

The state of youth work in austerity England – reclaiming the ability to ‘care’

Gill Hughes, Charlie Cooper, Sinéad Gormally and Julie Rippingale

Abstract

This article draws on the narratives of community and youth workers who attended a meeting held with the authors to examine the neoliberal restructuring of social policy and the subsequent impact on practice. The article contends that community and youth workers navigate a system which portrays young people as problematic. This jars with their value base and practice, which views young people as having potential. The erosion of care within global and local neoliberal regimes privileges performance measures over working with people. The article examines the mirrored experiences of community and youth workers and those they engage with – both encountering feelings of disempowerment, caught in the bind of a ‘double jeopardy’, a construct which highlights service users needing to feel cared about and workers wanting to care. The austerity cuts applied by the neoliberal regime impede this relational process through decreased resources, which in turn means that time is taken up with monitoring and evaluating funded outcomes, eating into time of the actual work of ‘what needs to be done’. Community and youth workers have little space to discuss and engage with the feelings they experience as a result of the incongruent nature of their increasingly bureaucratised role which conflicts with working towards enhancing young people’s quality of life. They expressed a need to find spaces of safety to articulate feelings and explore ‘what is to be done’, working communally with academic partners to reflect, but also to regain confidence sapped by the brutalising neoliberal regime.

Key words: care, community and youth work, double jeopardy, globalisation, neoliberalism, strategies of resistance

Background

THIS ARTICLE examines issues raised by community and youth work practitioners from the North of England concerning the challenges they face in the context of continuing neoliberal social policy restructuring. These issues emerged during a meeting between the authors and practitioners in the field, held in late 2013, a time of austerity. The issues raised were primarily centred on the increased marketisation of the profession (Russell et al, 2010), demoralising cuts, a reduced capacity to voice opinion, and a distinct lack of confidence to challenge the imposed neoliberal order. We will argue that the erosion of resources and commitment to the profession

under neoliberalism has led to the mirroring of youth workers' experience with that of the young people they seek to assist – albeit from different perspectives. Moreover, the ability of workers to deliver their services with care is constrained by the pressures imposed, with increased time taken on administrative responsibilities over 'being with' people to develop relational connections. We highlight how these developments are now being recognised globally in terms of a 'crisis' of 'double jeopardy' for both recipients of caring services, increasingly deprived of the basic resources for survival, and providers, increasingly denied the autonomy needed to care effectively (Abramovitz and Zelnick, 2010).

The impact of neoliberal globalisation on the ability to 'care'

Fundamental to neoliberal globalisation is the emphasis of free-market capitalism, on 'free capital movements, monetarism and a minimal state that does not accept responsibility for correcting income inequalities or managing serious externalities' (Held and McGrew, 2007: 188-189). Essentially, neoliberal globalisation is exacerbating poverty and human suffering (Bello, 2002). Moreover, 'Young people, more than any other age group, have been adversely affected by developments relating to globalization' (DESA, 2005: iii). Whilst there has been significant research into the impact of neoliberal globalisation on human suffering (for instance: Klein, 2007; Hardt and Negri, 2005; Pilger, 2001), less has been revealed about its impact on welfare service providers. This lacuna in the literature inspired Abramovitz and Zelnick (2010) to conduct a cross-national comparative study of the effects of two pieces of neoliberal social policy reform in different national contexts – the Welfare Reform bill in the US and measures to impose fiscal deficit reduction and trade liberalisation in South Africa, both introduced in 1996. These measures led to significant cutbacks in government spending which had a profound impact on 'caring' in both countries. Not only has the wellbeing of service users been undermined – deprived of basic resources needed for survival – but so too has the ability of service providers to care because of a lack of time and resources (Abramovitz and Zelnick, 2010).

Abramovitz and Zelnick's research study identified that, following the reforms in the US, those practitioners whose work required a caring approach faced increasing demands and pressures, and their work became more intense – largely due to an increase in paperwork and performance-related reporting. There was an increased focus on meeting basic needs rather than 'higher' psychological and/or emotional needs. There was also a sense that care workers felt a loss of control over their work – less time, less resources and less professional autonomy. Managers were found to be less co-operative and supportive, and ruder. Care workers also expressed ethical dilemmas, particularly in relation to the pressure to honour government rules as against honouring their own professional values and commitments. They felt helpless and lacked the ability to help their clients. There was a sense that government no longer supported, nor were interested in, the work they were doing. There was also fear of reprisals for expressing misgivings about the direction of welfare reform, tempering dissent and opposition to government policies. Demoralisation, stress and burn out

were increasing, leading to a loss of compassion and care for clients. In South Africa, neoliberal restructuring and cutbacks coincided with rising levels of illness, unemployment, poverty and inequality, placing additional pressure on service provision (especially around HIV and AIDS). This led to staff shortages because of low pay and increased pressures, resulting in further stress and reductions in levels of care. The pressures intensified due to resource shortages – especially equipment and space for health care. There was a discernible lack of government support and action in relation to HIV and AIDS, with President Mbeki at the time stating his doubts that HIV caused AIDS and failing to develop an effective national AIDS policy. Whilst the situation in South Africa was more extreme, it is clear how neoliberalism's pro-market and anti-state policy changes were creating a 'double jeopardy' in which care workers as well as patients and clients were adversely affected (Abramovitz and Zelnick 2010).

Austerity bites – the local context

The context for youth work in contemporary times, particularly in Northern England, is a brutalised one, largely as a consequence of three decades of neoliberalism. Social policy reforms since the 1980s have led to: increased deindustrialisation and the dismantling of social protections; public sector cuts and privatisations; the rise of the new managerialism; the erosion of 'care' in all areas of welfare organising; and widening inequalities and social tensions (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). The wellbeing of young people in particular has declined throughout this period (Unicef, 2007), and we have experienced a shift from a welfare state to a punishing state (Giroux, 2013) with the criminalisation of social problems (Rodger, 2008).

In addition, the dominant narrative of social problems is that they are increasingly interpreted as a dysfunction of the individual, with setbacks perceived as personal inadequacy rather than a structural dysfunction of the contemporary social order (Giroux, 2013). An illustration of this can be found in NatCen's interim evaluation of the National Citizen Service (NCS) which included a question on whether the participants agreed with the statement: 'If someone is not a success in their own life it's their own fault'. The proportion of young people agreeing with the statement increased after they had participated in the NCS social action project – interpreted by NatCen as 'encouraging' (cited in Davies, 2013: 11). So one sign of success of the NCS is getting more young people to blame individuals for their 'failings' – leaving the brutalising context of many young people's lives in austerity England beyond scrutiny. This current discourse was conspicuous in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne's speech at the 2012 Conservative party conference where he drew on a juxtaposition of 'strivers versus shirkers'. This speaks to both Charles Murray's (1996) 'underclass' thesis from the 1980s and the Poor Laws of the 1880s, where people were positioned in the binary of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, the latter blamed for their poverty and for lacking the inclination to work, despite each of these eras sharing unemployment as a dominant issue. Presently, 18.6 per cent of 18-24 year-olds are unemployed as shown by figures in early 2014 (Savage, 2014). Young people, like people who are generally unemployed, are viewed

as modernity's 'outcasts', living 'wasted lives' (Bauman, 2004).

'Youth work' as defined by the In Defence of Youth Work campaign (IDYW, 2009) is where young people freely engage in universal open-access facilities offering informal education opportunities, addressing issues based on their own perceived concerns and interests. It is a distinct way of working where relationships amongst young people, and between young people and adults, are rooted in mutual respect and trust (Davies, 2010). The space to work in this way is becoming more restricted. Instead, now, there is an increasing policy emphasis on targeted, intensive interventions, shaped by a 'deficit' model of youth which has become normalised through the language required of practitioners to support (increasingly competitive) funding bids. Such difficulties have been depoliticised and pathologised. Jeffs and Smith (1999) identify this position as occurring when youth workers find themselves operating with a 'Janus-Face', with one face forced to subjugate young people and their communities through the discourse of 'neets', 'troubled' or 'risky' in order to gain funding. Again, this is a discourse resonant of Murray's (1996) 'underclass'. This problematising of behaviour is a tool to attract money; however, this funding is generally for correctives to transform 'unruly selves' (Lawler, 2014). Simultaneously, the other face engages in seeing the potential of young people – replacing the 'underclass' discourse with that of 'empowerment'. It has become increasingly necessary for youth workers to become flexible with the funding authorities' rules to meet young people's needs, adhering to the criteria but doing so in ways that suit young people. This dialectical approach adds an additional burden to the already pressurised role of youth workers, firstly, in having to seek funding to meet needs and, secondly, in balancing the binary of pathologising young people as the 'problem' to acquire funding but to work with their 'potential' in empowering ways. This pressure can lead to community and youth work managers being consumed by institutionalised normative practices more in harmony with the requirements of an increasingly punitive state than those articulated by young people themselves. Over time these practices can appear legitimate, superior and natural, an unquestioned rationality perhaps. This calls into play Bourdieu's use of doxa, where something is presented as self-evident, as natural, rational and accepted 'as is' but, in effect, represents the exercise of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1992; Cooper, 2011).

Mirrored oppression – youth workers at risk

The issues for practitioners arguably mirror the experiences of young people – the notion of disempowerment can be equally attributed to the providers and recipients of community and youth work services (consistent with the notion of double jeopardy). In addition, the lack of voice and reduction in confidence, together with a need to feel connected, are also shared experiences. The narratives offered by practitioners in the field fall in line with the context described above, adding evidence to how the restrictive neoliberal social policy regime hampers the ontological practices of engagement, constraining the services offered to young people. For many youth workers, the strong ethos and values of their work drives them to attempt to retain high levels of connection.

However, in maintaining such levels, this can place the worker at risk of ‘burnout’ through self sacrifice, effectively privileging care for others over care for the self (Foucault, 1990). Youth workers may seek to facilitate empowerment, yet at the same time feel a sense of disconnection and powerlessness in doing value-based, radical youth work, distracted by the neoliberal regime which requires ‘bean-counters’ as opposed to people who resist oppression and tackle inequalities through a socially-just driven agenda. Analytically, the disempowered are attempting to empower the disempowered, spiralling through layers from government to managers to practitioners to young people, undermining youth work practice and having a detrimental impact on the confidence and wellbeing of the workers.

A clear and common call from the practitioners was a space to provide an opportunity to share feelings and experiences; to build recognition and to provide a sense of ‘community’ and solidarity, something that is increasingly difficult within the current climate. Batsleer (2010) notes that current youth work practice is predicated on providing a ‘safe space’ for young people, but this is as equally necessary for youth workers themselves. However, there are few opportunities for practitioners to create time and freedom to identify issues and discuss ‘what is to be done’. Having this space to connect is crucial for effective youth work but, more importantly, it creates opportunities to address the wellbeing of the workers as a preventative to the risk of burnout, which in turn enables them to continue to deliver services. This is something that seems to be missing in many professions, but in particular in the community and youth work field – that is, the space ‘to be’.

The importance of finding the time and place to examine current issues links with Kincheloe and Barry’s view of research where they draw attention to the influence of power: ‘Not all parties or all advocates of particular marginalised lived experiences are allowed to sit at the table of official meaning-making’ (Kincheloe and Barry, 2004: 11). The absence of a voice within strategic policy decision-making results in a diminished understanding of what community and youth work is and thus its value to society is often marginalised around the ‘table of official meaning-making’. Given providing opportunity for ‘voice’ is a fundamental tenet of youth work practice (Gormally and Coburn, 2013), it is concerning that the same opportunities are not afforded to practitioners. In addition, the precariousness of provision results in a fear to speak out and take risks; again, emulating the experience of many young service users. There is a palpable feeling of a lack of ‘confidence’ to challenge issues which impact the ethos of youth work, together with increasing individualised practice which hinders access to collective ways of working and mutual support, collegiality and a unified voice in speaking out.

The ‘performativity culture’ (Ball, 1998; 2012; 2013) of targets, monitoring regimes and bidding processes ensures that time is taken up with form filling and bids for funds which pit community and youth work projects with the same ambitions against each other, leading to the fragmentation of welfare. An important issue raised is the need to pursue more appropriate welfare outcomes.

If performance indicators have to be used then they need to be realistic and appropriate. The indicators should be developed ‘with’ those involved – the young people and the youth workers – to ensure that measurement is meaningful and achievable, and capable of meeting needs as opposed to ticking boxes.

Commissioning work in the dark – what shall we measure?

It was not uncommon to hear community and youth work practitioners refer to how some commissioners and decision-makers do not understand young people’s needs, leading to misrecognition of youth work, its values, quality and relevance. This also feeds into questioning the need for community and youth work and indeed anecdotes abound on the closure of whole services in some areas of the country and privatisations of other parts (see ‘Choose Youth campaign’ at <http://www.chooseyouth.org/campaigns/our-campaigns>, accessed 4th March 2014). Despite this, those services still in existence are increasingly under pressure to demonstrate their ability to prevent ‘risk taking’. The underlying values of building rapport, trust and promoting consciousness raising are in danger of losing their importance, despite practitioners’ knowledge that time is essential to facilitate practices which build relationality and which allow trust to develop. Moreover, these devalued elements allow a philosophy of ‘working with’ young people to emerge – not ‘doing to’ – which also draws attention to the power relations which are all so important in developing this mutual relational encounter. This process of connection allows workers to identify needs and facilitate prevention, ameliorating the possibility of risks – the same risks which trouble those developing interventions to contain ‘problem youth’. The lack of understanding of the profession leads to the development of performance indicators which are turgidly constructed and time consuming, and have little resonance with the practice of youth work. Class-based judgements on what is normative underpin the criteria by which the targets are measured and formulate a certain view of what young people should ‘be’ and what youth workers should ‘do’.

When funding is made available it is generally aimed at ‘fixing’ a social issue judged to occupy the lifeworld of young people. Behavioural economics has taken root in government with an underpinning psychological rationality for encouraging a ‘responsibilising’ of people to care for themselves and others within a context of a small state. The government’s Behavioural Insights Team is a worrying notion in itself but the news that it will partner private business adds a whole other dimension: imagine large supermarkets bidding to tell people, more than they already do, how to live their lives and that they have something to sell that will help achieve it.

[A] government unit aimed at ‘nudging’ people into making better life choices is to become a profit-making business. The Behavioural Insights Team – known as the ‘nudge unit’ – will join with a commercial partner and become the first policy unit to be spun out of Whitehall. It finds ways of ‘nudging’ people to make better choices themselves, rather than through state

intervention. (BBC, 2013)

This way of thinking sits with Foucault's discourse of governmentality where he explicates the processes by which governing is both by the state and for the state, guided by ideological rationality which informs policy and practice, and which appears 'commonsense':

Foucault coins the concept of 'governmentality' as a 'guideline' for the analysis he offers by way of historical reconstructions embracing a period starting from Ancient Greece through to modern neo-liberalism (Foucault 1997b, p.67). The semantic linking of governing ('gouverner') and modes of thought ('mentalité') indicates that it is not possible to study the technologies of power without an analysis of the political rationality underpinning them. ... In addition to the management by the state or the administration, 'government' also signified problems of self-control, guidance for the family and for children, management of the household, directing the soul, etc. For this reason, Foucault defines government as conduct, or, more precisely, as 'the conduct of conduct' and thus as a term which ranges from 'governing the self' to 'governing others'. (Lemke, 2000: 2)

It is the self evidence which underpins the unquestioning acceptance of self and others in need of control which poses a problem – government must have the wellbeing of its populace at heart. Within this framework youth workers are charged with adapting to ways of working which are in contrast to their values, guiding young people to be entrepreneurial in making a 'self' that is acceptable and conforms to a normative ideal; a fiscally-active citizen of the future, desired, and 'nudged' by the government and youth work interventions. The will to challenge the policy shift is something which instils fear in a climate of insecurity. Youth workers are caught in a bind – they want to do the best for the young people that they work with whilst, at the same time, wanting to retain the very employment that allows them to do this and maintain funding to the projects that underpin the provision. Yet the requirements of the funding may jar with the core of their value system, producing incongruence which troubles their processes of reflexivity. A solution identified through discussions between the authors of this article and community and youth workers is for the University to provide the space for practitioners to come together and join with academics (some of whom are also practitioners) to examine 'what can be done?'

Moving forward collectively

Returning to the analysis of Abramovitz and Zelnick (2010), we can identify within it important lessons for future possibilities and strategies of resistance. Whilst the double jeopardy they identified created significant hardships, they also identified opportunities for new social movements to appear. As they argue, 'the similar experiences of both vulnerable client/patient populations and care workers resulted in "double jeopardy", revealing intimate links between providers and the people they serve' (Abramovitz and Zelnick, 2010: 112). Through these links, potential exists for

the emergence of strategies of resistance to neoliberal domination.

A NYC [New York City] human service worker explained that welfare reform acted as a wake-up call, shaking complacent workers. ... 'Welfare reform has brought us back to the mission to advocate for the rights of the client we are serving'. (Abramovitz and Zelnick, 2010: 112)

Mobilising shared interests around a common campaign for change offers genuine possibilities for generating a coherent challenge to the contemporary neoliberal order.

The shared interests of care workers and the people they care for in the 'fight back' against neoliberalism suggest the potential for aligning care workers' health and safety with client/patient needs in public policy formation. The health and safety of care workers in the global economy is an important dimension for evaluating public policies and envisioning better ones. (Abramovitz and Zelnick, 2010: 113)

Abramovitz and Zelnick's analysis is a crucial one for it signposts future directions for generating strategies of resistance built around the common interests and shared values of community and youth work organisations, and the communities and young people they work with who are similarly affected by austerity cuts. It offers a potential strategy for aligning community and youth workers with users in evaluating neoliberal social policies and envisioning better ones.

The support needs of young people today are unprecedented. As alluded to at the start of this article, youth unemployment is considerable – indeed, at a record high and three times higher than for adults. Furthermore, 2.1million 16-to 24-year-olds were living in poverty in 2011, many from minority ethnic groups and with disabilities; childhood poverty continues into adulthood and is linked to lower educational attainment, higher unemployment and low earnings (Telfer, 2013). The need for a radical response is therefore paramount. As Giroux argues, under neoliberalism:

Society no longer makes any claims in the name of the social or collective insurance policies for future generations ... Debt, joblessness, insecurity, and hopelessness are the defining features of a generation that has been abandoned by its market-obsessed, turn-a-quick profit elders. (Giroux, 2013: 136)

Whilst Giroux is reflecting on the North American context, his observations mirror what is happening in England. There is a pressing need to reverse this development if we are to restore hope and prospects to young people's lives and youth work practice. And it is becoming increasingly clear that universities are perhaps one of the few safe places remaining where possibilities exist for generating counter strategies to the neoliberal social order, and where Foucault's comments on the role of the 'specific intellectual' in times of escalating oppression might be applied (Beckmann and

Cooper, 2005). As Giroux argues, academics ‘must join with ... youths in taking up the challenge of developing a politics and pedagogy that can serve and actualize a democratic notion of the social’ (Giroux, 2013: 140). For the University is perhaps:

... one of the few public spheres left that can provide the educational conditions for ... community members to occupy a space of dialogue and unmitigated questioning, imagine different futures, ... engage in coalition-building, and develop a language of critique and possibility that makes visible the urgency of a politics necessary to address important social issues and contribute to the quality of public life and the common good. (Giroux, 2013: 134)

This dialogue needs to start by addressing the fear expressed by community and youth workers about speaking out – a problem that has been identified throughout most areas of public life and welfare organising under neoliberalism (Abramovitz and Zelnick, 2010; Mathieson, 2013). The University offers possibilities for providing a safe space for practitioners to discuss and debate issues of concern freely, and to build their confidence through engaging collectively in a community and youth work coalition of shared interests at a distance from the day-to-dayness of work’s trials and tribulations. University engagement with its locale is crucially important. This is something that universities motivated to engage can deliver; it provides an opportunity for praxis – placing practice within a theoretically-informed context, bringing to life concerns, sharing empirical evidence, and allowing for collective recognition to strengthen resistance to the powerful ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1988a: 131) which come in the guise of policy to tackle ‘disaffected young people’. The feeling expressed by many practitioners in the meeting with the authors of this article is that the University engenders a level of authority and expertise from its externality and immersion in research which affords an opportunity to recite the opinions of practitioners, which have fallen on deaf ears, but are somehow then revealed as ‘expertise’ when hailed from academia. Care must be taken when privileged with such confidence – as academics, we would not want to adopt a colonial role, advocating what should be without reference to the sector and its young people. This could be read as academics pronouncing from their ‘Ivory Tower’. So any review or critique offered needs to be in partnership, a ‘working with’ process – which meetings such as ours could generate – identifying areas to problematize in unison.

The impact of the current policy context described above could be described as ‘dangerous’, and more recognition is needed to allow community and youth workers to break out from measuring outcomes to examine what can be done:

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper – and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger. (Foucault, 1983: 231-232)

By coming together in a collective space, community and youth workers ‘have something to do’; they can ‘determine which is the main danger’ and act on this. This might form the basis of working with young people to determine a City Plan, and could certainly enhance connectedness through bridging networks to mobilise strength in numbers for practitioners and for young people. This in turn can lead to Freire’s (2005) consciousness raising, enabling again both practitioners and young people to recognise the wider context and the constraints they face, but also the opportunities that might be drawn on. This chimes with Foucault’s ambition to facilitate a process whereby people can offset constraints and see that power is available for the will to challenge:

My role – and that is too emphatic a word – is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed. (Foucault 1988b: 10)

Sometimes the day-to-dayness in troubled times can draw attention to the immediacy of survival – working with young people navigating complexity – requiring a short-sighted lens. In contrast, Foucault’s contention of people being ‘freer’ than they think is something that the University might catalyse through the offer of a safe space to contemplate futures and different ways of being to maximise access to power and resources. It certainly fits with the idea of possibilities and strategies of resistance generated by the coming together of practitioners and ‘clients’, as posed above by Abramovitz and Zelnick (2010).

The University could assist with a further issue identified by youth workers, which is the lack of time to find information for bids or research to justify the worth of their provision. A request was made for the University to provide academic underpinnings, data and comparators – in short, the theory and empirical evidence that community and youth workers do not have the capacity to identify in their day-to-day work when they are attempting to provide services for young people under the veil of monitoring. It was also suggested that the University could provide critical research into community and youth work issues and practice to challenge the status quo or the rationalities presented by governments to justify the next big initiative; what Ball (2013: 3) refers to as ‘policy overload’ or, citing Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987), ‘hyperactivism’, which seeks to ‘fix’ young people and tie workers to more targets. In his own recent analysis of youth work in a changing policy landscape in England, Bernard Davies (2013) alludes to a number of policy responses that have been debated in recent times. Amongst these is the potential for engaging with the new Institute for Youth Work, as a means of generating a stronger voice for youth work to influence policy developments, and with youth work campaigns such as Choose Youth or IDYW. There are also those who argue the need to rethink the nature of youth work in contemporary times and who question whether or not the IDYW definition is, perhaps, too precious in a time of austerity. Should we, in fact, be more pragmatic and consider whether targeted youth work is such a problem? Youth work has, after all, always been a contested practice (Davies, 2013).

Conclusions

The challenges of working with young people within the current policy climate of cuts to benefits, increased homelessness and rising support needs, but with reduced resources, is difficult enough. But to do so within a demoralised and shrinking field of practice shaped by neoliberalism only adds to the problem. As we have seen from this analysis, there is an urgent need to address these developments if the aspirations of young people and communities in both the ‘developed’ world and ‘developing’ world are to be met. Neoliberalism has undermined the wellbeing of service users and service providers wherever it has applied its social policy prescriptions. The work of Abramovitz and Zelnick (2010) in particular provides evidence of the destructive power of neoliberalism in terms of increased stress, the decreased capacity of care providers to care, and the reduced wellbeing of communities, individuals and families.

However, at the same time, Abramovitz and Zelnick (2010) offer a signpost for potential future directions. Alongside some of the more pragmatic suggestions emerging from the dialogue between practitioners in the field and the authors of this article – such as regular meetings to debate issues – there is potential to generate a new social movement around the shared interests and values of critical academics, community and youth work practitioners, and young people themselves. This movement could provide fertile ground for generating a new language and new ways of thinking about how to measure the worth of community and youth work, and what it really means to ‘care’. This would include generating a counter discourse to that which pedals a deficit model of youth and youth workers, both similarly pathologised for failing to successfully embrace the challenges presented by market fundamentalism. It would include generating new measures of success in community and youth work, where ‘caring’ is reinstated as a central ambition in preference to cost-benefit, and where practices that decontextualise and homogenise young people and their communities’ needs are resisted. There is a need to contest depictions of youth workers as obstacles when they seek to challenge the powers that be and to recognise that they have a valuable contribution to make from the field to ensure young people are properly catered for. Achieving this will require the establishment of a safe place where community and youth work practitioners can come together, along with academics and young people, and debate freely alternative possibilities for a community and youth work praxis that offers genuine prospects for positively transforming young people’s lives and imagines new ways of working. Through coming together and building alliances, and in turn generating the confidence to speak out and take risks again, such collective endeavour will hopefully create an atmosphere of ‘can do’ and spark ideas, share good practice, and find ways of making young people visible and practitioners’ contributions recognised for their value.

References

- Abramovitz, M. and Zelnick, J. (2010) 'Double jeopardy: The impact of neoliberalism on care workers in the United States and South Africa', *International Journal of Health Services*, 40:1, pp. 97-117.
- BBC (2013) 'Whitehall "Nudge" to be part privatised', available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-22362727> [accessed 20.9.13].
- Ball, S. J. (1998) 'Performativity and fragmentation in "postmodern schooling"', in J. Carter (ed) *Postmodernity and the fragmentation of welfare*, London: Routledge, pp.187 – 203.
- Ball, S.J. (2012) 'Performativity, Commodification and Commitment: An I-Spy Guide to the Neoliberal University', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60:1, pp. 17-28.
- Ball, S.J. (2013) *Foucault, Power, and Education*, London: Routledge.
- Batsleer, J. (2010) 'Youth work prospects: back to the future?' in J. Batsleer and B. Davies (eds) *What is Youth Work?*, Exeter: Learning Matters, pp. 153-165.
- Bauman, Z. (2004) *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beckmann, A. and Cooper, C. (2005) 'Nous accusons – Revisiting Foucault's comments on the role of the "specific intellectual" in the context of increasing processes of Gleichschaltung in Britain', *Outlines: Critical Social Studies*, 7: 2, pp.3-22.
- Bello, W. (2002) *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy*, London & New York: Zed Books.
- Bourdieu, P. (1992) *Language and symbolic power*, Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Cooper, C. (2011) 'Imagining "radical" youth work possibilities – challenging the "symbolic violence" within the mainstream tradition in contemporary state-led youth work practice in England', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15:1, pp. 53-71.
- Davies, B. (2010) 'What do we mean by youth work?', in J. Batsleer and B. Davies (eds) *What is Youth Work?*, Exeter, Learning Matters, pp. 1–6.
- Davies, B. (2013) 'Youth work in a changing policy landscape: the view from England', *Youth & Policy*, 110, May, pp. 6-32.
- (DESA) Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005) *World Youth Report 2005: Young people today, and in 2015*, New York: UN.
- Dunleavy, P. and O'Leary, B. (1987) *Theories of the State: The politics of liberal democracy*, Houndmills: Macmillan Education.
- Foucault, M. (1983) 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress', in H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (eds), Michel Foucault: *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd Edition, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 229-252.
- Foucault, M. (1988a) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, London: Random House Publishing.
- Foucault, M. (1988b) 'Truth, power, self: An interview with Michel Foucault, October 25, 1982', in L. H. Martin, H. Gutman and P. Hutton (eds), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, pp. 9-15.

- Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.3: The Care of the Self, London: Penguin.
- Freire, P. (2005) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, London/New York: Continuum.
- Giroux, H. (2013) *Youth in Revolt: Reclaiming a Democratic Future*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Gormally, S. and Coburn, A. (2013) 'Finding Nexus: connecting youth work and research practices', *British Educational Research Journal*, available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/berj.3118/references>.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2005) *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, London: Penguin Books.
- Held, D. and McGrew, A. (2007) *Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- (IDYW) *In Defence of Youth Work* (2009) Open Letter, available at <http://www.indefenceofyouthwork.org.uk> [accessed 31.8.13].
- Jeffs, T. and Smith M.K. (1999) 'The problem of "youth" for youth work', *Youth & Policy*, 62, pp. 45–66, available at: <http://www.infed.org/archives/youth.htm> (updated 2012) [accessed 20.9.13].
- Kincheloe, J.L. and Barry, K.L. (2004), *Rigour and Complexity in Educational Research – Conceptualizing the Bricolage*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Klein, N. (2007) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, London: Allen Lane.
- Lawler, S. (2014) *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lemke, T. (2000) 'Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique', paper presented at *Rethinking Marxism Conference*, University of Amherst (MA), September 21–24, available at <http://www.andosciasociology.net/resources/Foucault%2C+Governmentality%2C+and+Critique+IV-2.pdf> [accessed 20.9.13].
- Mathieson, S. A. (2013) 'Duty of candour: a fear of whistleblowing still pervades the NHS', *The Guardian Healthcare Professionals Network*, 9 December, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/healthcare-network/2013/dec/09/duty-candour-whistleblowing-pervades-nhs> [accessed 4.3.14].
- Murray, C. (1996) *Charles Murray and the Underclass: The Developing Debate*, London: The Institute of Economic Affairs Health and Welfare Unit,
- Pilger, J. (2001) *New Rulers of the World*, video, at <http://johnpilger.com/> [accessed 20.1.14].
- Rodger, J.J. (2008) *Criminalising Social Policy: Anti-Social Behaviour and Welfare in a De-Civilised Society*, Cullompton: Willan.
- Russell, L., Simmons, R. and Thompson, R. (2010) Playing the numbers game: Connexions personal advisers working with learners on entry to employment programmes, *Journal of Vocational Training and Education*, 62:1, pp.1–12.
- Savage, J. (2014) 'The betrayal of teenagers by this government is a disgrace', the *Guardian*, 17 January, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/17/betrayal-teenagers-government-disgrace-austerity-britain> [accessed 20.1.14].
- Telfer, S. (2013) 'Austerity in the UK: Spotlight on young people', *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

Austerity in the UK Project, available at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/austerity-spotlight-young-people> [accessed 18.9.13].

(Unicef) The United Nations Children's Fund (2007) *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*, Florence: Unicef.

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, London: Penguin.

