of a relationship in light of another relationship A3iii: indications of guiding interactions with others in light of other relationships
Measure A4: Links between IWMs, behaviours, attachment types and affordances	
Puberty	
Measure P1: Stage of Tanner Breast Development indicated by visual instrument (Morris and Udry, 1980)	

Appendix B: Adapted Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire

Each item has possible responses for the following potential attachments:

Mum
Dad
Closest online friend
Closest offline friend

The score range for each potential attachment within a dimension is 3 – 15. Availability and Goal-Corrected Partnership are both reverse scored.

Dimension	Item
Angry Distress	My parent/friend only seems to notice me when I am angry.
	I often feel angry with my parent/friend without knowing why.
	I get annoyed at my parent/friend because it seems I have to demand his/her caring and support.
Availability	I'm confident that my parent/friend will listen to me.
	I'm confident that my parent/friend will try to understand my feelings.
	I talk things over with my parent/friend.
Goal-Corrected Partnership	I enjoy helping my parent/friend whenever I can.
	I feel for my parent/friend when he/she is upset.
	It makes me feel good to be able to do things for my parent/friend.

THINKING SPACE [1]

The Value of Youth Services towards Child and Adolescent mental health

Matthew Fish

THE PREMISE of this article is that local authority and voluntary youth services are not valued regarding the role that they play in preventing mental health problems developing in children and adolescents. This opinion derives from attempts I made to bring together evidence and research which would show such causation, and the realisation that there is a lack of research on this topic.

There are some small snippets of research evidence showing some benefits to be gained from youth work approaches, an example being Mahoney and Stattin (2002), who show the value of after school activities on depressed unattached youth, and Fite et al (2011), who consider attendance at youth programmes to act as a buffer against depressive symptoms developing in young people in deprived areas. A report by Coulston (2010) suggested an affinity between youth work and the promotion of mental health, and detailed some of the ways in which youth work can help prevent young people from developing mental health problems. The report identifies how youth clubs can help to develop and strengthen young people's resilience, reduce the vulnerability of young people to adverse negative social-demographic factors, and also help prevent young people with 'low level' mental health problems from developing a more severe mental health problem. Coulston also indicates that youth clubs can help promote mental health awareness and also assist in young people getting access to more specialised mental health services.

My own reading of the government's 10 year strategy for youth services (DfCSF, 2007), gave me cause for hope at the time, as that paper placed some emphasis on the role that youth services can bring to building resilience in youth through helping the development of social and emotional skills.

I looked forward then to the youth work profession vocalising its suitability for this approach.

However, in practice, the profession did not seem to recognise or appreciate the significance of this in terms of young people's mental health, and little more was said on the contribution of youth services to social and emotional learning (SEL). This is a shame, as the evidence from social and emotional learning theory, implicitly gives significant credence to youth work's potential role in promoting SEL.

So where can this potential be located? It is worth considering how youth work fits into SEL competencies. Firstly a brief look at the core values of youth work may highlight some links. Resourcing Excellent Youth Services (DfES, 2002) summarises some of the core values; young people choose to be involved; youth work starts where young people are at; it encourages critical thinking and exploration and recognises and respects communities and cultures; it seeks to help build stronger relationships, as well as collective identities, and is concerned with the feelings and attitudes of young people; it aims to empower young people, respects and values individual differences, and can work with other relations in young people's lives such as family or school (adapted from DfES, 2002).

For me, seeing these values in practice, as well as having an awareness of SEL theory proclaims their similarities. Martinovich (2006) provides a useful breakdown of SEL by saying that it consists of three competencies; self-awareness, social awareness and interaction, and self-management. A closer look at how youth work compares with specific SEL competencies will make my point clearer, and I will begin with Martinovich's first competency of self-awareness.

Martinovich defines self-awareness as 'awareness of self and own emotions, ability to decode, understand and label emotions, self-regulation, communication, self-motivation, realistic and positive sense of self' (Martinovich, 2006: 43). From the youth work perspective, Young captures the equivalent role in fulfilling this by saying succinctly that it helps 'young people to see themselves' (Young, 2006:75), and that it encourages young people to examine their values and morals as well as their sense of self. As well as unmasking self-image, youth work aims to help develop a positive self-concept through challenging negative self-perceptions and providing opportunities to discover positive strengths. Meanwhile, Bamfield says that Youth work can 'transform young people's outlook and dispositions' (Bamfield, 2007: 20).

Through working for statutory and voluntary youth work organizations, in a wide range of settings from traditional generic youth work drop in sessions, through to working with young people being sexually exploited, I have found that youth work is ideal for working on the competency of self-awareness. Youth workers through discussions in informal one to one or group work settings, discuss and explore young people's perceptions of themselves, and encourage reflection on comments or behaviours perhaps signalling some self-belief. The skill of youth workers lies often in their ability to come alongside young people, and this skill, particularly when employed consistently with young people over extended periods, is pivotal in building new positive attachments for young

people. Garbarino et al (1992) demonstrate how an attachment with a supportive adult can help build self-esteem and resilience with children exposed to high levels of family and community violence. Similarly, Luxmoore (2008) disagrees with a view of poor early attachment being definitively conclusive in regards to a young person's self-esteem. He shows how professionals and other supportive adults can build new healthy attachments with young people, which can bolster and reinforce a new and more positive sense of self.

Martinovich's second SEL category is social awareness and interaction, which she defines as, 'awareness of others, ability to 'decode', understand and respect their perspective, appreciating the differences of others, (and) collaboration' (Martinovich, 2006:43). Jeffs and Smith (1999) say that building relationships is central to youth work, and emphasis is put on the relationship between youth worker and young person to equip young people for their own relationships, while Merton et al (2004) show how youth work helps provide key relationship building skills.

Within youth work, relationship skills are often taught within group work settings, providing a safe place for young people to learn and reflect on practical experience. Youth workers also often work with young people on a one to one basis, which gives space and safety for young people to talk through their emotions. This seemingly mere act of talking between youth worker and young person is considered by some as therapeutic in itself (Jeffs and Smith, 2005). Youth workers also at times provide constructive feedback about relationship skills which include empathy awareness. In discussing the *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies Program*, Kusche and Greenberg (2001) assert how having increased empathy can help improve interpersonal skills, meaning the young people concerned are more likely to become part of a social group, and so accordingly achieve a sense of belonging.

Martinovich's third category is self-management, defied as 'problem solving, decision making, realistic analysis, ability to set and work toward goals' (Martinovich, 2006:43). Larson (2000) discusses how positive youth activities can lead to increased motivation, autonomy and initiative, and Bamfield (2007) shows how non formal education can lead to skills in motivation, aspiration, self-determination and self-control. Through youth work led group work activities, young people are often tested and challenged around self-control, as well as this learning being fostered in an environment governed by rules and boundaries. The youth work method at times uses young people-derived goal oriented tasks, such as organising a camping trip, or a funding or arts project. These types of activities, facilitated by youth workers, are particularly constructive for young people learning to handle conflicts, or disappointments and upsets.

It is difficult to fully capture the many facets of the youth work approach, but what is salient is that youth work begins where young people are at and responds to them in the multitude of contexts that they find themselves in. Youth work can occur in schools, communities, with groups or individuals. It can make use of targeted projects, outdoor education or indoor activities. It can use arts, sports,

volunteering, be based on the street or in centres. It can cover power, justice, inequality, health, the environment or local community issues (see for example, Devon Youth Service, 2006), as well as a host of other informal learning topics.

Based on my experience it seems clear to me that there is an increasing demand for the application of SEL approaches with children and young people. This is supported by recent evidence from the Royal College of GPs indicating an increase in mental health concerns in youth (Whitworth, 2014). Schools may be a good place to consider implementing SEL programmes, however, Shute (2012) identifies some existing barriers to this, including the need to ensure that SEL programs in schools are evidence based.

I have presented how local authority and voluntary youth services are best placed, and best experienced, to respond to the need to develop SEL competencies in our youth. Given the government's claim to recognise the value of early intervention with regard to mental health (HMG 2011), should not this early intervention be better delivered more widely by youth services?

There may be challenges with this approach. Some youth workers may perceive a greater emphasis on mental health as a threat to their professional identity, or there may be an expectation of greater workloads or commitments. However, the only change that I can see as necessary is in how youth services capture and communicate their contribution towards SEL competencies.

What would be helpful then is further training and awareness for youth workers, on the contribution that they make towards child and adolescent mental health, as well as further research and exploration around this topic in general. Also, given the need and trend for greater partnership working among services working with children and young people, greater collaboration between the youth and mental health work professions is essential.

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THINKING SPACE [2]

Youth Work and the 'Military Ethos'

Janet Batsleer

GIVEN THE widespread culture of support for the Armed Forces after their engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, it may seem difficult to discuss the question of 'military ethos' in schools and also in youth work, which has been placed strongly on the agenda by Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Education. Nevertheless, an open and democratic perspective in youth work implies that we should not accept such matters uncritically: it is necessary that we should raise questions and debate about this, as much as any other social and political matter. The ambition to promote a 'military ethos' is currently presented thus on the DfE website:

- *Our ambition is for pupils to use the benefits of a military ethos, such as self-discipline and teamwork, to achieve an excellent education which will help them shape their own futures.*

- *Promoting military ethos in schools helps foster confidence, self-discipline and self-esteem whilst developing teamwork and leadership skills. Past experience from both the military and education sector has demonstrated how these core values help pupils to reach their academic potential and become well-rounded and accomplished adults fully prepared for life beyond school.*

- *We are already working to bring military ethos into our education system to help raise standards and tackle issues such as behaviour. This includes:*

- *Expansion of the school-based cadets to create around 100 more units by 2015.*

- *Delivering the Troops to Teachers programme, which aims to increase the number of Service Leavers making the transition to teaching.*

- *Promoting alternative provision with a military ethos.*

- *Exploring how academies and Free Schools can use their freedoms to foster a military ethos and raise standards.*

On 14th November 2013 the DfE announced £4.8 million to be spent on 'projects led by ex-armed services personnel to tackle underachievement by disengaged pupils.' We should be concerned that the children with the lowest attainment and with many disadvantages are clearly the target for militarisation and potentially seen as the answer to the Army recruitment crisis.

The DfE is working with key charities and Community Interest Companies (CICs) which are enabling this work, and (as so often currently), the networks here are text book examples of what Stephen Ball has called the 'new heterarchies', linking philanthropy, privatisation and peripheralisation. So, for example, Uppingham School links with the newly constituted Havelock Academy in Grimsby to develop a Combined Cadet Corps, in the tradition of *noblesse oblige* and Public School influence which informed the origins of youth work. The three companies with which the DfE is working, *Challenger Troop*, *SkillForce* and *Commando Joe's*, themselves also embody the alliances which are driving so much educational and social policy.

Challenger Troop emerged from Kent voluntary youth services and has a strong base in the Cadets. Its partnerships are with the Police and Fire Service, as well as Housing Associations and Forestry.

Skillforce, based in Failsworth, North Manchester and operating nationally, emerged from the army as part of their contribution to civil society. The process of moving *Skillforce* out of the Army and establishing its independent governance has been supported by members of the *Skillforce* Board. These Board Members are in many ways representative of 'middle England.' They have associations with many significant national bodies: the Church of England Southwell Minster, the Woodland Trust, and the Racial Justice Committee of the Baptist Union. Others are the charitable representatives of finance companies, J.P. Morgan and Price Waterhouse Cooper.

The last of the triad funded by the DfE, *Commando Joe's*, is an American company who have not even bothered to change their website for the British market (**http://www.commandojoes.co.uk/**). Alongside its offer of products for primary and secondary schools, sports clubs and birthday parties, *Commando Joe's* website is still proudly emblazoned with the logo 'No Child Left Behind', the US policy equivalent of 'Every Child Matters'. With the possible difference that the programmes offered by these organisations may have more emphasis on structure and discipline than much informal education in youth work, they offer much that is important and familiarly claimed as 'outcomes' of youth and community work processes: confidence, self-discipline, self-esteem, development of team work and leadership skills, inclusion, fun and adventure. What's not to like?

Support for such strategies has come from across the political spectrum and has included Labour's Stephen Twigg as well as David Cameron's one-time favourite 'think tank' *Res Publica*. *Res*

Publica's advocacy of 'service schools' is based on a view of the moral degeneracy of poverty-stricken urban areas. 'They [service schools] would challenge the cultural and moral outlook of those currently engulfed by hopelessness and cynicism.' Ex-service personnel can, they argue, 'act as excellent role models for young people' whilst cadet experience brings 'a sense of responsibility and citizenship.' Through the £15 million grant to the charity *Skillforce*, 'an extra 100 ex-service personnel are already making a valuable contribution as mentors for young people in challenging schools and communities across England' (Blond and Kaszynska, 2012).

Unfortunately, without in any way wishing to question the value of individual supportive relationships formed through such work both for young men and for the ex-servicemen, the general discourse of moral elevation and virtue associated with the military cannot be sustained in the face of evidence concerning the actual mixed experience of military life. The organisation *Forceswatch* gives a full account of and rationale for the critique of the 'military ethos' but, even without taking an outright pacifist stance or even opposing particular military deployments, it should be recognised that the classroom and youth projects are civil society (that is, civilian) spaces and not war zones. Methods of work in each space should properly differ from those associated with military training if we are to retain a sense of education as part of civil society and a space of democracy.

It is sadly also the case that evidence of the higher 'morality' supposedly brought to bear by ex-military personnel can only be put into question by the levels of rape (one a week) and sexual assault reported within the services. High levels of violent crime, including domestic assault, as well as homelessness, alcoholism and drug abuse are a matter of record. Research by Dr Deirdre McManus showed that those who had served in the army were far more likely to commit violent crimes than those who had not, and those who had seen active service in Afghanistan and Iraq were 53% more likely to have committed violent crimes than non-combatants (MacManus et al 2013).

It has been argued that the encroachment of the military into civil society is in part related to the changing practice of actual combat and the growth of warfare using drones. The need to redefine a role for the army in this context has emerged also in the period since 9/11 and has been analysed by Vron Ware in *Military Migrants. Fighting for Your Country* (Ware, 2012). The Troops into Teaching Programme (which fast tracks ex-service personnel including non-graduates into teaching) can be understood as at least in part a response to the crisis facing ex-service personnel who lack a role in civilian life.

According to Ware's analysis, in 1998, there was a chronic shortage of troops and only 1% of the British Army came from an ethnic minority. By 2008 the figure was 9% but as Ware demonstrates, two thirds of these joined as Commonwealth citizens and only 1/3 have British passports. The remnants of the British Empire were scoured to find the labour force needed by the army in Afghanistan. Soldiers from Fiji, Nepal, Gambia and Ghana and the Caribbean were to be found in

Army literacy classes alongside soldiers from Dewsbury and Sunderland. The rules which enabled this have been changed (in summer 2013) and now recruits to the Army must have a five year residency in the UK, so it remains to be seen how the recently achieved 'ethnic mix' will be sustained.

There has been a significant decline of interest in the army as a career and a crisis in recruitment even in traditional working class recruiting grounds. The 'Community Covenant' through which the Army is developing its role in civil society, including in youth work projects, may be above all understood as a response to the difficulty the Army has experienced in recruitment, as well as being a major contributor to a re-emergent control culture in the inner urban areas. Ware quotes a significant Army General as saying 'If you can't run an Army without migrants, you're in trouble' and the Community Covenant can be read as a response to this trouble. (Vron Ware's ongoing work on this topic is regularly reported on the OpenDemocracy website in her 'Up in Arms' contribution.)

The power of the figure of the 'British Tommy ' is ambivalent with a long and complex history. The sense that these soldiers are 'lions led by donkeys' instils the figure with a working-class heroism, whilst occluding the role played by such working-class heroes in the brutal establishment of British Empire. In conditions of postcolonial warfare, in which it is argued that the difference between 'home' and 'abroad' is no longer clear cut, the renegotiation of the presence of the military within civil society is accompanied by a positive appeal to an obligation to 'Help the Heroes' and commit to the Armed Forces in a different way than to other public services. The Community Covenant may not be simply about removing disadvantages which members of the Armed Services may face (and which may contribute to the levels of personal disintegration after combat cited above). It seems rather to be about giving them priority.

Democratic education, including youth work and informal education, needs a clear response to this network of initiatives concerned with 'military ethos.' This response will include an engagement with ideas of international voluntary service as a completely different practice from military service. 'Service Civile' was introduced in many European countries after the Second World War as a peace-making alternative to national military service. We need to emphasise again global connections in our practice and to strengthen emphasis on the disciplines and virtues involved in co-operation. Democratic informal education traditions cherish questioning and critical enquiry, even dissent. And dissent requires character, organisation and discipline, but dissident associations which can offer alternatives to the present denigration and abandonment of young people are not likely to have a 'military ethos.' Militarised culture has many attractions, but these attractions, including adventure, challenge and team-building have long been part of alternative co-operative education traditions too. The Woodcraft Folk movement still uses the outdoors and camping as an important vehicle for learning co-operation and for building the international co-operative movement for summer camps. Saskia Neuberg, a Woodcraft Folk member, has recently started the

Military Out of Schools Campaign. Beyond such explicitly affiliated work, the movement of open youth work developed democratic traditions of member participation which have informed many contemporary projects including those based in international exchange and solidarity.

On July 4th 2013 the Youth and Community work team at MMU supported a Conference organised by the Co-operative College and MMU to discuss Co-operative Education against the Crises. This conference brought together practitioners and activists from schools, colleges, universities as well as youth work. Co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality and equity require practices as disciplined in their way as those promoted by the armed services. At the conference we heard from Michael Apple concerning the US 'interrupting the right' movement in education. Creating such movements here is a priority in order to make it evidently completely untrue that there is no alternative to the 'military ethos' currently receiving cross-party support. On our agenda must be internationalism, a sense of solidarity across borders and conflict zones, a discussion of the ethics and effects of war, a wider discussion of the meanings of 'public service', heroism, comradeship and self-sacrifice as well as opportunities for education and adventure that are widely available without recourse to military uniforms.

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THINKING SPACE [3]

Racism as Islamaphobia

Bal Gill

SALMAN RUSHDIE in one of the series of C4 programmes *Opinions* in the 1980s, referring to the separate experiences of Black and white communities in Britain, stated that the world in which Black and white people live in is so different as to be utterly unrecognisable to the other. Thirty years later little has changed. (In this article Black is capitalised, not white, to denote a community under extreme oppression). Politicians and the media have been fuelling the fires of rage within the mainly white electorate for decades by continuously highlighting the issue of immigration as a problem. The Polish, Romanian or Bulgarian EU migration is grossly exaggerated by the likes of UKIP, which in turn is followed by the LibCon and Labour parties jumping on the bandwagon with even more strict immigration policies, which, as they cannot be directed against EU nationals, are again targeted against Black people under the guise of restrictions on people from the Commonwealth.

All white people from any European country will become part of the white population as they have over preceding generations. It seems we Black people will never be accepted as British by the politicians and media and in turn their unquestioning followers, even though the greater percentage are born on these shores. The covert and overt forms of racism will continue being directed against the Black community.

Black people have been present in the UK since the time of the Romans and Black communities settled in Britain since the sixteenth century in large enough numbers for Queen Elizabeth 1 to comment on it being a problem, leading her to issue Proclamations from the 1590s calling for the repatriation of 'Blackamoores'. It doesn't matter how many of 'us' there are, there are clearly always going to be too many. In Britain the idea of being British is linked intrinsically to being white but usually people don't say it overtly.

Islamaphobia has raised its ugly head in the last three decades and the words terrorism, fundamentalism and extremism are associated with any event that is conducted by a person/s

calling themselves a Muslim, regardless of whether their actions fit with what most Muslims would regard as 'Islamic'. The words Sharia and Jihad are taken totally out of context and used to justify anti-Muslim feeling even though authors like Khan (2013) assert the challenge of Jihad being an internal one.

The brutal murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich elicited strong condemnation by everyone including Muslims, but did not prevent the subsequent wave of racist attacks. In the space of five days following Rigby's murder more than 200 incidents involving verbal abuse, violence, aggressive acts of intimidation against women and children had taken place and ten Mosques had been attacked all over the UK including two fire bombed and one burnt down in Muswell Hill (*Faith Matters*, 2013). At the time of writing the attacks against individuals and Mosques are still continuing on a scale that had it been Muslims attacking white people or churches the action taken by the state would have been considerably different as would the condemnations in the media.

Numerous and horrendous other attacks against Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, community centres, residential homes and religious centres have also taken place but only a minority report them knowing through past experience that very little will be done. The most prominent racist murder of recent times of Stephen Lawrence still hasn't seen all the killers, or even the police officers who seemed to have colluded with the murderers, brought to justice. Others are not even classified as racist, like the brutal racist murder of Ricky Reel, and sometimes takes years of protesting from families and friends to have it listed as such; finding the perpetrators seems impossible.

Although Nick Clegg referred to these as 'vile attacks' and Boris Johnson said the arson attack was 'cowardly, pathetic and pointless', the huge increase in racist attacks was not linked to Christianity, terrorism, fundamentalism or extremism by the media, the police or politicians in the way that Rigby's murder was linked to Islam. Teresa May or Cameron have not responded to these acts of terror as they did with Rigby's murder and the Queen did not visit the Muslim community as she did the Woolwich barracks.

Channel 4 news on 27th May 2013 showed images of English Defence League (EDL) supporters wearing balaclavas that are normally associated with terrorists but instead of exploring the overt white racism that is normally kept under the veneer of 'respectability' within British society, they expounded upon the rise of racism, anti-Semitism and fascism in the Bulgarian and Hungarian political parties without so much as a mention of the covert and overt racism in all of the political parties in the UK.

Newsnight interviewed three experts discussing the rise in racist incidents and attacks, one being a Black Muslim, Mohammed Khaliel, Director of Islamix, the other representing Demos, Jamie Bartlett, head of Violence and Extremism, and Brian Paddick, Deputy assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police (2003-2004), both white as was the presenter Gavin Esler. All three white

people tried to argue that the high levels of racism were just a 'temporary blip'.

Gilligan in the *Telegraph* on 2nd June and Parsons in the *MIrror* on 8th June dismissed the idea that the Muslim community was facing a serious rise in Islamaphobia. Instead Parsons stated how the 'British are a civilised, polite, tolerant people' and asserted 'We are frequently too tolerant' then stated that some Muslims should have their benefits stopped and be deported. I wonder what his definition of intolerance is and whether he would still feel the same way if his friends and family were spat at, abused and had their clothing pulled off them and beaten and humiliated whilst going about their day to day business? Instead of focusing on the increase in attacks he even seemed to suggest that Monitoring Anti-Muslim Attacks (MAMA) was exaggerating them to obtain grants. At least he is reassured that there is no real threat because the arsonist couldn't spell correctly; if only Black people could feel so confident and reassured!

The violence that men resort to, whether by individuals or vigilantes on the streets or from politicians and so called journalists using 'acceptable' racist euphemisms such as 'immigration' or 'multi-culturalism doesn't work' (Cameron), stoke the fires of hatred that increase the tension between Black and white communities, leading to acts of abuse, violence, arson and murder.

Faith Matters found tweets calling for '… them (Muslims) to be found and killed' and yet no one was arrested for posting Race and Hate mail. Had there been 200 attacks against white people or institutions would these same politicians stay so calm and would the same journalists state that these incidents were exaggerated and posed no threat?

Chauhan's (1990, p.18) description in the 1980s of how Black young people are pathologised by white people and institutions is alive and well to this day, as is Rushdie's notion of people cohabiting different worlds based on the colour of their skin. Black people who have defended their communities from fascist, racist or state oppression be it in Newham, Bradford or Birmingham have felt the full force of the law whilst the racist and fascist thugs have run riot in Black communities with the protection of the state.

Although we have had two wars and invasions against Iraq and Afghanistan, with millions of mostly innocent Muslims being murdered, 'British soldiers' have now been transformed into 'heroes'. If the Germans had won the war, by this definition the Nazis of the 1940s would be heroes and the Home Guard and the allied soldiers would be classed as terrorists. Are we not able to look at actions and apply the same standards to everyone equally? Do we question why the armed forces seems to be the only institution still recruiting mainly working class young people to die for the politics and policies of the middle class white rulers?

Despite all the recent wars being unjust or illegal the desire to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear power is constant, no one in the media or politicians even asks the question what right have western

governments to impose threats against another country.

This is reminiscent of Chomsky identifying that the west see:

> *… terror that they carry out against us … definition in official US documents … Calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature…* (2008: 329-330).

When the only nation on earth that has ever used a nuclear bomb against anyone and has intervened in the internal affairs of more nations than any other country is the USA, and they have the greatest arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons ever amassed in the history of humankind, questions are not asked of the aggressor with a proven track record of murder but of countries who are likely to be its target.

> *The US rarely ratifies human rights and other conventions, but when it does there is usually – maybe always – a reservation excluding itself* (Chomsky, 2007: 108).

> *In 1987 the United Nations General Assembly proposed a strongly worded condemnation of terrorism … only the United States and Israel voted against it* (Roy, 2004: 9).

The use of chemical weapons in Syria has been condemned, even though they have been supplied by western countries who export all of the war machine and weapons to the rest of the world, but again this crucial question is never asked and Britain is at the forefront of wanting to supply weapons to the rebels and demanding another regime change. Cameron was defeated in Parliament but instead of it being seen as a triumph for democracy it was decried by the likes of Paddy Ashdown as a day on which he felt ashamed to be British and condemned it as a victory for al-Assad and Putin to invoke war instead of questioning the lethal nuclear, biological and chemical weapons held and sold by so called democracies especially the USA, Britain and France.

I wonder how dismayed the peace loving Dr. Martin Luther King would have been for the warmonger Obama to lead the 50th anniversary of the march on Washington and to have the 'dream' realised. The 'dream' of Colin Powell, Condoleeza Rice and now Obama seems to be the freedom to drop bombs and send drones to kill thousands of innocent people against all international laws. It is also interesting that when Saddam Hussein killed thousands of Kurdish people in a chemical attack Britain and the USA continued to fully support that particular tyrant at that particular time. This has developed to using the power of white, western countries to ban the military wing of Hezbollah whilst using western military might in whatever country the intervention is desired. The last one in Libya left the country in tatters with the brutal torture and murder of Colonel Quadafi, this seems totally acceptable as the murderers were supported by the west.

State assassinations by the west elicit no condemnation whatsoever as was evidenced by the murder of Osama Bin Laden. Essentially what it says is that it's okay to be a bully and to act as such because no one will do anything against you so long as you support the west. Almost everyone stated that the only reason Cameron lost the vote to attack Syria was because of the way in which Blair misled Parliament, yet no one is calling for Blair to be tried as someone who unlawfully authorised mass murder and civil war.

Israel used chemical weapons against the Palestinians and has repeatedly gone against various UN declarations, building illegal settlements, building a wall on more Palestinian land, that has put the Berlin wall to shame, attacking who it pleases, when it pleases, supported completely by the western powers but this is never seen as problematic. It should come as no surprise that anti-Muslim feeling is so rife, and 'war' is waged against innocent Muslims, whether 'they' are here on UK soil or elsewhere. After all imperialism has never been so strong.

> On the global stage, beyond the jurisdiction of sovereign governments, international instruments of trade and finance oversee a complex web of multilateral laws and agreements that have entrenched a system of appropriation that puts colonialism to shame (Roy, 2004: 21).

In *Public Power*, Arundhati Roy (2004, p.5) reiterates the concept of 'doublespeak' as demonstrated so vividly in Orwell's *1984* stating:

> When language has been butchered and bled of meaning, how do we understand 'public power'? When freedom means occupation, when democracy means neo-liberal-capitalism, when reform means repression when words like 'empowerment' and 'peacekeeping' make your blood run cold.

I would add 'collateral damage' as being one of the most euphemistic terms used to describe murder by western governments.

The people that youth and community workers work with include colleagues and young people who are affected by all that they see and hear in the media which in turn impacts on their attitudes and behaviours. Without a clear understanding of the issues and the responses by institutions it would be difficult to engage with whom we work without re-enforcing the stereotypical images that all of us are surrounded by day and night.

Are we as educators engaging with this debate and making a counter argument and challenging the gross levels of racism we see, hear or feel on a day to day basis?

The major issue that impacts in the lives of people is the oppression they face; ignoring this

fundamental issue is like trying to mop up the floor whilst the house is under flood waters. There is a real lack of addressing issues of oppression and there appear to be people who think that racism no longer exists or that sexism has disappeared because we have the Equalities Act, or that homophobia has disappeared, even though the LGBTQ community face daily acts of intimidation and violence.

Oppression still exists and oppressed people are facing abuse, threats, violence and arson on a day to day basis. This needs to be confronted and challenged just as fervently as it was in the 1970s-1990s. Anyone who thinks otherwise is living in a middle class white cocoon, totally ignoring the real experiences and lives of the oppressed.

As youth and community workers and tutors we need to stop denying the experiences of others and acknowledge that we also have a lot to learn as well as to accept that we have our own prejudices which also need to be challenged. These include the neo-liberal notion of the acceptance of non-critical submissions on groups such as the EDL and British National Party (BNP), turning a blind eye to comments by white Israelis and Australians who deny the holocaust and genocide committed against the Palestinians and Aboriginal People whilst attempting to come across as caring and aware and who in turn receive sympathy when they are challenged in public.

If you remember nothing just try to remember that there is no country on earth which Black people have colonised and kept in the way that white people have: America, Australia, numerous islands all over the globe from the Malvinas to the islands used as military bases or on which nuclear testing has been conducted and from which native islanders have been excluded by the western countries who shout the loudest when it comes to morality, namely the USA, Britain and France.

We need to begin to use our abilities of communication to really listen to the voices of the oppressed rather than to the voices of the oppressors … and act.

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Review article:
Independence at risk: the state, the market and the voluntary youth sector

Colin Rochester
Rediscovering Voluntary Action: The Beat of a Different Drum
Palgrave MacMillan 2013
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Abstract

In reviewing Colin Rochester's book, this article builds on a brief discussion of the voluntary youth sector in a previous Youth and Policy article, 'Youth work in a changing policy landscape: the view from England' (Davies, 2013: 13-14). In uncompromising terms 'Rediscovering Voluntary Action' sets out the wider ideological and political contexts in which the voluntary sector (of which, it is assumed, the voluntary youth sector is part) is now operating, and the serious threat it is now facing to its independence and its potentially innovative, critical and democratic role within civil society. The risks here arise partly from the sector's increasing incorporation into government policy agendas and partly from its involvement in 'partnerships' with private sector businesses, some of whose ethical practices have been shown to be questionable at best. The article concludes by considering where resistance to these developments is being attempted and how effective this is.

The emergence of voluntary youth work

The origins of what today we understand as 'youth work' lie in the 'youth leadership' which, in the later decades of the nineteenth century, philanthropic volunteers provided through the scout and guide troops, brigades and girls' and boys' clubs they formed across the country. These were created for those who fell into the newly discovered category of 'adolescents' many of whom, it was being realised at the time, were neither at school nor at work – part of, with the schools, what Frank Musgrove many years ago called in a phrase with still too many contemporary resonances 'a gigantic street-clearing device' (Musgrove, 1966:30). What emerged were most of the voluntary youth organisations, local, regional and national, which – though their titles have changed over the decades – are still with us.

The establishment of a Service of Youth in 1939 and the somewhat strengthened legislative basis this was given by the 1944 Education Act brought the first significant challenges to what had for decades been seen, not least by the organisations themselves, as their all but exclusive mandate to deliver and organise youth work. By the later 1950s, however, their credibility amongst ministers and civil servants was declining, particularly for providing for what was by then being seen as a more liberated and affluent teenage generation. This in part prompted the Ministry of Education in 1958 to appoint a committee 'to review the contribution of the Youth Service' (Smith, 1997:31).

The resultant Albemarle Report (Ministry of Education, 1960) stopped well short of open public disavowal of the main national voluntary youth organisations. Indeed, in giving strong support to local voluntary sector 'partnerships' with the statutory sector, it sought to provide them with a mechanism for retaining leverage on both policy and practice. However, with Albemarle making an uncompromising case for the local state's role in providing youth work directly, the power relations within these partnerships often meant they were more rhetorical flourish than operational reality. With this as its starting point – and in sharp contrast to the kid-glove treatment of, for example, businesses and banks – from the 1980s onwards the neo-liberal era progressively brought increased state influence on the voluntary youth sector, leading in due course to its widespread incorporation into state policies and priorities.

Reconceptualising voluntary action …

Though Rochester's book gives little specific attention to the youth work segments of the voluntary sector, it provides the vital overall context for understanding this, its more recent development, and its current political strains and dilemmas. He draws both on his extensive voluntary sector practice and management experience and his record as an academic. The resultant book, though providing ample evidence of the latter – it is supported by references running to 13 pages – sets out its arguments and analysis clearly and logically and in accessible language. It is also a valuable reference text – for example on issues like the history of voluntary action and the impact of bureaucracy and managerialism on voluntary organisations.

Hopefully however youth workers, youth work managers and youth policy-makers will engage fully with its overall analysis and in particular the policy as well as practice implications for them of its reconceptualisation of 'voluntary' as in 'the voluntary sector', 'voluntary organisations' and 'volunteer'. In doing this, Rochester for example challenges what he sees as a dominant 'philanthropic paradigm' whose goals are assumed to be mainly instrumental and 'welfarist'. To rebalance these definitions, he highlights the expressive aims of conviviality, sociability and 'serious leisure'. These, he points out, have underpinned much of the self-help and mutuality of, for example, friendly societies and working men's clubs – and also, it can be surely argued, are central to the best youth work.

Volunteering – and the case of youth work

Rochester is at pains, too, to challenge currently dominant conceptions of volunteering. For example, he describes the 'default setting' of 'the volunteering industry' which has emerged in the past three-to-four decades, as rooted in

> … *the unspoken assumption that volunteering is essentially about unpaid work undertaken for the benefit of people less fortunate than oneself and which involves carrying out pre-determined tasks for a formal bureaucratic organisation which employs staff to manage its volunteer labour* (p.66).

Here, too, he points out, no account is taken of other kinds of motivation – particularly, again, expressive ones, some of which may be substantially driven by self-interest – or of the organisational contexts which embrace and indeed encourage what he calls 'unmanaged' forms of volunteering.

Though this may just be the reaction of a youth work obsessive, at this point Rochester's analysis struck me as perhaps overlooking or at least under-playing some special features of volunteering within the youth work field. For one thing, even after the 1960s post-Albemarle professionalisation of youth work, volunteers – many operating well outside voluntary sector bureaucracies and so, in Rochester's sense, largely 'unmanaged' – continued (and indeed continue) to provide most of its labour force. Given this reality, it is perhaps not surprising that the general public and the media still often fail to differentiate between them and those who see themselves as professional. Indeed, as a reaction to the push to professionalisation, many, often assertively, continued to lay claim to their identity as 'youth workers' so that as late as December 2013 Tony Ransley – a self-styled 'mere voluntary youth worker' – was responding to a news report on the slow take-up of membership of the Institute for Youth Work with barely concealed anger:

> *Take the way those young people and workers in the voluntary sector are treated, you know, The Explorer Scouts, The Guides, The Church Youth Clubs etc.*

> *Despite providing the lion's share of the effective youth work in the country, they are shunned by the professionals, excluded from resources and dumped in something called the third sector* (McCardle, 2013).

Though largely below the radar, such views and the material realities from which they stem have gone on having substantially greater influence on youth work and its face-to-face practice than on most other forms of professionalised work-with-people. Shaping how youth work (often unquestioningly) is seen by policy-makers and politicians, they have most recently provided national and local politicians with spurious justifications for decimating Youth Services on the grounds that volunteers are available to fill all the resultant gaps – in sufficient numbers and with

the time and skills required. The continuing (and overwhelming) numerical superiority of its volunteer workforce has also left youth work itself with some tough unresolved dilemmas – over for example whether and how to establish a 'licence to practice' which does not ignore and thereby devalue those who still do most of the face-to-face work; and how to define membership of an Institute which, with 'youth work' in its title, seeks to attract both professionals and volunteers.

A second youth work divergence from Rochester's account of the recent history of volunteering would seem to lie in the attempts he describes to tame the attitudes and behaviour of the unmanaged volunteer. He dates these efforts from the work of the 1969 Aves Committee and its report The Voluntary Worker in the Social Services. Produced at a time when concerns were emerging about the limits of the welfare state's resources, the report initiated a long-term strategy for recruiting 'the volunteer worker' as additional, albeit unpaid, labour into welfare, health and education services.

In this, however, the Youth Service may have pre-empted Aves. In 1961 a Ministry of Education-appointed working party chaired by the Director of Education for Cumberland, Gordon Bessey, was given the brief to:

> … consider, in the light of the needs of the youth service, the nature of training which should be available to part-time youth leaders and assistants, both paid and voluntary (Ministry of Education, 1962: Para 1).

The move was prompted mainly by Albemarle's concern that the 4,600 part-time workers employed by local education authorities should have 'professional experience of working with adolescents and professional understanding of their needs' (Ministry of Education, 1962: Para 287). Nonetheless, the Bessey report assumed throughout that it was addressing the voluntary youth organisations as well as local authority Youth Services and that its recommendations would be taken up by them and the volunteers they recruited.

Indeed one of its key proposals was that a 'common element' training should be developed for all part-time youth workers, to be 'provided locally by the local education authority and the voluntary bodies jointly, through one training agency' (Ministry of Education, 1962: Para 31). This recommendation was underpinned by appendices setting out a detailed and highly prescriptive curriculum for this training. Though widely implemented in the later 1960s and into 1970s, by 1975 all but eight of the 74 joint training agencies identified ten years earlier had disappeared (Davies, 1999: 189). The limited longer-term impact of these early attempts at 'managing' the Youth Service's volunteer workforce is perhaps most vividly illustrated thirty years later by Tony Ransley's recalcitrant commentary on the professional world, quoted above.

To the heart of the matter: the voluntary sector, the state – and now the market

Rediscovering Voluntary Action's analysis and critique of how volunteering and voluntary organisations have been reconceptualised in recent years are much-needed and indeed long overdue. However, at its heart the book has an analysis of even greater significance to the youth policy field: how this reconceptualisation has been used by the state to change, often fundamentally, its relationship with previously independent voluntary bodies; how this in turn has opened up these bodies to damaging intrusions by the for-profit business sector; and how in the process voluntary organisations are being used as Trojan horses for the privatisation of public services. Tracing these developments back at least to the 1980s, Rochester shows how they gained major new and carefully engineered traction first under New Labour and then the Coalition. Indeed, one of the book's basic premises is that the very notion of a 'voluntary sector' was invented by governments as one way of drawing its component organisations into state structures. As a result, their purposes and managerial processes have increasingly been shaped, first, for meeting state expectations and then, through procurement and commissioning, for delivering its requirements.

For understanding this journey, two chapters particularly merit careful scrutiny and a critical search for relevance by youth policy-makers and practitioners. One, 'A Perilous Partnership? Voluntary Action and the State', makes a well evidenced case, placed firmly in its longer historical context, that

> … *the degree of influence – both direct and indirect – exercised by government over the work and conduct of voluntary agencies has become a major threat to their independence of thought and action during the past 20 years or so* (p.69).

Rochester, correctly, adds caveats to this broad generalisation – such as that, though many voluntary organisations may still be 'subject to onerous forms of regulation' such as police checks on volunteers and health and safety requirements, fewer than a quarter of them get funding from central or local government.

Nonetheless, sometimes embedded in words which could be passed over too easily, this chapter has crucial messages for the youth work/youth policy fields. For example the threat, Rochester makes clear, is not just to the work of the voluntary agencies. It is also to their *conduct* – revealed both in the bureaucratic and managerialist ways in which increasingly they now do business internally and in how they are developing their external 'political' relations. No less a threat, it should be noted, now exists not just to their independence of action, but also to their independence of *thought* – to the point, it often seems, where many are apparently no longer noticing that they have given up the role even of 'critical friend' to government and have become just another compliant arm of its delivery.

The second chapter deserving careful attention from the youth policy field also has a challenging question in its title: 'Selling out? Voluntary Action and the Market'. Rochester's core message on this is that:

> … *in ways that were unthinkable 30 years ago and unusual ten years after that, the leaders and managers of voluntary organisations refer to them as 'businesses' and have developed 'business plans' which are based on securing greater 'market share' as they successfully pursue 'customers'…(They) have become increasingly difficult to distinguish from the commercial enterprises whose forms and practices they have adopted* (p.85).

As well as exploring a range of other organisational models which voluntary organisations could adopt, the analysis here too is located in a longer historical perspective and in particular in the rise of neo-liberal economics and the politics which have driven these to the centre of social policy-making. The chapter for example traces how, especially under New Labour and then the Coalition, an ideology intrinsically hostile to a state role in public services provision has led increasingly either to this being privatised or to a resort to forms of 'public sector reform' aimed at 'turning it into as close a facsimile of the private sector as possible' (p.90). For voluntary organisations, these developments have resulted in 'a significant recasting of their relationships with the state' (pp.92-93) and how they organise themselves, including the widespread adoption of internal managerialist structures and procedures. This has also brought a consequential shift either from using volunteers to employing paid specialist staff, and/or to formalising volunteers' roles.

Underpinned by this analysis, Rochester highlights how so many voluntary organisations have compromised the values and purposes which first inspired them and to which they claim still to be committed. In the process many of the most distinctive features of their role historically have been marginalised if not eliminated – such as developing services on the basis of what intended beneficiaries want and need; campaigning on their behalf; and speaking truth to the powerful. It is thus hardly surprising that a later chapter of the book is again framed by a question: 'What is Voluntary Action For?'

And the voluntary youth sector?

In laying out his arguments and evidence, Rochester gives very little attention to the voluntary youth sector. This may be because it doesn't provide core welfare state services – health, education, housing, penal. It may also be because, given the limited amount of profit to be squeezed out of its main users, it is much less 'privatisable' – unless that is, the growing impact on the wider sector of the big national 'voluntary' corporates is taken into account (see later).

When looked at in its own right, there is some evidence that parts of the sector have made piecemeal

efforts to resist the kind of 'mission drift' Rochester highlights. In 2009, for example, what was at the time Clubs for Young People – formerly the very 'traditional' National Association of Boys' Clubs and since fashionably renamed 'Ambition' – sought to defend the open access club work to which it was committed against New Labour shifts to targeted work. It talked for example of the government having 'still some way to go before the value of clubs is fully understood' and about public sector commissioners being 'too narrowly focused on some specific "problem" groups such as … NEETs' (Clubs for Young People, 2009:8-9).

Girlguiding, too – another long established voluntary youth organisations often somewhat unfairly stuck with the 'traditional' label – has also adopted some broader critical stances. It has for example encouraged its members to petition against the *Sun*'s page 3 topless women and to support a 'Better Sex Education' campaign, while its 2013 survey of members' attitudes included focuses on equality for girls and the challenges they face from 'everyday sexism, online abuse (and) appearance pressures' (Girlguiding, 2013). What was formerly the YWCA – now the Young Women's Trust – is also now giving priority to publishing and campaigning on young women's issues. (See for example Young Women's Trust, 2013).

Most notable in this context, however – though perhaps least surprising given its history – has been the Woodcraft Folk and the highly public positions it has taken up in recent years. In November 2010 for example it announced that it would 'enthusiastically support action taken by young people to protest against government cuts to education. This includes walkouts and non-violent direct action' (IDYW, 2010). A year later it was strongly urging its members to support a trade union day of action – for example, by avoiding doing anything to 'undermine legal and legitimate industrial action by crossing any picket line' (IDYW, 2011). It has also sought to launch campaigns in support of asylum-seekers and refugees and against the UK Border Agency's restrictive visa policies (Woodcraft Folk, 2013).

With the Woodcraft Folk as an exception, even these organisations, however, have rarely gone beyond expressing 'reservations' and 'concerns' to conducting overtly oppositional campaigns against government policies even when – such as the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance – they have had seriously damaging consequences for young people. As striking, voluntary youth organisations have been no better than others in the voluntary sector in confronting – even often it seemed noticing – the free-market ideologies driving these policies and the destruction of welfare state services, including local authority Youth Services, which is resulting. If anything, stances against the prevailing policy pressures and their underlying rationale have become even rarer since the Coalition government came to power as the push to promote the voluntary sector as a substitute for state provision has become more relentless and strategic and as organisations have allowed themselves to become increasingly entangled with private sector 'partners' as well as the state.

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services offers one example of how this can play out in a particular organisation – in this case one which exists to represent 'a diverse and growing network of over 290 national organisations and regional and local networks that work with and for young people'. As co-ordinator of the Catalyst consortium, in 2011-13 NCVYS received over £1.28M of government money to, amongst other things, 'establish a social finance retailer that can pilot and then promote a youth sector specific social investment approach based on evidence of impact' (NCVYS, 2012). By this time, too, NCVYS was explaining its broader purposes as including 'strengthen(ing) the youth sector market (and) equip(ping) the sector to work in partnership with Government' (NCVYS, 2013).

It is hard to conceive of allocations of funding of this size coming without some strings attached – hidden if not overt. How can they not close down space to act, as NCVYS claims to do, as 'the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector'? How in particular can this be avoided when the money is given by a key government department (in this case Michael Gove's Department for Education) to the organisation as its 'strategic partner for young people'? And how can the organisation avoid such pressures at a time when that same government is labelling voluntary organisations which are calling for increased public spending 'fake charities' (Barings Foundation, 2013: 9)? Nor perhaps can it be seen as entirely co-incidental that in this same period NCVYS seemed to lose sight of its commitment to work not just with but for young people by, immediately, after the 2011 summer riots, launching its divisive 'Not in my name' campaign. This not only publicly distanced the organisation from any young person who had taken part in the riots but it did so long before it could have had any evidence on who had actually been involved or why, and in so doing it was at least encouraging if not acting itself on stereotypes of 'youth' against which it might have been expected to campaign.

As well as, through Catalyst, being involved with the Young Foundation and Social Enterprise UK – organisations which largely take as given the Coalition's market-oriented values – in 2012 NCVYS went into partnership with Respublica, a think tank whose founder and director, Philip Blond, has been described as 'a driving force behind David Cameron's 'Big Society' agenda' (Hennessy, 2010). NCVYS – without any prior explicit critique – thereby openly connected itself to endorsements of a 'post-liberal vision', 'a vibrant democracy and market economy' and 'a future (in which) the benefits of capital, trade and entrepreneurship are open to all'.

Confirming some of Rochester's other arguments, voluntary youth organisations are also becoming increasingly tied into relationships with major (indeed global) for-profit corporations, often, it would seem, without any prior check on what ethical risk this might involve both for their reputation and for what they actually do. Take UK Youth's Money Skills programme for example. Designed to help 'NEET' young people manage their money – presumably in whatever meagre amounts the state or employers choose to put their way – this continues to be sponsored by Barclays notwithstanding its recent alleged involvement in exchange rate rigging and insurance policies

mis-selling. For delivering the National Citizen Service in six regions across England, UK Youth, alongside the National Youth Agency and two other voluntary youth organisations, VInspired and Catch 22, is now also partnered by Serco, a corporation whose global interests include the arms trade. In relatively mild terms, Rochester describes Serco as having a 'controversial history of providing services to the criminal justice system, where its management of detention centres and other facilities has been criticised' (see also Corporate Watch, 2012). More recent additions to this record of ethically questionable practice include charging the government for tagging offenders who were in prison or even dead, and of covering up failures to meet targets for out-of-hours GP services it was running.

One other development discussed by Rochester is now also showing up within the voluntary youth sector: a 'predatory' intrusion into local areas by large national voluntary organisations operating on unashamedly competitive business principles. For youth work as informal education, these developments can often carry the extra threat of being taken over by agencies coming out of a child welfare or criminal justice tradition. One documented example of what can happen here – supporting more anecdotal evidence from elsewhere – is Barnardo's successful bid for a contract in Newcastle against a consortium of long-established local youth projects. Finding itself working in areas where it had no previous track record, its subsequent offer to some members of the consortium to work with it as sub-contractors resulted in competition and deep division where previously there had been significant levels of trust and co-operation (Bell, 2012).

So what's to be done?

Rochester seeks to tackle this ultimately testing question in a chapter entitled 'Dissenting voices'. Although sub-titled 'The Case of the National Coalition for Independent Action' (NCIA), this starts by looking at the work of the Barings Foundation over a number of years and most recently at its 'Independence Panel' (pp.190-93). Though the Panel's second 'annual assessment' was more forthright than its first in expressing its concerns about and for the sector (Barings, 2013), Rochester's conclusion remains valid: that its vision for addressing the threats is 'couched in the most general terms' with most of its prescriptions for action failing to face individual voluntary organisations and their governing bodies with their responsibility for safeguarding their independence.

Another blunter way of putting this perhaps is that, reflecting the composition of much of the Panel, those prescriptions remain safely within conventional 'establishment' parameters. The report for example stops well short of reminding readers of how strongly current policies are being driven by a broader set of neo-liberal economic and political values and aims which, by their very nature, are bound to put voluntary sector independence at risk. Though the report regrets that 'many organisations working with disadvantaged groups are experiencing a dramatic rise in

demand as income plummets', it nonetheless just takes it as a given, without critical examination, that 'the voluntary sector cannot be immune' from cuts. Despite accumulating evidence on how the state's Compact partnership with 'civil society organisations' is being ignored (including by the Coalition itself), the report also continues to place considerable faith in this and its capacity to act as a protection for those organisations' independence (Barings, 2013:7,10).

Rochester devotes most of the space in this chapter, however, to NCIA – not surprisingly perhaps given that he is (as am I) one of its directors (in effect trustees). He provides a valuable summary, not available elsewhere, of its history, its critique of the present situation and the voluntary sector's responses to it, its achievements – not least how it has 'helped to change the terms of the debate' (p.200) – and its limitations. What emerges from this account is both the exceptional nature of NCIA's role – and the weakness that in the end this represents as an indicator of how hard it has found it to win, not just interest an even generalised support, but active allies in a field whose very *raison d'être* is rapidly being eroded.

So where does this leave the possibilities for resistance to the present drift of policy and action within the voluntary youth work sector? Individuals from the sector have engaged with NCIA, though largely – as is the case of most others involved with it – as individuals but not on behalf of their organisations. NCIA has also highlighted the experience of some voluntary youth groups and projects such as those in Newcastle quoted earlier (see also NCIA, 2011). And it has worked in a strong mutually supportive relationship with the In Defence of Youth Work campaign (IDYW). However, with those working in the voluntary youth sector having only exceptionally seen NCIA as a home for addressing their discontents, its impact on them has probably been less than on those in the voluntary sector overall.

For its part, IDYW has highlighted relevant voluntary sector responses to youth work's predicament – sometimes supportively (for example for some of the positions taken up by the Woodcraft Folk), sometimes very critically as in the case of NCVYS's reaction to the 2011 riots. Given however that IDYW's core concern is what is happening to youth work in whatever organisational setting, the overall principled shifts in voluntary organisations' philosophy and ways of operating have not been central its work or critiques.

This must leave on the table Rochester's hard-headed if not very encouraging conclusion to his discussion of NCIA:

> *The muted response to its campaign may suggest that its analysis is flawed or, perhaps more*
> *probably, that its intervention came too late and that the damage to the independence of*
> *action enjoyed by voluntary organisations had already gone too far to be reversed* (p.201).

Youth work practitioner, youth work manager, youth policy-maker, politician – is anyone out there

on the front line listening; aware; concerned? As Rochester makes very clear, time is running out.

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Note

Readers can get 20% off Colin Rochester's new title, *Rediscovering Voluntary Action: The Beat of a Different Drum*. Quote WROCHESTER2014a when ordering the book directly from Palgrave Macmillan to claim your discount. (When ordering via the website, the code is requested at the end of the ordering process.) Order here: **http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=594104** This discount code is valid until the end of June 2014.

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Reviews

Peter Kraftl
Geographies of Alternative Education
Polity Press 2013
ISBN 978-1-44730-049-6
£70 (hbk)
pp. 304

<div align="right">Paula Connaughton</div>

THE EXISTENCE of this book points to the central position of social-scientific disciplines that currently prioritise social learning processes over learning spaces within the study of education. Inspired by the study of human geography, *Geographies of Alternative Education* provides an additional dimension as it proposes that social processes and spatial processes are intertwined in the learning environment. The book goes beyond simply looking at the attributes of the teacher, motivation of the learner, curriculum design, teacher–learner relationships, and learning materials, by incorporating theories of autonomy, emotion, habit, and life-itself. However, readers looking for a book particularly concerning alternative education philosophy and approaches will be disappointed as the author concentrates on the contradictory ways in which 'alternatives' intersect with 'mainstream' education.

The study of children's and young people's learning spaces is no easy task since alternative education covers a wide range of definitions, approaches, aims, and settings. Until now, the profile of 'alternative education' has concentrated on ideas that learning can take place in any setting, including small areas of woodland, makeshift cabins, old buildings, and on a bus journey. This Peter Kraftl does not dispute, but a number of theories on human geography inspire his conviction that the study of alternative education should be based on the premise that a 'good education' might also be understood in spatial terms. In the case of this book, spatiality incorporates a creative environment to enable children to interact on a level with adult educators, but, more importantly, it helps to foster a sense of the 'good life' as an alternative vision of life-itself. Kraftl uses case studies to explore examples of spatiality, including connections and disconnections with local communities. His research also looks at the potential for creative atmospheres and learning materials to the importance of bodily movement in learning.

The book is divided into nine chapters, with the first being an introduction that outlines two principal aims of the book. The first aim is quite straightforward: the author compares a range of

alternative approaches to learning in the UK from outside mainstream education by using case studies including Steiner schools, Forest Schools, Care Farms and homeschooling. The second aim is less straightforward. The exploration of what makes alternative approaches 'alternative' highlights a number of complexities because of the variegated and contradictory ways in which educational alternatives intersect with the educational mainstream.

The author adopts and expands on key theories, such as Hanson Thiem's (2009) argument that neoliberal restructuring should not be the sole concern of academics who study educational processes. This means recognising the range of collaborations in the social process of learning, such as the interrelationships among homeschoolers who are also part of food-growing cooperatives. It is based on acknowledging the importance of 'nature' as a learning resource and the virtue of instilling loving habits in pupils in order that they see themselves as part of a broader 'community of practice', which supports them to move beyond a neoliberal state of 'being'. Kraftl terms this an 'outward-looking' vision of education rather than the 'inward-looking' vision that is identified in conventional modes of governance and socio-economic structures of neoliberalism, which perpetuate dominant assumptions of individualism outside schools.

Particularly stimulating are the later chapters that illuminate the extent to which policy directives have an impact on alternative provision. As Kraftl demonstrates, 'alternative' learning spaces are multiple and shifting because of the many intersections with 'mainstream' schools. For example, in the case studies Forest School educators had spoken of using the National Curriculum as a 'moral guide' for their curriculum content. This account reflects the historical shift from informal learning to predetermined outcome-led practice in youth work to meet funding and government policy directives. In this sense, Kraftl argues that alternative spaces should 'aim less to be fully "alternative" but rather "autonomous"' (p. 113), perhaps, taking inspiration from the social movements of South America and drawing on Illich's notion of 'de-schooling'.

Kraftl does not aspire to provide simple solutions to complex problems, but he provides a clear and coherent basis for ethical inquiry. His view reflects Steiner's (2003: 260) argument that good teachers demonstrate the capacity to address 'the intellect, the imagination, the nervous system, and the very innards of the listener'. As Kraft asserts, 'habits are important to the production of alternative versions and visions of life-itself' (p. 251). This brings to the fore a fundamental aspect of education that advocates the 'unlearning' of habits of possessive individualism and competition, based on conceptions of love that are integral to the production of habits of generosity, care, and responsibility to others. As Peters (1967:55) acknowledged in the classic *Ethics and Education*, normative aspects of 'education' 'ignore matters to do with individual differences of the pupil… [and the] personal bond which must exist between teachers and taught'.

The entire book provides examples of the author's ability to combine a range of theoretical writings from sociology, education studies and philosophy that, when read via a geographical lens, will

offer something to readers from all backgrounds. In all, the uniqueness of this book is precisely the way that the author is able to knit themes together. It is unfortunate, however, that Kraftl leaves it until the conclusion of the book to scantily mention recent curriculum innovations in the UK that have expressly drawn on alternative educational philosophies in the promotion of Free Schools and academies. This is a missed opportunity to explore critical questions on educational policy and the state's agenda to explain the diversification of mainstream education in terms of alternative provision. That said, the book's appeal is its recognition of diverse economic and autonomous practices, non-representational geographies, and the politics of life-itself, which, combined, dismantle any sense of a simple binary between 'alternative' and 'mainstream' education.

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Alan Rogers and Mark Smith (eds.)
Journeying Together: Growing Youth Work and Youth Workers in Local Communities
Russell House Publishing 2010
ISBN: 1905541546
£13.95 (pbk)
pp. 154

Fionn Greig

READING THIS book has, for me, put into perspective the changes that have occurred in youth work in the last 5 – 10 years and highlighted the dire need for growing local community based youth work. Since the neo-liberal takeover of the New Labour attitudes to targeted youth work, increased monitoring, the Coalition's drive to fix 'broken Britain' in the form of the National Citizenship Service (NCS), and the Positive for Youth strategy, local, community driven youth work has seemed more difficult to explain and, importantly, to fund.

This book confidently makes the case for more youth work and more locally driven, locally grown youth work. At times, as a local community youth worker I struggle to find the language and

confidence to describe my work and its importance. When I tell people that I am a youth worker, the response is often along the lines of 'oh that must be so hard' and or, 'oh that's good, keeping young people off the streets and out of trouble, that kind of thing?' A combination of the media and government demonizing of young people and populist schemes like Duke of Edinburgh and the new NCS has impacted on the minds of the population to inform them that a) young people are bad and need controlling and that b) youth work is about making them 'good' and keeping them controlled. As Rogers and Smith point out at the beginning of their conclusion to this book, this is not just about youth work, but that now is a time 'when fundamental choices need to be made in the way we, as a society, think about youth work – and education and welfare more generally' (p.134).

The authors write in various ways about members of communities who grow up feeling nurtured and valued by their peers and elders, and who want to continue that cycle by becoming involved in community and youth work themselves. We read in various examples that this is a very common experience all over the country and that people are becoming involved with the young people who share their lives in all sorts of ways. However the book also explores the definition of youth work as having a distinct focus on young people and their experiences. This shows the importance of youth work and particularly of growing local youth work and workers as being work and even a political act.

The authors explore the importance of doing youth work in young people's own settings and grounded in their day-to-day experiences. This is in stark contrast to the recent and current direction of what Sarah Lloyd-Jones calls 'issue-based' work, namely 'NEET to EET', gang work and teenage pregnancy work to name but a few, essentially a reactive rather than proactive strategy. The essence of this book in my view is about local youth workers who take a holistic approach to building relationships with young people, going on a 'journey together', not about fixing one element of a young person's life and then leaving.

Politically the book champions the power of local organisations having the knowledge and connection to those around them in their communities. This has historically been the foundation of working class and oppressed people's victories; having a feeling of solidarity and ownership when you are connected and have local knowledge, history and, importantly, places to meet. At the current time of attacks on working class communities, women, young people, disabled people, Black and immigrant populations, local community organisations can be the key to resistance and fight back. The book draws this out through the authors' different angles, some more subtle than others. Essentially the book talks about the development of workers who are informed, supported and nurtured to bring themselves and their knowledge to youth work in the community to create the local strength needed to empower themselves, individuals and organisations.

One of my favourite aspects of the book is the acknowledgement that workers must have a commitment to self-awareness and transparency in our humaneness when embarking on local

community youth work. What I love about this is how it could be seen as an ethical blueprint for a different type of world than the one that the neo-liberals, capitalists and target-driven policy makers have created. By committing to looking at ourselves and admitting our mistakes and needs, youth workers can say to young people, you don't have to be perfect, brave, get things right all the time and most importantly, you can make mistakes and people will still accept you. As local youth workers, who 'stick around' and are about the relationship, not keeping you to a pre-determined target, we have to show more of ourselves. We don't have a task we can keep focused on and hide behind whilst consistently highlighting what the young person must improve. We are with them, in their lives and ours, journeying together, in our community.

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Sarah-Jane Dodd and Irwin Epstein
Practice-based Research in Social Work: A Guide for Reluctant Researchers
Routledge 2011
ISBN: 0415565243
£24.99 (pbk)
pp. 224

Jan Huyton

ACCORDING TO the authors, if you have 'groaning', 'moaning', 'eye-rolling', 'bad-mouthing', 'waiver-strategizing' students on your research module (p.4), or if you are such a student, then this book is for you. Whilst this may seem like hyperbole, many of us will be familiar with the challenges of demonstrating the relevance of research methods for the practice context. The purpose of the book is 'to demonstrate the many ways in which research concepts and simple and ethically-acceptable research projects can contribute to the quality of your practice'. Indeed 'our purpose is to make research more "practice-friendly", help you see it as such and, in so doing to reduce your reluctance to use it' (p.4). Spot on thought I, and naturally approached this book with great expectations. The twin concepts of practice-based research and a guide for reluctant researchers sounds ideal and, whilst the context here is social work, often the social work literature is applicable to a range of other professional contexts.

The most engaging part of the book is the introduction in which the authors focus on practice-based research (PBR), which they describe as a pragmatic approach that starts where the worker is. Referring to the failed yet 'unending pursuit of just the right way to integrate science and social work practice' (p.6) they are dismissive of the evidence-based practice (EBP) movement for its inappropriate emphasis on scientific method and narrow, formulaic practice prescriptions. Instead the authors seek to 'emphasize the primacy and complexity of the practitioner's role – much of which extends beyond narrowly assessing, intervening and evaluating client problems' (p.7). Add to this the authors' emphasis on consultation and collaboration, throw in their statement that research could be fun, and this begins to sound quite promising; the text of which we have all been dreaming, an accessible and motivational guide to practice-based research.

The book draws heavily on the previous work of one of the authors, Irwin Epstein. Epstein has written prolifically about the limitations of EBP, which he describes as one model of research-based practice (RBP). Chapter 1 is devoted to the evolution and definition of PBR. The authors state that they seek not to oppose what they describe as the scientific movement of EBP, but to 'assert an appreciative understanding and respect for what practitioners do…a more collaborative and mutually appreciative approach whereby social work students and practitioners can become independent producers of social work knowledge and whereby practitioners working together with academic researchers can become co-creators of social work knowledge' (p.14). The stated strengths of PBR, including its applicability and benefits to practitioners and clients, arise out of its mixed-method approach and practice-based starting point. The book does well at promoting this approach, but detracts from this somewhat apologetically when it lists PBR's limitations as 'not "gold standard"; less generalizable; less fundable; less publishable'. This ought to be an opportunity to make a case for persuading funders and publishers of the specific worth and value of PBR. Instead there is a brief statement advising us to learn from rejections and send our work to a practice-oriented journal instead. This is decidedly disappointing, and unlikely to persuade academics and practitioners of the benefits of this research approach.

Part 2 of the book focuses on the designing, planning and execution of PBR. Each chapter has a stated purpose in a box at the start, and there are a few (but not enough) step-by-step practical guides to some stages of the research and analysis processes. Although there is a short summary of the key concepts at the end of each chapter, Part 2 is not particularly accessible in style or register for those unfamiliar with the academic context, and one is left wondering what type of potential researcher and what type of reluctance the book is designed to address.

Perhaps my great expectations were a trifle optimistic. The authors are heavily wedded to distinguishing PBR from EBP, with welcome and valuable arguments to make in terms of emphasizing the importance of PBR to groups such as policy-makers who may be sceptical about this approach, but I can already hear the 'groaning', 'moaning', and 'eye-rolling' from the reluctant researchers I seek to work with – conscientious youth and community practitioners and other

education professionals for whom the concept of research can appear alien and irrelevant. This book makes an excellent case for PBR, but is simply not accessible for those without a strong research background.

The introduction and chapters 1-3 can be drawn on effectively to argue the case for research grounded in practice, but I have seen these arguments made more eloquently elsewhere (for example, Schostak and Schostak, 2007). The 'how to' chapters which follow are dry, complex, and highly academic. Practice-based research guides such as Bradford and Cullen (2012) give more accessible and motivational guidance applied to the practice context. I'd recommend Dodd and Epstein's book for post-graduate practitioner-researchers, but surely research reluctance, where it exists, is more frequently found amongst undergraduates.

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Phil Jones and Gary Walker (eds.)
Children's Rights in Practice
Sage 2011
ISBN: 9781849203807
£23.99 (pbk)
pp. 256

<div align="right">Sean Murphy</div>

THE STYLE AND presentation of this book makes it refreshingly easy to read, and the editors and contributing authors have worked hard to produce a mix of case studies, conceptual models, prompt questions and policy extracts to enable the reader to explore key themes and issues surrounding children's rights. It is most definitely suitable to a broad readership, including undergraduates from a range of disciplines, as well as professionals and those undertaking multi-disciplinary training courses.

The text uses a socio-legal framework to explore the application of a rights-based approach to child protection and well-being, and presents a number of scenarios that challenge the reader to consider

and question key ethical and other implications for practice. Chapters help the reader to develop a sound understanding of the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through the application of its core principles and Articles to a variety of practice contexts.

The book is divided into two main parts. The former provides an overview of the historical and legislative development of children's rights, including the right to play and the voice of the child, as well as exploring child protection, safeguarding, and social exclusion. What is most useful is the way it contextualises the rights agenda, by providing international, European and UK perspectives and establishing links between the UNCRC and the broader human rights agenda. This approach provides the reader with an introduction to key themes and debate, particularly exposing systematic failings in the traditional child protection and welfare approaches. It articulates a strong case for a shift in our thinking and approaches to practice by developing a sound argument for a move from protective regimes towards a more preventative and safeguarding model, which is allied to a stronger voice of the child.

The latter section of the book explores the children's rights approach in practice and the chapters provide a rich variety of theoretical perspectives, research evidence and policy implications, which extend the reader's knowledge within a range of contexts. It considers how a rights-based approach is increasingly becoming a common language within the emerging multi-agency working arrangements. It uses youth justice, youth work and social work settings as case studies to demonstrate how professional values and principles can be evoked to place children's rights at the forefront of practice interventions and approaches. In seeking to contribute towards such developments the text offers insightful models that integrate thinking, for example, blending Bernard Davies' key principles of youth work with the UNCRC articles. It also presents some challenging and contested scenarios within youth justice practice in the context of street based interventions, custody suites and institutions.

The book is relatively jargon-free and instead prefers to examine the subject in a realistic and measured way and in doing so it succeeds in bridging the gap between theory and practice. It therefore makes a valuable contribution to both academic and practitioner learning as its use of case studies and prompts encourage the reader to consider some ethical dilemmas in different contexts. Overall, it presents a strong case for children's rights and youth participation as a buffer against policy failures an inadequate welfare approaches. A very well structured book, contemporary and designed to dedvelop deeper understanding of the subject, it is engaging, thought provoking and challenges practice and should certainly form part of key reading on children's rights undergraduate modules, applied practice modules and multi-disciplinary training.

Sean Murphy, Senior Lecturer in Youth Work and Childhood Studies, Teesside University

Gary Craig, Marjorie Mayo, Keith Popple, Mae Shaw and Marilyn Taylor (eds)
The Community Development Reader: History, Themes and Issues
Policy Press 2011
ISBN: 978 1 84742 704 5
£28.99 (pbk)
pp. 352

Emilia Ohberg

THE COMMUNITY Development Reader chronicles selected parts of the history of community development in the United Kingdom since it first emerged as a profession in the 1950s and the ongoing debate that exists around it. According to the introduction, the goal of the book is:

> *to reassert the identity of the occupation of community development in a UK context by drawing together key readings from the past 50 years from a range of sources... which have helped to shape this identity [but not to] provide a definitive 'official' history of community development in the UK* (p.17-18).

In this, I believe the editors have been ultimately successful. The book provides a broad foundation for anyone who wishes to know more about the evolution of community development in the UK. Though it is not a comprehensive guide, it provides many interesting insights into the practice and profession of community work throughout the last 50 years.

The book is a collection of 28 essays and articles from various authors and sources. They are in chronological order and split into three parts: the 1950s to the mid 1970s, the late 1970s to the early 1990s, and the mid-1990s to the 2000s. Each section begins with an introduction which helps put the section in its political, economic and cultural context. The editors all have extensive experience in the field of community development and are long-standing members of the editorial board of the *Community Development Journal*. As a student of youth and community work I found the writing accessible and free from jargon but nonetheless educational and thought provoking.

This book is especially relevant at the moment considering the current 'Big Society' agenda of the coalition government. It provides a deeper understanding of the historical aspects of community development and how we ended up where we are now. It is equally relevant to students of community development as it is to professionals, activists and 'Big Society' politicians who glean a better insight into the workings of successful community development and the non-tokenistic, bottom-up approach on which it is built.

Many of the articles in the book focus on the empowering and participatory nature of good community development and the need for a 'bottom up' approach. In particular, I found the article entitled 'The politics of participation' by Suzy Croft and Peter Beresford (p.163-169) enlightening

and useful. Another major topic of the book is the difficulty in defining 'community', 'community development' and 'community organisation' and how this affects the debate. The book is critical of the way the language has often been re-appropriated by various governments, including the current coalition government, and attempts made by governments to use community development to manipulate communities.

As a long time anti-racist campaigner, activist and feminist I was pleased to see how much space had been devoted to discussing these topics. I was especially happy to see the focus given to the feminist contribution to community development and the chapter on the pitfalls of anti-racist community work for workers from the majority culture. However, as the book itself states (p.19), many areas are not covered sufficiently (or at all) including the environment, arts and culture, rural communities or the church and its influence on community work.

The book was published in 2011, not long after the last election, and because of this it already feels a bit dated. The afterword speculates about what the future may bring with regards to how coalition government politics may affect community development and organisation. A second edition with a couple of additional articles describing how the current government is changing the nature and landscape of community development in the UK, specifically regarding the impact mutuals may have on the profession, would be very interesting to see.

Despite these criticisms I would recommend the book to anyone who wishes to learn more about the historical context of community development in the UK. I think it is an essential book on the reading list of any youth and community work undergraduate degree and equally interesting and inspiring for those already working in the field. It is current and relevant, it provides a broad understanding of the development of community work in the UK and it offers many interesting insights and ideas.

Emilia Ohberg is currently undertaking a bachelors degree in youth work and community development at Goldsmiths, University of London.

David Palmer

AS A COMPANION for play practitioners, this highly accessible, encouraging and optimistic

book inspires confidence, both in those new to the profession and in those seeking to re-affirm their understanding of the foundations and imperatives of their current practice. It usefully and effectively melds two areas of childhood that currently promote much debate. Firstly that of the value of play in a society that seems at every turn to be structuring the playfulness out of play, and secondly the increased debate over the emotional well-being of children that grew from the UNICEF (2007) child well-being analysis of twenty OECD countries that saw the UK embarrassingly lowly placed.

In a country where the increased bureaucratisation of all aspects of education seems to be leaching the joy, spontaneity and humanity from the classroom, playgrounds, and importantly for those closest to the child, play has and will have battles to fight. In this book, Howard and McInnes begin that fight by rearming practitioners with the ideas, fundamental values and beliefs and, crucially, the self confidence to elicit the very best outcomes for children within recreational, educational and therapeutic settings.

One of the key tenets of this book is the idea that children learn and develop best when they perceive an activity as playful; what an activity feels like to the child is the most important consideration. Implicit in this is the need to listen to what children say about play. Rather than being a passive recipient of (inherently limiting) adult constructions of what they see play as, the authors emphasize the child's agency in the process of learning and development. The centrality of communication is also fostered by a plea for increased opportunities for, and willingness of, practitioners to learn from each other and to share good practice.

That this plea has sometimes been unanswered in the past is attributed to the diversity of theoretical frameworks that have underpinned practice, both historically and in the last few decades. While recourse to references in the first two chapters will reward the more assiduous reader, there is sufficient depth and breadth to promote understanding of the commonalities and divergences of theoretical accounts. Seminal theorists such as Vygotsky, Piaget and Froebel lead the discussion onto ideas of whether children are 'becomings' (lacking competencies) or 'beings' (social actors), a central discussion in childhood research (see Uprichard, 2008). A fairly complex web of ideas is usefully tabulated by Howard and McInnes although some examples may have helped the reader gain a stronger grasp. Importantly, the reader is invited to review their own ideas stimulating the examination of opinions and of received wisdom. Each chapter in this book concludes with a 'now that you have read the chapter section which poses excellent questions that prompt individual and collective reflection on understandings and practices. This technique offers an effective conduit for ideas and validates the wishes of the best practitioners to constantly appraise and refine their practice.

Chapter Two is also theoretically based, looking at how theories of learning are complemented by theories of play. It is a fascinating read, usefully and engagingly illustrated (although colour

photographs would have been preferable), and often pauses to summarise key points in a highly accessible, coherent way. It succeeds in convincing any practitioner who is questioning the value of what they bring to young children's lives that their work is vital.

Howard and McInnes go on to present, in chapter three, their theories around the value of *playfulness* against play and the significance of the child's voice within this as well as the importance of the context within which activity takes place. It is challenging chapter as it largely militates against accepted practice and invites creativity and intellectual curiosity. Over seventy years ago, Dewey first drew distinctions between play and playfulness, defining the latter as an 'attitude of mind' (Dewey, cited in Howard and McInnes, 2012: 41) and it is this assertion that the authors explore further. Their view is that playfulness involves a high degree of affect and as such is difficult to observe, hence the need to see activity from the child's perspective. There are links here with what developmental psychologists term subjectivity and intersubjectivity and this would be a worthwhile avenue of research for the interested reader. An examination of some recent and apposite work on the value of playfulness is complemented with suggested methodologies that aim to overcome the inherent difficulties of measuring playfulness. We are introduced to 'Leuven's Involvement Scale' as a measure of emotional well-being, and to the 'Activity Apperception Story Procedure' as a measure of a child's view of play. This challenging chapter benefits from the use of scenarios which help ground the practitioner in familiar territory.

Engagingly presented scenarios are a key feature of chapter four, which heralds the beginning of the more practical thrust of the book. Ending with a four stage reflective process that once again highlights the genuinely companionable nature of Howard and McInnes's book, Chapter Four seeks to identify what practitioners can do, and be, to encourage the playfulness of activity. Readers are encouraged to see themselves as children might see them and to question their role within the play cycle, constantly evaluating and reflecting upon practice. Again summaries help bring the reader back to key principles and the distinction between those related to therapeutic, recreational and educational settings and how these principles impact on how the adult may be viewed by the child.

In their examination of the interaction between environment and development, the authors draw on Jennings' (1999) 'Embodiment, Projection and Role' paradigm to demonstrate the play stages we all pass through and the different opportunities each presents. Reference is made to play environments that are 'as safe as possible' and 'safe enough', encouraging the reader to consider the corralling of children that practitioners can feel compelled to employ. Further thought is given to the institutionalisation of play, with affluent children being taxied from one organised activity to the next. As with all the chapters, useful further reading is identified with a short outline of its value to the forgoing chapter.

Refreshingly, the thoughtful and thought provoking chapter six, on inclusive play practice, opens

up some fascinating avenues of exploration with an excellent tabulated look at specific conditions and possible adaptive practice. There is possibly scope for a more extensive exploration of the role of play for children in, or emerging from, emotional turmoil, especially given the overarching emphasis in the book on emotional well-being and the importance of positioning play in the 'here and now'. The importance of observation in understanding children's play benefits is emphasised. This well-constructed chapter employs several example scenarios and attendant interpretation, all of which will chime with the daily experience of play workers. The book concludes with a pragmatic look at issues that affect that daily experience such as safeguarding and working productively with parents.

This valuable and highly readable book should be in every play setting. It is by turns practical and thought provoking, stimulating and inspiring.

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Nikki Giant
E-Safety for the I-Generation – Combating the Misuse and Abuse of Technology in Schools
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pp.144

Roy Smith

E-SAFETY IS undoubtedly a hot topic for those of us working with young people. With the internet and new technology central to many aspects of modern life, it is vital that educators have a good understanding of how young people experience it, and are in a position to offer informed guidance.

Giant gives a clear summary of the current state of play, assessing risks and discussing how young people use the Internet and social networks. She also provides some good examples of school based

policy for e-safety and tackling cyber bullying. The sections on cyber bullying and responding to incidents are probably the strongest elements here, giving advice to teachers and school policy makers, with practice based models that relate to online and offline bullying.

That being said, much of the material would be fairly standard for anyone who has a reasonably grasp of the internet and there is little on offer for those experienced in working with young people and technology. Although Giant attempts to give a rounded view of the subject, the negative curriculum is dominant here and more than once I could hear Maude Flanders crying 'won't somebody please think of the children!' This is symptomatic of the public discourse around the internet, treated by government and the media as the latest threat to young people who 'cannot escape the continuous slew of sex.' This grates, with alarmism reminiscent of the demon rock and roll of the 1950s. There are real threats to young people online and educators have an important role in protecting and informing young people, but by dwelling on the risk narrative we miss the opportunity to educate young people on the 'how to' rather than the 'how not to'.

The 'curriculum activities' section starts with a promise to rectify this, including some initial worksheets on communication, but the vast majority of tasks serve only to illustrate the dangers lurking around every corner. The tasks feature some uncomfortably stereotypical and sometimes judgemental case studies, with the football-playing boy, and the girl who just wants a boyfriend, so commits the cardinal sin of wearing too much make up and not having any hobbies or interests. The activities themselves are fairly standard for this type of resource, including some agree / disagree, true or false and sorting activities, which may be useful, but offer little out of the ordinary. Given this is a book about 'new' technology, some online resources or innovative content would have been welcome.

E-Safety for the i-generation is a useful starting place for the uninformed and is correct in calling for educators and institutions to form clear policy and curriculum dealing with e-safety. Although Giant only aimed to tackle issues relating to e-safety, isolating this issue risks distorting the online world, reinforcing negative views. Educators pursuing this strategy could alienate young online-natives, who have integrated these technologies into their lives and may feel their teachers are out of touch. Further resources are needed that can support educators to work with young people on subjects such as: forming positive online identities; effective communication; e-participation; and managing the connection between on and offline worlds.

From a youth work perspective, permission to engage with young people online has long been an issue. Having used social media as part of our youth work in Medway for a number of years, our experience has been incredibly positive, with youth workers engaging through Facebook and other platforms. This I feel has put us in a better position to highlight and discuss issues relating to e-safety, as well as improving communication in general. Despite this, many youth projects and local authorities still prevent their workers engaging online, due in part to the dominance

of negative and risk based narratives associated with the internet. A more positive approach is essential to move on and ensure we are able to educate and relate to young people, for whom the Internet is a normal part of life.

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Peter Kraftl, John Horton and Faith Tucker (eds.)
Critical Geographies of Childhood and Youth: Contemporary Policy and Practice
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<div align="right">Graeme Tiffany</div>

THE INTRODUCTORY statement, 'that researchers, policy-makers and practitioners working with children and young people should be aware of how spaces are important in/for their work', is identified as one of the key challenges emerging from children's geographies. This book takes on this challenge passionately and effectively. On reading, those who work with children and young people will undoubtedly conclude *geography matters*. It matters because, as is convincingly argued, this work is better understood when it considers the spaces and places in which it takes place, and, especially, how, and by whom, these spaces are controlled. Other concepts, such as scale, networks and mobilities, also feature. All can have a profound significance in the lives of young people. But there's complexity also, which is why geography has engendered so many sub-disciplines: from the human, to the social and the cultural, and beyond. A strength of the book is in showing that these geographies act as windows to other understandings, from how time works, to politics and economics too. This means the reader does not need to be a geographer to value its findings. But its greatest contribution is in bearing witness to the realities of childhood and youth in society, and how these lives are affected by policy and practice.

Several chapters expose worrying effects; others are testament of the good. As might be anticipated, the former outweigh the latter. Notwithstanding, they enlighten us, which is important when the drip, drip, drip of policy affects practice in ways we may not have recognised. Most startling is the impact of neoliberalising trends across the education and welfare landscapes. Neoliberalism is, without understatement, extraordinarily difficult to pin down and has some immunity to criticism because of this. But, as Gus John (2006) persuasively argues, it is by analysing examples of what actually happens in practice that the workings of power and hegemony can be revealed.

This book offers examples aplenty. Contributing geographers show how the abandonment of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) was synchronous with the promotion of Free Schools (in effect, a deliberate strategy to liberate the state from spending on new educational spaces). Free Schools' use of existing buildings might seem like a virtuous take on austerity, but what happened to the rationale that classrooms can be profoundly important in shaping the lives of individual children and young people? Then, evidence of how policy increasingly moves youth work into school. Isabel Cartwright illustrates a consequence: 'informal education may be constrained by the policies embedded in formal education settings'. (If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck…) Yet more examples demonstrate policy's preference for a future-oriented conception of childhood. Based on constructions of the child as in deficit, as an incomplete adult, in need of development, a person not yet realised as human capital, the rationale is created for the ever more stringent control of children and young people's education, invariably through the governance of the spaces they inhabit. Even the linguistic turn in policy from 'enabling aspirations' to 'raising aspirations' is, when subjected to geographical analysis, revealed to have these behaviour management tendencies.

The book also takes us further afield: to the externally influenced youth policy environment of Malawi, to policy on HIV/AIDS affected children in South Africa, and to young offender institutions in America. Nowhere escapes these neoliberalising trends. Closer to home, consider the euphemistically labelled school 'stay-on-site' policies: are they a defensible response to the 'junk food mothers' who incurred our opprobrium as they, seemingly, put two fingers up to Jamie's School Dinners in passing food through the school fence? Or, as often happens when the threads of detail emerge, was this a desperate response to the lack of participative geographies in 'institutions characterised by hierarchical, disciplinary and ritualised relations in enclosed sites' (p.31)? (In this case, parents were excluded from the space of the 'School Nutrition Action Group').

What is not better informed by the geographical concepts of space, place, territory and mobility? And yet it's the identification of 'spatial injustices' that is most disturbing. Talk of social mobility clearly masks social *immobility*: what does it say about efforts to widen participation in our universities when less than a fifth of entrants come from disadvantaged areas and fully sixty percent come from the most advantaged? Conversely, youth homelessness policies insist the vulnerable move from their localities, with the effect that support networks are fractured and the stigma of problematic outsider is cast upon them. Stigmatisation is compounded by place; many 'locals' distance themselves from consultation regimes, and retreat into the private sphere (Slater, 2013). How authentic then is the claimed commitment to regeneration and community development, especially when neoliberalism's subliminal narrative, that you 'have to get out to get on', works its magic?

We see how school choice policies influence the leap-frogging of local provision; walking to school becomes a thing of the past as the car becomes needed to get there. Fear and authority conspire to constrain children's freedom to play outside, the youth's mere presence in public space now a

problem. How ironic then that the 'macro spatial effects' of these restrictive policy geographies are likely to contribute to, rather than prevent, the obesity time bomb, inhibit the development of street literacy, and exacerbate other social ills? We can conclude: social exclusion is a geographical concept. Which makes it all the more worrying when we realise that, whilst policy has a centrist, national, spin, the scale of operation of youth participation is invariably the local. Have we been seduced, has our capacity for influence been diminished, by localism?

Thankfully, we are treated to examples that remind us that 'local engagement is never just local'. There is some solace in that. But are these examples too few in this book? Might it be a little ambivalent? Certainly it offers hope. But this appears, somewhat ironically, to be limited by an apparently self-imposed geography of ambition: in its concluding remarks the book asks if we can find and create new spaces but also opportunities within existing policy frameworks that enable progressive values to flourish and 'find moments of joyfulness or compassion within them'. Therein the frustration, might we have to settle for only moments and the occasional space within all of this to act in a progressive way? A greater play of the conclusion that policy is, at best, inefficient and, at worst, detrimental to young people could have laid the foundation for where we go now. But perhaps it is there in this important book. In exploring the many geographical wrongs (and some rights) the signal exists to make geography public, social, participative and democratic. Thus, the citizenship education of (and that is) informal education comes out peculiarly well-placed to inform a more hopeful future. It has the potential to resist, challenge and reclaim the policy spaces in which participation has been reduced to mere taking part in an economic project judged inviolable by its adherents. Informal education can, and does, work through the local, by encouraging and enabling mobilities and an 'outward-looking education'. And it can, and does, inform and affect that beyond. A concluding, if perhaps odd, injunction is made: 'in whatever form might be appropriate in whatever contexts'. This seems to invoke the spirit of both radical geography and informal education, that nothing is definitive and that the world is all the better for that.

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Youth & Policy Journal was founded in 1982 to offer a critical space for the discussion of youth policy and youth work theory and practice.

The editorial group have subsequently expanded activities to include the organisation of related conferences, research and book publication. Regular activities include the bi-annual 'History of Community and Youth Work' and the 'Thinking Seriously' conferences.

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