"Are we all playing an elaborate game?"

A Bourdieusian analysis of children's participation in

decision making in youth justice

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Abstract

There has been a lack of empirical research on children's involvement in the design and delivery of youth offending services. This PhD investigates the extent and nature of children's participation in planning, decision making and assessment in youth justice. It seeks to reveal the 'logic' and unmask the 'hidden workings' of participatory youth justice practice. The PhD involved 15 months of fieldwork, undertaken between 2016-2017 at a youth offending service in England. This involved participant observations and semi-structured interviews with children and young people (n=20) and professionals (n=20). Pierre Bourdieu's analytical tools: habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence, were utilised to investigate the attitudes and behaviours of practitioners and those under supervision. This original and distinctive study produced new knowledge, uncovering both inclusive and exclusive aspects of practice that either facilitated or foreclosed children's participation. Opportunities provided to young people to have a say and influence practice were strikingly unequal at the practice level. Involvement in shaping decision making and influencing processes was ostensibly reserved for the non-high risk, especially the ready to conform or those with seemingly malleable personality types. The study found that several young people were seeking to exert minimal energy in order to achieve a type of passive compliance with court order requirements. Professionals were concerned that they were also participating in this type of 'game playing'. The PhD reveals insight into why agents may not contest the status quo despite experiencing hardship. The PhD presents cogent arguments for

involving children more centrally in decision making, unlocking their potential and reversing a system that has traditionally 'designed out' opportunities for them to provide a perspective on their care/supervision or devalued the credibility/validity of their experiential knowledge. Peer mentoring was found to be a liberating and enlightening type of practice. Whilst not necessarily denouncing the adult professional voice and perspective, children and young people can be 'experts by experience'.

Declaration of Published Work

Creaney, S. and Smith, R. (2014) Youth justice back at the crossroads *Safer communities* 13 (2) 83-87.

Creaney, S (2015) Using research to develop inclusive practice in the Early Years in Brodie, K and Savage, K (eds). *Inclusion and Early Years Practice.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Creaney, S. (2018) Children's Voices—are we Listening? Progressing Peer Mentoring in the Youth Justice System *Child Care in Practice* DOI: 10.1080/13575279.2018.1521381.

Case, S., **Creaney, S**., Deakin, J., & Haines, K. (2015). Youth Justice Past Present and Future *British Journal of Community Justice* 13(2), 99-110.

Conference papers

Creaney, S. (2019) "Are we all playing an elaborate game?" A Bourdieusian analysis of children's involvement in decision making and assessment in youth justice. *Building on Bourdieu in National and International Spaces.* Bourdieu Study Group. British Sociological Association: Sheffield Hallam University. 27 September.

Creaney, S. (2019) Preserving or transforming the risk-oriented status quo? Using Bourdieu's theory of practice to investigate the tension and interplay between risk and participation in youth justice. *Tensions at the front line of risk work: implications for policy and practice.* Risk and Society Study Group. British Sociological Association: BSA London Meeting Room. 9–10 December.

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Author's declaration

I certify that this PhD thesis is the result of my own work and quotations and sources of information have been duly acknowledged in the text. This PhD thesis has not been submitted for any previous award.

Chapter 1: Introduction and outline of the thesis

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the PhD thesis. It sets the scene by presenting background information and providing a context related to the purpose and focus of the PhD. It briefly explores the efficacy and the *raison d'être* of a participatory and 'child first' agenda in youth justice. It then presents a series of obstacles to progressing user involvement in the Youth Justice System. Despite laudable aspirations (See YJB, 2016, 2019), capturing the voice of the child or facilitating meaningful opportunities for them to input into processes, techniques, methods and strategies, appears to be the system's 'Achilles Heel' (Morgan and Hough, 2007: 46; Case and Hampson, 2019). This chapter seeks to engage with, and vet this key issue of concern.

The chapter then proceeds to explain and justify the study's aims and objectives. Included in this chapter, is an overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework, chosen research methods and a rationale provided for the methodological approach adopted. As will be briefly explained, in taking Bourdieu and his analytical tools into the unique field of youth justice supervision, the intention of the PhD is to scrutinise areas of practice that have been under researched, undertheorised and ostensibly untested (Case and Hampson, 2019). The chapter ends by providing a brief introduction to the purpose and key points of each chapter in the thesis.

A fresh vision? Enter the 'children first' agenda

It has been argued that front-line professionals and children under supervision have been experiencing systems as uncomforting (Haines and Case, 2015). Young people have felt that their cognitive and emotional ability to provide input into decision making processes has been undervalued, thus experiencing, limited opportunities to pursue child-led agendas (Clinks, 2016; Haines and Case, 2015). These experiences concur with the findings of a report by Clinks (2016) submitted to the Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System. The majority of those under supervision often felt disaffected, seldom presented with an opportunity to negotiate the form and content of their supervision arrangements or contribute to the design, development and delivery of services (Clinks, 2016).

Young people voiced little confidence that their views were being taken seriously when they expressed them and remained unconvinced that complaints handling processes were fair and transparent (Clinks, 2016). Disconcertingly, there has been a lack of strategic direction on how such issues can be rectified or how children's participation can become common place (Case and Hampson; 2019; Case, 2018).

The Taylor Review published in 2016, revaluated the system's priorities (Taylor, 2016). Notwithstanding the problems associated with contemporary measures of reoffending where a frank yes/no indicator of criminal activity is used (Creaney and Smith, 2014; National Association

for Youth Justice, 2015), what prompted his review was concern that re-offending rates remained high.

Whilst acknowledging successes such as: reductions in detected offending, falls in first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System and the numbers of children receiving prison sentences decreasing, he referred to a core group of young people being responsible for a considerable amount of crime (Taylor, 2016). Criminal justice responses were ostensibly proving ineffective in tackling frequent and persistent offending (Taylor, 2016).

Taylor (2016:3) recommended a type of 'child first offender second' approach, emphasising the need to promote positive aspects of a child's life, highlighting the importance of relationship-based practice and the need to recognise children's evolving capacities. He also advocated responding in a way that helps to build confidence and self-esteem in young people. This proposal was underpinned by the belief that to 'other' a child, apply stigmatising labels and in so doing primarily view them in a negative light is unhelpful in terms of preventing offending and reoffending (Goldson, 2010b; McAra and McVie, 2007 and 2010). It can be difficult for children to 'escape' such as 'fiercely labelling embrace' (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010:147). There was support for a move away from criminalisation and towards non-stigmatising forms of support (Taylor, 2016).

A type of 'children first' youth justice, proffered by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, has resulted in an apparent endorsement

of participatory and strengths-based practice models (Youth Justice Board, 2019). Putting aside the danger that this term – including its ethos and ideology - can be misused and misunderstood, 'child first' denotes a range of techniques, approaches that can be potentially fruitful in terms of understanding issues of 'youth' and 'crime' (Haines and Case, 2015). Indeed, it has been able, to an extent, to prosper due to, at least in part, ostensibly infrequent political concern over issues of youth crime (Bateman, 2014), perhaps a result of the Government being otherwise preoccupied (or perhaps engulfed) with tackling the profound uncertainty associated with the Brexit negotiations (Case, 2018).

The key features or components of the Youth Justice Board's new focus is also compatible with the National Police Chiefs' Council (2015) strategy which advocates a 'children first' policing model, and the Sentencing Council (2017) who recommend a prime focus on the child, not the crime. A note of caution however is warranted. It may prove challenging to sustain this focus, in that the current issue of 'knife crime', concerns surrounding serious youth violence and 'gang' activity - where young people may be vulnerable to processes of demonisation and vilification - could be potent and potentially trigger 'a rapid change of mood' (Smith, 2014a:62).

The 'child first' stance may not be popular amongst politicians who may instead resort to 'tough on crime' rhetoric (Jamieson and Yates, 2009:82). Thus, although 'harsh responses for children who (break) the law (appear) no longer *de rigueur*' (Bateman, 2012:45), positive approaches

may be short-lived or held in abeyance if the pendulum swings away from a nascent 'child' and returns to the routine 'offender' first philosophy. For instance, 'a pendulum swing away from welfare and towards justice-based notions of just deserts and anti-welfarism became manifest in the 1990s', following concern 'youth crime' was on the rise and becoming out of control (Case, et al., 2015:101).

At the time of writing the new Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has been reasserting her 'populist' credentials (Jamieson and Yates, 2009:86; Newburn, 1996:69) espousing punitive rhetoric and the supposed efficacy of 'zero tolerance' approaches and 'authoritarian responses' (Jamieson and Yates, 2009:76), underpinned by restrictions and prohibitions, to combat reportedly unprecedented levels of knife crime (Gayle, 2019). This intervention from the Home Secretory, based on a law and order ideology, reinforced by the Prime Minister (Drew, 2019), is perhaps an effort to 'appease public concern' (Jamieson and Yates, 2009:84) and gain 'short term political advantage (whether imagined or real)' (Newburn, 1996:74).

Notwithstanding the danger that such proposals/announcements risk fostering or reinforcing a criminal identity adversely affecting pathways out of crime and offending, such negativity has receded somewhat in recent years. The Youth Justice Board's approach towards a 'child friendly' youth justice is one example of a tentative effort to award children a stronger voice in the Youth Justice System, inclusive of both

those undertaking community sentences and children who are placed in the juvenile secure estate (Case, 2018; Youth Justice Board, 2016).

Despite its key features being ill-defined and open to (mis)interpretation, this new approach can potentially pave the way for more active rather than passive or shallow forms of participation (Youth Justice Board, 2019). However, although it represents a marked shift in how children are to be treated and renders visible the importance of giving them a voice in systems and processes, the 'child first' focus has rekindled questions or forced a rethink concerning the efficacy of risk-led measures. The approach seems to be consciously at odds with, or runs counter to, risk related ideals underpinned by a neo-conservativism (Jamieson and Yates, 2009; Ugwudike, 2011; Youth Justice Board, 2016).

There is at least some misunderstanding or inconsistency in the Youth Justice Board's approach. For instance, in their Prevention Briefing (YJB, 2017) they promoted the use of constructive, responsive and positive approaches with children in the Youth Justice System, alongside emphasising the need to target 'known' risk factors for offending which inevitably is at least, in part, deficit based. It is a movement that does not appear to confront the established dogma related to risk oriented practices (Ugwudike, 2011) or underpinning belief systems and common risk procedures in general (Case and Hampson, 2019).

It could be argued that the positive attitudinal shift fails to offer profound solutions to engage the most vulnerable children who can feel alienated and disempowered (Case, 2018; Case and Hampton, 2018; English and

Bolton, 2016:25). Despite giving the appearance of being relevant to all children and young people under supervision, in reality, it may not be applicable to those who pose a 'threat' to society (Smith, 2008:128). Thus, the Youth Justice Board's 'child first' agenda may not be an antidote to adult-led and disempowering risk practices and processes. Nevertheless, it could be perceived as generative, focused on the production of new thinking and potentially innovative or progressive practices, as opposed to reproducing an old or outdated risk-oriented model (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Youth Justice Board, 2016, 2019).

The Youth Justice Board's 'child first' approach has been dubbed a promising movement, especially amongst advocates who have been viscerally or implacably opposed to tokenistic 'box ticking' (Case, 2018). It has been particularly appealing to those who have brought a discerning gaze to the realities of practice, exposing a deficit-based culture, and formulaic assessments underpinned by reductivism (Haines and Case, 2015; Smith, 2014a). However, this movement towards children being the recipients of positive forms of practice (Haines and Case, 2015; Youth Justice Board, 2019), may be depicted as a utopian revolution that is essentially too abstract. It may appear 'out of touch' or 'out of sync' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999) and bore little resemblance to the expectations of children and professionals, their lived experiences of contact with the criminal justice system and their perceptions of reality, namely what they are experiencing on the front-line (Hampson, 2017a).

Obstacles to progressing user involvement

Participation is a potentially useful mechanism through which the needs of vulnerable children can be recognised. It can lead to approaches that are compatible with children's wishes, tailored to their social and emotional development (Haines and Case, 2015). Despite potential benefits such as improved compliance, self-esteem/confidence and reductions in further offending (Weaver, et al., 2019), there are significant obstacles to progressing user involvement in the justice system. For example, as alluded to above, risk focused practices have not been ousted, consigned or relegated to the past (Hampson, 2017b). They retain prominence or pole position in the contradictory field of youth justice practice and supervision (See Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015; Smith, 2014a). Such existing risk-averse cultures can obstruct forms of participatory working (Hampson, 2017b).

Nevertheless, an attempt to advance in this direction appears promising and progressive. For example, Youth Offending Services have been transitioning to so-called strengths-based assessments, procedures or techniques – putting the voice of the child at the forefront of service delivery and development. However, children's participation in services has not consistently been outlined as a priority area in youth justice plans drawn up by Youth Offending Team Management Boards (Smith and Grey, 2018). Nonetheless, this participatory agenda is being introduced in a field favourable to risk oriented discussions and responses, an 'ideology' seemingly 'inherent in the profession' (Bourdieu, 1990:20). It may at times appear incompatible with an enduring culture of fear,

creating tension and conflict amongst front-line professionals who may be unable to 'break', in a Bourdieusian sense, 'with [traditionally] accepted ideas and ordinary discourse' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:123; Case and Hampson, 2019).

Professionals are not necessarily narcissistic for wide-ranging power nor unreceptive to concerns being levelled at them. However, some can experience challenges grappling with internal battles concerning the relinquishing of their autocratic control over processes, systems or strategies. This stance may contravene the dominant perception, simultaneously implicit and explicit, that because 'young offenders' have inflicted harm on society, it goes without saying that they have forfeited the right to influence processes that are of relevance to their lives (Hart and Thompson, 2009). Young people may be viewed as undeserving of a role contributing to the governance, design or delivery of services that affect them (Hart and Thompson, 2009).

It has been argued, due to children's participation not being a central feature of youth justice policy and practice, some have been silenced, denied a voice in systems or processes (Haines and Case, 2015). They have had little opportunity to contribute to governance arrangements and contribute to discussions on 'services that are likely to be most effective' (Hart and Thompson, 2009:8) for them and their circumstances.

Professionals may experience difficulties 'venturing into the unknown' (Weaver, et al., 2019:21), and view this 'new' practice with cynicism. There may even be a danger that the 'wave of participation activity could

be followed … by a wave of disillusionment' (Sinclair, 2004:113) among both professionals and those under supervision. They may be pessimistic, fearing their role as principal decision maker is being subject to a sort of attack (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). There is a possibility that they may feel unable to detach themselves from models or adult-led practices that are familiar or that they feel 'at home with', whereby they 'move in their world as fish in water' (Bourdieu, 1990:104 and 108). If the risk model, which has been rampant in the field of youth justice practice (Case, 2018), was substituted for an alternative approach, this could result in 'situations of crisis which disrupt the immediate adjustment of habitus to field' (Bourdieu, 1990:108; see Chapter three).

As alluded to above, a further obstacle has been professionals, who exert a powerful influence over young people, having reservations about 'handing over control' (Thomas, 2007:202). They may feel that giving children a stronger voice will result in those under supervision having too much power over the process which could undermine professional authority and legitimate status as credible figures in the field. They may be of the view that adopting such a stance or position, destabilises an emphasis on punishment or public protection work (Buck and Creaney, in press). It is plausible they then become fearful that this could result in 'the whole system of rule that gave them privilege [being] threatened' (Norbert Elias, cited in Bourdieu, 1998a:27). Thus, professionals may seek to retain the power or 'doxa' - the dominant opinions or beliefs present in the field or social space (See Chapter three).

Nevertheless, there is a level of uncertainty regarding whether children feel entitled to a voice over their care and treatment (Beyond Youth Custody, 2014; Clinks, 2016). It is unclear to what extent children feel able or competent to shape/influence the content/format of interventions. In the light of these concerns and aforementioned critical observations, I now proceed to justify and explain the research aims and objectives.

Overview of research aim and objectives

This study involved 15 months of fieldwork undertaken between 2016-2017. The purpose was to investigate children's involvement in the design and delivery of services at a multi-agency youth offending team in the North West of England. As the recipients of interventions and assessments, the focus was to centralise the authentic voices of children and young people.

The aim was to prioritise the voices of the most excluded or subordinated, those often depicted by authority figures (adults) as 'hard to reach' - the so-called 'difficult to engage' or unresponsive (France, et al., 2013; Goldson and Yates, 2008; Hadfield and Haw, 2001:487).

I set out to privilege the subjective experiences and situated knowledge of children and practitioners (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013:426). To this end, the following objectives were formed:

1. Investigate how participation is perceived from a child/young person and practitioner perspective.

2. Explore child/young person and practitioner experiences of participation.

3. Evaluate the application of user-led/participatory approaches.

4. Evaluate the characteristics of 'effective' child worker relationships and how notions of partnership are contracted in these relationships.

5. Analyse the challenges practitioners and children encounter in practice with regard to participation.

6. Critically appraise suggestions to promote participatory practice.

7. Critically review Youth Offending Service policy documentation in relation to participation/engagement.

There is a dearth of empirical research dedicated to exploring children's perspectives on the 'effectiveness' of the service they are receiving (Case and Hampson, 2019; Hart and Thompson, 2009). Thus, this study focused on uncovering the type or nature and extent of children's involvement in assessment and decision making, including governance and casework matters (Robinson, et al., 2014:130).

Second, the purpose was to evaluate the characteristics of 'effective' child worker relationships and how notions of partnership were contracted in these relationships. The child/practitioner relationship 'has enjoyed something of a renaissance' (Ugwudike, 2011:255) in recent times.

I aimed to investigate what helped and hindered the establishment of positive and constructive relationships between children and their supervising officers.

Third, I aimed to evaluate, from child and practitioner perspectives, the application of user-led approaches. More specifically, I intended to explore the potential or apparent benefits, limitations or challenges of different, potentially unique or innovative participatory practices. I aimed to subject such types of practice to rigorous investigation and analyses through empirical observation and use of the in-depth interviewing technique with social agents. Lastly, I aimed to critically review in-house policy documentation related to risk management and participation/engagement.

Taking Bourdieu into the unique field of youth justice supervision: A Bourdieusian analysis of children's involvement in decision making

Despite significant 21st century interest in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Thatcher et al., 2016), his thinking tools have been seldom used to investigate the experiences, attitudes, and behaviours of youth justice professionals and those under their supervision. This PhD thesis set out to contribute to this limited scholarship and produce original insights and discover new knowledge on the topic of children's participation, illuminating patterns, and revealing the nature of, service user involvement in the Youth Justice System.

I set out to apply Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence to an area of practice that has been severely under researched and undertheorized, namely the topic of children's participation (Case and Hampson, 2019). One focal intention of the PhD thesis in using Bourdieu's theory of practice and employing and reworking his key thinking tools to the field of youth justice practice, is to expose the extent to which agents feel 'free' or 'trapped', experience a sense of powerlessness or inevitability about situations and circumstances.

The thesis aims to offer insight into how and why those facilitating and those receiving supervision might put up with precarious conditions (Garrett, 2018). A Bourdieusian analysis can potentially 'provide keys to the internal logic' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: ix) concerning the factors that influence the ability of social agents (children and professionals) to make decisions related to care and supervision, in so doing exposing coping mechanisms in the event of 'unforeseen and ever-changing situations' (Bourdieu, 1977:72-95).

Bourdieu's toolbox or research apparatus can be useful in conceptualising problems that are patently difficult to comprehend, 'describe or think about' (Bourdieu, at al., 1999:3), issues that are both visible and non-visible. All too often, as Bourdieu (2000:142-3) observed, social agents, in this context criminal justice professionals and children under supervision, experience difficulties consciously detecting power imbalances, including realising the arbitrariness of situations, and decisions taken in the field. They may not fully realise the arbitrary nature

of the symbolic capital attributed to individuals occupying an elevated position in the social space (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). They may be unaware of the extent of the inequality and feel incapable of overcoming difficult circumstances (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

I aimed to adopt an 'outside in' stance, seeking to observe and capture what was lived on the ground, rooted in the perspectives of those facilitating and those receiving supervision. The PhD aimed to expose how professionals and young people perceived situations, thought and acted (their habitus) in a specific socio-structural context. I set out to carefully and rigorously critically consider the 'space of play' (or field) and thus committed to thinking relationally not deterministically about the subject matter (Bourdieu, 1990).

I set out to observe phenomena, with a view to initially describe and then subsequently analyse it. I did not aim to scientifically verify knowledge in a positivist sense (Bourdieu, 2004; Stainton-Rogers, 2010; Wakefield, 2010:80). Knowledge was formed or constructed through 'ongoing dialogue' with social agents (Saar-Heiman and Gupta, 2019:5), wherein meaning or sense making was derived via negotiations/interactions between people operating in fields, under certain conditions that shaped their individual and collective habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Stainton-Rogers, 2010). I was conscious of the realisation that social agents had gone through a 'complex and subtle process of enculturation' (Crotty 1998:79) and were not living in a world that was wholly neat and tidy. It was not an 'evenly balanced, consensual society' (Scraton,

2007:7) but rather a fundamentally 'fragmented' one (Balarabe Kura, 2012:5). Yet, I was mindful that, to a degree, the social world and the habitus' of social agents was ordered/structured (Jenkins, 1992). Objective structures influenced conscious/unconscious thought/action in various ways (Jenkins, 1992).

It was not possible, nor was the intention, to wholly separate the individual from their historical context or disentangle them from the social, economic and political forces (Bourdieu, 2004; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Jenkins, 1992; see Chapter three). I aimed to directly observe the actions of social agents, and in so doing forge 'close relationships' with children and front-line professionals to capture their 'point of view' or 'real-world experiences' (Wood, 2010:50) and uncover similar/dissimilar perspectives (Saar-Heiman and Gupta, 2019:5; See Chapter four and nine). I aimed to acknowledge the power and influence of structuring structures or depict how 'objective structures' were 'capable of guiding or constraining their practices' including opportunities for selection/choice, that were dependent on the differing conditions (Bourdieu, 1990:123; English and Bolton, 2016).

The research findings will be analysed through a Bourdieusian lens. I will seek to expose competitive endeavours existent in the social space agents occupy and obvious power inequalities between children and adults, front-line professionals and senior managers. I will also seek to explore the habitus of respondents and the ease or comfort with which they advance or strengthen their position or challenges they face *vis-a-vis*

accruing status and navigating precarious positions and resisting 'dominant legitimizing forces' (Grenfell, 2014a:38). As alluded to above, through utilising Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence, the intention is to enrich discussion on the elusive matter of the purpose and meaning of user involvement in the design and delivery of youth justice services.

A more detailed overview of Bourdieu's theory of practice is provided in Chapter three, including a critical narrative on how his conceptual framework will be operationalised in this thesis.

Methods and methodological approach

I attempted to carefully acknowledge the influence of objective structures, which according to Bourdieu, are 'independent of the consciousness and desires of agents' yet 'capable of guiding or constraining their practices' (Bourdieu, 1990: 123). This is of specific pertinence in that neither youth justice practitioners nor children practice or operate in a sort of political vacuum. Crucially, however, participants were not to be seen as 'passive sufferers' of structural inequalities (Scraton, 2007) but rather active agents who could negotiate the social world (Bourdieu, 1993).

Consequently, I started from the premise that social actors are able to take control of their own lives, and in so doing construct their own identities and mediate structural barriers. Crucially, however, there was an important caveat: their choices are limited, as agents can often be constrained by wider societal structures seemingly outside of their control

(Bourdieu, 1990) yet impacted by, 'regulated and reproduced through relations of power, legitimacy and authority' (Scraton, 2007:7).

My interest in understanding the perceptions and experiences of youth justice supervision led to the adoption of the qualitative approach and specifically in-depth interviews and participant observations. Rather than testing a hypothesis or viewing participants as 'objects' of observation, I was interested in capturing 'the first-hand accounts of people themselves' (Gergen, 1999:95) to understand how they perceived and interpreted the social structural context within which decision making occurs.

I decided the best way to capture subjective experiences and perceptions on the voice of the child was through in-depth interviewing and observation not, for instance, through designing and distributing a quantitative survey comprising closed questions. After all, 'in order to better understand young people's real lives [and the lived experiences of professionals] we need to investigate their own interpretations and experiences' (Wood, 2010:65). My intention was not to craft an 'absolute knowledge' through a scientific or positivist stance that involved being in a 'distant' or 'detached' researcher/participant relationship (Bourdieu, 1990:21). Indeed, 'social scientific independence is fundamentally tainted and fatally compromised by politics' (Goldson and Hughes, 2010:223).

A key purpose of the PhD study was to 'give voice' to children's qualitative lived experiences (Hine, 2010), their experiential and situated knowledge (Beresford, 2016) and personal narratives (France, 2015:79). It focused on children's 'subjective interpretations of, and reactions to'

specific events or circumstances, including their experiences of arrest, conviction and community supervision (Barry, 2010:160).

Outline of the thesis

This thesis comprises ten chapters. Chapter two reviews relevant literature and identifies themes related to the PhD study. It explores young people's involvement in decision making processes in the Youth Justice System. The chapter offers a critical perspective on the notion and practice of children's participation in the Youth Justice System. It seeks to expose and illuminate the diverse and complex challenges involving children in institutional governance matters, assessment and supervision arrangements. The chapter also explores the position of relationship-based practice in youth justice, issues associated with managerialist bureaucracy, and proceeds to discuss the main features of peer mentoring.

Chapter three presents an insightful and critical analysis of Bourdieu's theory of practice and his associated thinking tools. It explores how and why his critical scholarship and empirical work was considered relevant and important to this PhD thesis on the under-explored subject of children's lived experiences of participating in processes and systems in the field of youth justice practice.

Chapter four sets out the methodological stance that undergirds the study. It also provides justification and critique on the chosen methods of data collection. The chapter explains how the study was rigorous and systematic, simultaneously concerned with theory development and

empirical exploration (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). It explains how the analysis was grounded in the perspectives and experiences of participants.

Chapter five presents the findings related to children's involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of youth justice services. It explores young people's participation in systems and processes. In particular, it investigates their ability to express their viewpoints and influence matters that affect them. The chapter also explores the difficulties professionals experience centralising the voice of the child and enhancing opportunities for young people to put forward their own perspective.

Chapter six submits contemporary risk assessment practices to extensive detailed critique and analysis, homing in on children's ability to exert influence and shape decision making processes. It presents findings related to the 'logic' of high-risk multi-agency professional meetings – a niche, under-researched area of practice. In addition to critiquing the form and function of this type of risk-based approach, it also presents data related to resource and workload pressures, and examines the tension and interplay between risk management, public protection and children's participation.

Chapter seven presents the analysis of empirical data related to young people's involvement in a participant-led music project. The chapter explores how the workers who facilitated the sessions tapped into children's unique skillset. It also evaluates the benefits, limitations and challenges of focusing on children's strengths as opposed to their deficits.

The chapter considers a key finding of the research related to young people's enthusiasm to share their experiential knowledge and lived experiences and passion to assist in the rehabilitation of their peers. The music project was considered a practical mechanism for progressing peer mentoring practices. Finally, it shows how the study added to the existing body of research on children first, positive approaches in youth justice.

Chapter eight uses Bourdieu's analytical framework (Bourdieu, 1998a) to not only extend, but also critique understandings about the barriers and facilitators to children's participation. It aims to uncover the particularities or 'logic' of a practical sense (Bourdieu, 1990). This approach or way of explaining practice is distinct from a conscious/rational choice or intended 'act of will' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:138). The study uses the intimately interconnected trio of habitus, capital and field, applying these 'technologies' to an area of practice that has, as alluded to above, been severely under researched and undertheorized (Case and Hampson, 2019). It also exposes the surrounding complexities, including dynamic power relations between young people on court orders and criminal justice professionals. This chapter investigates how practitioners communicate and engage with such 'involuntary clients' (Trotter, 1999), alongside whether the system is 'just' and 'fair', and from a young person's perspective, to what extent their views are taken seriously.

Chapter nine is a critical self-analysis, undertaken to guard against potential discrepancies or flaws in the study. The chapter explains how it is not possible to aspire or remain impartial or 'neutral' (Bourdieu and

Wacquant, 1992:71) when doing social research. When conducting interviews and observations researchers can influence the results obtained, to varying degrees and without social agents necessarily realising (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). The chapter includes an account of the objectivation of myself as the researcher, reflecting on my thoughts and perspectives both those 'gratifying and painful' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:615). I tease out my own perspectives and 'innermost thoughts', ostensibly dissecting my obvious biases (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:46). I critically reflect on how I aimed to show a deep and empathic understanding of the lives of participants throughout fieldwork and data analysis phases.

Chapter ten revisits the key purpose of the PhD and reflects upon the central arguments in the thesis, restating its claims to originality and distinctiveness. It provides an overall summary of the thesis and presents recommendations specifically concerning children's involvement in risk-oriented decision making processes, their participation in the design/development of services and the use of peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System.

Throughout the thesis I use the words 'child' and 'young person' interchangeably. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (United Nations, 1989), I define a young person or child as anyone under the age of 18 years (also see Haines and Case, 2015).

Chapter 2: 'Designing out' the voice of the child? Children's participation in the Youth Justice System

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter one, the absence of the child's voice in processes has fuelled calls for practitioners to work more in partnership with children, embed a participatory culture within decision making and hold their melange of interests, their rights, viewpoints and needs as paramount in all interactions (Case and Yates, 2016:59; also see Case and Hampson, 2019, Clinks, 2016 and Taylor, 2016). The Youth Justice Board's 'child first' strategy is an example of a tentative effort to 'design in' opportunities for children to have a stronger voice in the Youth Justice System.

Building on the arguments presented in Chapter one, this section of the thesis reviews relevant literature and identifies themes related to the aims and objectives of the PhD research. First, the chapter offers a critical perspective on the notion and practice of children's participation in the Youth Justice System. It seeks to expose and illuminate the diverse and complex challenges involving children in institutional governance matters and supervision arrangements. Second, it examines the efficacy of assessment practice in youth justice, homing in on the voice of the child in such risk-based systems and processes. Third, building on the discussion in the previous chapter, key challenges related to balancing 'children first' enabling priorities and community protection enforcement-led imperatives, are identified and presented (Kemshall and Wood, 2009).

Fourth, the chapter explores the position of relationship-based practice in youth justice and presents issues associated with managerialist bureaucracy. Fifth, it then proceeds to discuss the main features of peer mentoring, investigating the efficacy of this type of practice.

The rise of children's participation in the Youth Justice System? Voice, power and overcoming a 'poverty of choice'

There are multiple and contested definitions of participation. It can relate to shared decision making and/or children's active involvement in the design, development and evaluation of activities (Beyond Youth Custody, 2014; Weaver, 2018; Weaver, et al., 2019; YJB, 2016). Participation can be thought of as: being listened to and/or consulted on the governance and delivery of services (Farthing, 2012; Fleming, 2013; Participation Works, 2008). Matthews (2003:270) describes 'participation [as] an essential and moral ingredient of any democratic society'. Drakeford and Gregory (2010:145) refer this type of practice as involving those who 'produce' and 'receive' participatory interventions being 'jointly engaged in securing beneficial outcomes'. If young people are meaningfully involved in shaping processes or systems - and as a result enhancing 'adult understandings of their worlds' (Wood and Hine, 2013:11) - one may observe improvements in children's 'self-esteem, confidence, negotiation skills' and their 'sense of autonomy' (Farthing, 2012:77).

It has been argued that, young people have the right to influence the design and/or delivery of services (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015). However, as alluded to in Chapter one, promoting the voices of young

people who offend may conflict with the underlying discourse of punishment (Hart and Thompson, 2009). Participatory agendas can be difficult to progress in a context of neo-conservativism or following the advent of the new correctionalism, where young people's perspectives may be seen as irrelevant or rendered invalid due to being considered a risk to society (Barry, 2010; Haines and Case, 2015; Jamieson and Yates, 2009; Muncie and Goldson, 2006).

Children and young people are perhaps more likely to be viewed as 'threatening' or 'posing a risk' and thus the recipients of measures that 'restrict liberty' (Goldson and Muncie, 2006:205; Muncie and Goldson, 2006:36). This appears discernibly different to a 'children first' strategy and the prioritisation of children's rights and entitlements (Case, 2018). In this context, there may be a concerted effort to dismiss or deny their ability to choose how they wish to proceed or be responded to (Hart and Thompson, 2009).

Young people can feel frustrated and see the supervision process as tokenistic if 'their participation results in little or no change' (Tisdall, et al., 2008:346) to their situation or how the service operates. It may be counterproductive to involve children and young people in systems and processes if there is not a commitment to the equal or fair distribution of power (Hadfield and Haw, 2001; Haines and Case, 2015; Wood, 2009). Professionals may question the trustworthiness of young people's accounts, related to their perceived immaturity, underdeveloped cognitive

skills and '[in]ability to make sense of the world' (Hadfield and Haw, 2001:487).

Although children can be capable social agents they may be thought of as individuals devoid of personal agency (Kemshall, 2009). In a study exploring young people's views and opinions on practice supervision Hazel et al., (2002:14) noted that,

> "while they started out feeling in control of their actions, accounts of [children] became striking in their lack of "agency". Giving in, submitting, becoming marginalised and losing power were central themes, quite contrary to the assumption of engagement and responsibility that the system hopes to achieve."

Although children are not 'blank slates', they may be in need of assistance from an adult to articulate their voice and contribute meaningfully to decision making (Hadfield and Haw, 2001; Haines and Case, 2015:78; Hine, 2010:171). In this context, practices may be more adult-led, seeking the child's cooperation, than a collaborative or a shared endeavour (McCulloch, 2016).

Providing for the child is also an important part of the practitioner's role, in that there are inevitably aspects of children's lives, that children are unable to change or affect due to their age (Haines and Case, 2015; Phoenix, 2016). For instance, children are unable to: decide local community safety priorities, apply for universal credit to assist them through difficult social and economic periods in their life, to escape 'toxic' living conditions and unloved or deprived environments, to overcome various forms of poverty, inequality and social disadvantage, and to

address the social-economic context adversely affecting outcomes, constraining their access to social and leisure opportunities (Haines and Case, 2015; Phoenix, 2016; Robinson, 2016; Wood and Hine, 2013).

In addition to these issues children have minimal control over, those under eighteen years of age are unable to vote for politicians or political parties that are opposed to austerity measures and in favour of investment in public services and the strengthening of the welfare state. Although children can join protests and direct anger at the establishment, in England, children are not able to vote at local/general elections. Thus, they are unable to vote against the dismantling of what they perceive as vital services, such as the decimation of youth and community services (Haines and Case, 2015; Phoenix, 2016; Wood and Hine, 2013). In the youth justice context especially, such 'children are in a weak political position to resist (risk) classification' (Haines and Case, 2015:145).

As alluded to above, children may not 'have reason to believe' that their participation in systems and processes, including voicing discontent, 'will make a difference' and alter the situation (Sinclair, 2004:110-1), especially if their perspectives on suitable approaches do not feed into the intervention plan (Farrow et al., 2007). Thus, they may appear disinterested, lacking in motivation to direct service design and delivery, especially if the perceived or actual power inequalities between them and their workers remain unchallenged (Whyte, 2009).

Although professionals are required to enable children's participation, they can also enforce non-compliance, instigate breach proceedings

where necessary or inflict further negative sanctions. It can be argued aspects of the care they receive are non-negotiable (HM Government, 2008). Children may be reluctant to speak out if they feel they are being treated unfairly due to fearing the consequences of potentially being returned to court for non-compliance (Hine, 2010). They may be apprehensive about expressing their point of view not least due to, *inter alia*, feeling insecure or suspicious of authority. They may see the system as underpinned by adult agendas, adult assumptions/expectations and adult decision-making processes and thus be reticent or reluctant to speak out in that they perceive no personal benefit to them in doing so (Hine, 2010).

Nevertheless, it has been suggested that interventions with young people under supervision should be multi-model, a myriad of techniques deployed to sustain their motivation and interests, not informed by an inflexible standardised approach or driven by a one-size-fits-all mentality (Barry, 2010; Farrow, et al., 2007). However, children's emotional abilities and matters related to cognitive development can present barriers to progressing children's participation, hindering effective engagement and their active involvement in the planning and execution of services. Children may be unable to voice an opinion on matters due to being judged incompetent, 'lacking capacity to engage' (Wood, 2010:50). As Lundy (2007:929) observed, professionals may be sceptical, in some quarters, about children's willingness or their ability to engage in meaningful interaction. They may feel children 'lack capacity… to have a meaningful input into decision-making' (Lundy, 2007:929).

Children's participation has not been a central feature of youth justice policy and practice. There have been concerns children are being abstracted and alienated from the process on what works for them and their circumstances (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015; Whyte, 2009). Working in a participatory and creative way, encouraging children to contribute meaningfully into processes and systems can be complex and resource-intensive (Baker, 2009:105). It may be difficult to secure children's participation when they are viewed as bearers of risk (McNeill, 2009), and their 'particular, preferences and interests' (Ward and Maruna, 2007:111) are not a primary consideration.

In the youth justice context, participatory practices – albeit in differing shapes and forms - can enhance children's trust in the system and positively impact on their willingness to comply with requirements (Hart and Thompson, 2009). If children are treated as assets not problems or 'burdens on the system' (Weaver, et al., 2019:7), and their input into what works for them and their circumstances is valued by professionals, this can potentially result in positive outcomes. Such positive achievements may include: meaningful participation, increases in self-esteem and confidence, and motivation to change (Haines and Case, 2015).

If children's participation is to become a core feature of policy and practice, we should perhaps 'guard against a focus on reduction in offending as a primary measure of effectiveness…' (Yates, 2004:123). Other indicators of success, for instance, include improvements in the child's emotional health and wellbeing (National Association for Youth

Justice, 2015; Peer Power, 2016). However, young people in conflict with the law and the Youth Justice System may be viewed first and foremost as an 'offender', not deserving of a voice/consultative input in decision-making processes. As Smith (2014b:300) notes:

> "gaining legitimacy for an approach which appears to be granting special privileges to young people whose rights are properly forfeited in the eyes of many by the very fact of their proven involvement in [crime] [is a substantial challenge that continues to be difficult to resolve]".

Arguably, approaches should start 'from the bottom-up' (Hadfield and Haw, 2001:485) – at the grassroots level - and seek to ensure children's active participation, with professionals fostering empathy and trust in the process (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015; YJB, 2016). Capturing young people's experiences, their beliefs or opinions on matters, and on 'how it is' (Hadfield and Haw, 2001:493) to be a child or young person in the Criminal Justice System, can help to facilitate positive outcomes, including maintaining their motivation to achieve positive change and desist from crime (YJB, 2016). They can provide insight into what may help or hinder their rehabilitation (Hadfield and Haw, 2001:493). However, a key issue relates to the child expressing vocally/verbally to professionals what they think adults want to hear, and thus not necessarily how they truly feel (Hadfield and Haw, 2001:493).

Arguably young people's viewpoints should be taken seriously. They should be treated as children, 'as assets… as citizens, advisors, colleagues and stakeholders' (Youth Justice Board, 2016:3 also see Drakeford and Gregory, 2010).

Such participatory youth practice, according to the Youth Justice Board (2016:3), 'is crucial if youth justice is to be truly effective' (also see Greater Manchester Youth Justice-University Partnership, 2018). Indeed, it was acknowledged that children can be active agents, capable of possessing credible expertise. It promoted or at least reinforced the need to elicit the child's viewpoint on matters that affect them and detailed the beneficial effects of their active participation and meaningful involvement in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of youth justice services (YJB, 2016). Furthermore, included in the policy were standards of participation. These standards related to ensuring sufficient information/guidance is provided to children in order for them to make informed decisions, and opportunities to participate 'in a way that they are comfortable with' (YJB, 2016:4).

The practitioner is usually the principal decision maker, and the one with ultimate power and influence over young people (Hough, 2010). Whilst acknowledging that they are not magistrates or judges, case managers, in theory, decide what programmes or activities children are required to undertake and if necessary, the punitive measures or sanctions to be imposed, potentially disincentivising young people from adopting more active and participatory positions (Hough, 2010). A lack of meaningful engagement is perhaps understandable when considering that court orders are essentially imposed on children – it is not voluntary; they have a statutory obligation to meet with the service.

Building collaborative relationships, recognising underlying issues such as a traumatic childhood, and pursuing joint ownership of intervention plans can be challenging when children see being on an order as an inconvenience. As was found in a report on desistance and young people by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (2016), children and young people may comply but not actively engage:

> "The YOT just make you go on these courses to show that you've done victim work. Then they say well done, you nod, smile and move on. I was just playing with them" (former service user, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2016:21).

This can be described as 'tick box' compliance. It can be disempowering leading to disengaging participation, resulting in children adopting passive roles (Case, 2018). However, youth offending services can promote children's voices through involving them in the design of their intervention plans, in the process incorporate their views and perspectives, allowing them an opportunity to shape their timetable of activities (Smith, 2014b). Furthermore, services can establish user feedback, consultation or advisory groups, providing children with an opportunity to contribute to policy development and discuss matters related to quality assurance (Beyond Youth Custody, 2014).

However, organisations can experience difficulties promoting participation and giving children a voice in the design, delivery and evaluation of services. As Smith (2014b:298) notes, there are several barriers to overcome not least,

> "inhospitable statutory requirements and an unwelcoming 'culture'; lack of time and resources to engage young people; conflicting organisational expectations; lack of knowledge or understanding within staff teams; and a general absence of a strategic commitment to participatory principles…[and] prevailing emphasis on [adult-centric] actuarial, risk-based and managerial frameworks for intervention".

As Smith (2014b:298) pessimistically but realistically notes, 'the prospects for progressive development within a tightly circumscribed service setting are extremely limited'. Notwithstanding such challenges, it has been argued that, young people who offend should be given opportunities to have their say and be empowered throughout all stages of the youth justice system to provide 'insights…into the services that are likely to be most effective' (Hart and Thompson, 2009:8; also see Greater Manchester Youth Justice-University Partnership, 2018).

Children and young people can 'quickly become disinterested or disengage from interventions, if they do not feel valued or listened to' (YJB, 2008:8). It could be argued that young people who offend may not be receptive or attentive to interventions, programmes or activities if they feel 'done to' rather than 'with', and their 'basic needs are not being effectively addressed' (McNeill, 2009:88). On the other hand, if young people in conflict with the law and the Youth Justice System are 'active partners' and empowered to influence the shape of their care, 'negotiate' (Wood, 2009:152) supervision arrangements and the services they are receiving, they can provide insight into what does and does not work for them (Nacro, 2008:6). Crucially such a stance offers most promise in terms of young people perceiving their treatment as legitimate. If they

perceive how they are cared for to be fair and just, they are more likely to join in with what has been proposed and avoid or refrain from adopting a disinterested disposition (Haines and Case, 2015).

An emphasis on promoting children's participation may be viewed by professionals as a distraction to a principal and primary focus on monitoring the dangers young people, especially those who are judged not to be 'desistance ready' (McNeill and Weaver, 2010:8), pose to society.

Are the rules of the 'game' changing? 'The Positive Turn'

There have been 'contradictory fractures' (Goldson, 2010a:66) between 'children first' enabling priorities and community protection enforcement-led imperatives (Kemshall and Wood, 2009; Phoenix, 2009 and 2016). Although strengths-based and deficit-focused models may 'drift in and out of policy and practice' (Goldson and Muncie, 2006:207), in youth justice, the rules of the game appear to be changing. There appears to be a firmer understanding that the Youth Justice System is often unable to achieve its key purposes without the 'attendance and participation' of those under supervision (Canton, 2011: 123; YJB, 2016).

Although risk and participation continue to operate alongside one another (Goldson and Muncie, 2006:206), there appears to be an appetite, amongst members of the Youth Justice Board, to progress a more positive and participatory agenda (Case, 2018). There are many reasons for this change in mood, not least the Government's austerity programme,

the damaging effects of viewing young people as a problem or inherently risky and emerging evidence and research on the potential effectiveness of desistance-based participatory practices (see Case, 2018).

A pressing issue relates to those young people who are classified as 'high risk' whose offending is considered serious and prevalent, who may be particularly susceptible to being coercively engaged subject to external controls and the recipients of tough punitive enforcement to manage risk (Kemshall and Wood, 2009; Muncie, 2000). This response is perhaps especially so in the event of non-compliance or expressed concern regarding young people's ability to adhere to their court order requirements, including continued associations with pro-criminal peers (Barry, 2009; Haines and Case, 2015; HM Government, 2008). Disconcertingly disciplinarian-inspired control, and a reluctance to listen to the voices of these young people, continues to be a discourse strikingly retained and, to a degree, continues unabated (Case, 2018; Muncie, 2000).

Consequently, risk or deficit led systems are firmly in place, with young people's perspectives on matters vulnerable to being rendered invalid or systematically excluded, due to, *inter alia*, concern that centralising their voice risks 'sacrificing public safety' (Farrow, et al., 2007; Goldson and Muncie, 2006:220; Muncie, 2000). Despite the danger that by ignoring the voice of the child their problems may exacerbate and a non-negotiable confrontational style relationship potentially amplifying the problems, professional knowledge and expertise may continue to take precedence

over young people's experiential knowledge and interests (Barry, 2009; Beresford, 2016).

Nevertheless, there is evidence of an apparent commitment to replacing adult-centric risk-oriented practices with a focus on centralising the voice of the child. The rhetoric has centred around children being at the heart of the design and development of youth justice services (YJB, 2016), and the dangers of defensive practices or adult-centric 'pre-formulated solutions to complex and uncertain situations' (Munro, 2011: 63 paragraph 4.47).

As highlighted in Chapter one, user involvement was given impetus, for instance, through the publication of the Youth Justice Board's (2016) left-leaning 'inclusive' Participation Strategy concerned with children's involvement in decision-making processes. Whilst being somewhat prosaic, the strategy has not heralded a new era of enhanced user involvement (Case, 2018).

Nevertheless, it is commendable in that it appeared to signal a commitment to a cultural shift (or sea change) in the way children were to be treated by the criminal justice system (YJB, 2016). The participation strategy was influenced, at least in part, by persistent criticism levelled at the Board for a lack of strategic direction on children's involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of youth justice services (Hart and Thompson, 2009; Smith, 2014b), and claims young people were being subject to disempowering or alienating processes, and marginalised/ignored. As Case and Yates (2016:59) note, 'considerations

of engagement have been little more than an addendum to recent youth justice policy and practice'.

The emphasis on user involvement was further strengthened by the recommendation outlined in the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (2017:4) report on how Youth Offending Services are protecting the public. The report emphasised that organisations need to do 'more to incorporate the views of young people in their plans', and strive to avoid being defensive, 'risk-averse', or too fragmented and inconsistent in their practices (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2017:4).

The challenges developing and preserving children's involvement should not be underestimated, not least the reliance on practitioners feeling suitably motivated and sustaining enthusiasm to facilitate creative and innovative 'child first' practices. Professionals may not be receptive to investing effort and energy into progressing or embedding this type of practice.

Due to being in a vulnerable state, potentially without the 'means of speech' or ability to 'take the floor' (Mahar, et al., 1990:14), young people may feel uncomfortable being provided with opportunities to influence decisions that affect their life. They may feel ill-equipped and without the necessary skills and abilities to contribute meaningfully to the design and delivery of the services they are receiving. In comparison to their non-offending counterparts, children in conflict with the law tend to present with unmet educative and social care needs and experience mental health problems (Bradley, 2009; Case, 2018; Peer Power, 2016).

However, viewing children as vulnerable, disadvantaged with limited-life chances experiencing 'material and moral suffering' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:183) and in need of protection, can result in the perception that they are unable, unless supported, to influence decision making processes. They may be judged incapable of possessing the ability to participate in processes, unable to competently shape the content of intervention plans. This may be a barrier to progressing user involvement and dissuade professionals from respecting young people's participatory rights. Asset Plus, however, is potentially a vehicle to maximise the voice of the child. It was developed in response to sustained and somewhat fierce criticism of Asset not least an over emphasis on children's deficits and its controversial risk scoring system (Haines and Case, 2015).

Are 'old ways' of assessing risk no longer *de rigueur*? Asset Plus and the new status quo

One of the key purposes of assessment in youth justice has been to recognise and investigate discrete parts of children's lives, in so doing depicting them 'risk factors' that require expert attention (Case, et al., 2015; Case and Haines, 2009). It appears there has been a desire to compose a type of mathematical formula - akin to methods used in the insurance industry - to calculate probability of harm occurring to or from the child (Haines and Case, 2009; Paylor, 2011).

This has involved the identification and targeting of risk factors (Boeck, et al., 2006b) in order to limit opportunities for future criminal activity (Haines and Case, 2009). However, a highly critical point relates to it being

'almost impossible to assess whether the relationship between a particular factor and an increased probability of reconviction is causal or merely coincidental' (Paylor, 2011:226).

The Asset assessment tool, which preceded Asset Plus, was an instrument used by practitioners to identify and subsequently limit/control the likelihood in a young person causing harm to others or inflicting pain on themselves. The assessment covered areas such as living arrangements, education, and substance use. On completion of each section, case managers were required to judge whether the issues identified were associated with the young person's offending: 0 'not associated' 4 'very strongly associated' (Haines and Case, 2009). The young person's score determined how often they were seen and how much intervention they would receive (Creaney, 2012; Haines and Case, 2009). The assessment tool seemed to be more focused on highlighting a young person's failures, drawn from a deficit model of negativity, rather than developing a young person's strengths (Case, et al., 2015).

Asset was found to be not 'fit for purpose' (Smith, 2007). One specific criticism related to the 'What Do You Think?' component of the assessment framework which was meant to be used to inform planning and intervention (Creaney and Smith, 2014). However, it was discovered that the self-assessment tool was being used as more of an afterthought, and subsequently viewed as a tokenistic gesture (Creaney and Smith, 2014; Hart and Thompson, 2009). Such criticism prompted a

reconsideration of its purpose and function (Haines and Case, 2015; Whyte, 2009).

Critics claimed Asset was primarily geared towards defensive decision making, resulting in young people becoming passive recipients, not active partners, of the supervision process (Hine, 2010; Smith, 2007). Asset was, ostensibly, thought of as a device that could potentially protect professional interests. If completed properly, the assessment could prevent the organisation from being subject to excessive external scrutiny in the event of a serious further offence (Smith, 2014b). Such rare and atypical events can have consequences for organisations and how they operate in the future (Farrow, et al., 2007; Robinson, 2011; Smith, 2007).

The Youth Justice Board appears to have been receptive to these concerns, not only acknowledging but working to correct these faults through embracing the shift towards strengths-based practices (Case, 2018). As Hampson (2017b:2) notes, this was 'crystallised in the launching of Asset Plus, an assessment system purporting to support desistance approaches'. Thus, Asset Plus was launched with the intent of igniting a (partial) shift towards a new participatory rhetoric, in a desistance-based and 'children first' direction (Case, 2018; Haines and Case, 2015; Hampson, 2017b). It promotes a move away from offending being the young person's master status. It is underpinned by a philosophy of seeing the child as an asset and part of the solution, not depicted as the delinquent who is solely at fault (Haines and Case, 2015).

The risk and need assessment tool, promotes greater use of self-assessment techniques (Haines and Case, 2015). It appears to be focused on a child's strengths and positive behaviours, potentially allowing for a more 'whole child' approach (promoting personal, social and emotional development) to practice intervention.

Asset Plus is apparently an improvement on Asset in that it is less rigid, and a more child-led assessment, designed to be more referral-orientated. It appears to allow professionals to reinforce more positive elements in a child's life. However, there has been a lack of empirical research into whether the newer Asset Plus assessment framework facilitates the meaningful inclusion of young people's voices (Arnull and Fox 2016; Haines and Case, 2015). It is purported to be a method deemed capable of assisting practitioners in their pursuit to thoroughly consider the child's point of view on their own assessment.

The assessment framework is potentially capable of facilitating meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to their intervention/change plan, reflecting their point of view on the types of activities to be undertaken (Baker, 2014). It is potentially a tool to 'think with', a vehicle to maximise the voice of the child, not a prescriptive device where there is little opportunity to exercise discretion or apply suitable expertise to the presenting situation/circumstance (Case, 2018). It can enable case managers to move beyond narrow risk-oriented conventions and customs, albeit with young people continuing to be judged either: low, medium or high risk to themselves or others.

Children may feel a sense of injustice if, as Hart and Thompson (2009:13) note, 'their own perceptions do not accord with the scores' and professional judgements related to the risk tariff ladder 'assigned to them by the YOT assessor'. Nevertheless, following the introduction of Asset Plus, front line professionals perhaps now have the authority to prioritise the child's own personal positive goals and aspirations (Baker, 2014; Case, 2018; Hine, 2010). This approach can potentially enable the child to create and sustain a positive new self (Robinson, 2014) in that the assessment framework places greater emphasis on young people's wishes and feelings. It appears to be capable of facilitating children's participation in the planning and execution of services (Case, 2018).

There seems to be a disconnect between its intended aims or aspirations and how it is experienced on the ground by front-line professionals (Case and Hampson, 2019). Asset Plus was intended to promote practitioner discretion, reduce forms of managerialism, and halt the continuation of an offender first type of system (Haines and Case, 2015). However, its application in practice has resulted in this 'progressive moment' (Muncie and Goldson, 2006:36) appearing to cease. Claims are emerging (or re-surfacing, not dissimilar to concerns levelled at its predecessor, Asset) that the process retains its deficit focus (Case and Hampson, 2019) and it has been alleged that the assessment is heavily time-consuming and 'paperwork-heavy' (Case and Hampson, 2019; Phoenix, 2009:120).

As alluded to above, Asset Plus prioritises the likely risk of reoffending as its key outcome. More specifically, at its core, it remains a risk

assessment tool with professionals continuing to be required to judge the potential for the occurrence of future problems or offending by young people (Case, 2018; Case and Hampson, 2019). Critically, it continues to conceptualise and legitimise young people as 'objects' of risk or concern (Briggs, 2013) providing justification for (pre-emptive) intervention in the lives of children to reduce the probability of (further) offending.

This potentially discourages children from adopting active roles (Haines and Case, 2015). It can also be viewed as 'a tool of blame' (Turnbull and Spence, 2011:940) as professionals continue to be preoccupied with threat or potential danger, perpetuating a mistrust of young people, marginalising their voices in the process (Turnbull and Spence, 2011). There continue to be concerns that risk-oriented practices and excessive managerialism is hampering professional discretion and creativity (Case, 2018), preventing front line professionals from building positive relationships with those under supervision and optimising positive aspects of their lives.

Relationship-based practice

Professional/young person partnerships can help to prevent children adopting passive or disengaged roles, increasing their willingness to comply with court order requirements (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2016). Young people may feel particularly comfortable and secure communicating with professionals, if their workers project empathy and warmth and commit to forming a safe and non-judgemental relationship (Mason and Prior, 2008).

This involves not treating children as 'mini adults'. It also involves practitioners not being too rigid in how they respond but instead prepared to adapt their practice in line with the needs and wants of children in their care. Interventions should be decided with children, and tailored to their needs, appropriately balancing their levels of maturity, and any judgements on their learning capacities (Kemshall and Wood, 2009:30).

However, children on court orders, are more likely, than their non-offending counterparts, to have experienced unhealthy, problematic or failed relationships and to feel 'depleted, empty and de-energised, [lacking] in motivation and without a sense of hope and optimism about their lives and future' (Trevithick, 2003: 168). Collaborative partnerships, premised on 'empathy, warmth and genuineness…' (Hudson and Sheldon, 2000:65) can help to heal such fractured relationships. Practitioners may feel, however, that they have insufficient time to 'facilitate practices which build relationality, and which allow trust to develop' (Hughes, et al., 2014:6). Professionals may also be concerned that a focus on addressing non-criminogenic needs or underlying issues deemed unrelated to offending, conflicts with the expectation that they will principally identify, assess and manage 'criminogenic' risk factors (Haines and Case, 2015).

It has been argued that, key features of effective practice with children in conflict with the law include: 'empathy and genuineness; the establishment of a working alliance; and the adoption of person-centred, collaborative and [user-led] approaches' (McNeill, 2006b: 130).

Furthermore, shared ownership of intervention plans and collaborative approaches to ground rules, openness and upholding confidentiality are considered to be the basis of effective engagement (National Youth Agency, 2011). However, professionals can experience difficulties building relationships, particularly with a core group of young people, depicted as 'hard to reach' or 'difficult to engage'.

Although research consistently demonstrates the central role of relational practices (Stephenson, et al., 2007), there is often limited attention directed at how to establish and sustain 'effective' young person-worker relationships (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005). Nevertheless, if children have developed caring and trusting relationships with their supervising officers, this can help to increase their self-esteem and self-worth, and can even be transformative and help the young person to cope with distress and feelings of hopelessness (Mason and Prior, 2008).

Positive and constructive relationships are more likely to form when professionals avoid adopting a confrontational stance. It has been argued that professionals should avoid opting for short-term solutions, especially to potentially complex problems and, as Hampson (2017b:7) notes,

> "[avoid] the trap of falling for scripted responses, where young people give replies which are the product of having to answer surface-level questions about personal goals, enabling them to avoid proper engagement on the subject".

Demonstrating belief and being optimistic about the future, can help to sustain children's motivation. Children value such non-coercive or non-authoritarian relationships, and in particular receiving emotional and

practical assistance from a non-judgmental practitioner who understands their circumstances and guides them through difficult situations (France and Homel, 2006).

In the context of counselling and psychotherapy, Westwell (2015:67) refers to the necessity of practitioners demonstrating 'a heartfelt commitment of goodwill… towards the emotional suffering of' children and young people. According to Westwell (2015:67), this requires 'active, careful, accurate, sensitive and consistent empathic communication' with a view to empowering those in receipt of assistance to 'voice their own emotions and needs'.

Time constraints and bureaucratic aspects/procedural requirements can restrict the ability of the practitioner to be sufficiently bespoke and responsive to address the needs or requirements of the child, and value/respect their perspectives. As a result, professionals have experienced difficulties being suitability creative and innovative with children. It has resulted in practitioners being heavily criticised for not focussing enough on positive aspects of children's and young people's lives and acknowledging the context of uncertainty (Haines and Case, 2015; Paylor, 2011).

However, professionals are not 'policy dupes' or 'zombies' (Pitts, 2001), and as Briggs (2013:25) notes, are at least in part able to overcome such challenges. They can use their discretion or 'craft' (art or skill) and employ tactics (Hough, 2010:18) to facilitate welfare driven, strengths-based and child-focused ways of working. Where appropriate, they can engage in

acts of resistance, subverting managerialist measures and disengaging policies (Phoenix, 2009:120).

It is important to remember that, however precise a policy or practice might be, 'there is always a certain flexibility, ambiguity or discretion in how' centralised directives are 'applied in practice' (Gelsthorpe and Padfield, 2003:3). There can be negative consequences to professionals being awarded substantial flexibility on practice matters. Ugwudike (2011:251) cautions against wide-ranging discretion in that this could result in a situation where there are 'inconsistencies in practice' potentially leading to 'discriminatory treatment'. On the other hand, if professionals are granted sufficient freedom, they may be able to initiate creative responses, and progress peer mentoring practices for instance.

'Experts by experience': Peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System

Types of mentoring, such as: adult-to-youth, group and peer, and settings where this approach can be used, such as: pupil referral units, youth offending services, prison institutions or educational establishments, differ (Porteous, 2005; Stephenson et al., 2007). Nonetheless, in the youth justice context, mentoring has been conceptualised as a voluntary, one-to-one non-judgemental relationship between a mentor, usually an adult, who provides guidance, coaching and support and a mentee, usually a young person, who receives emotional and practical assistance (O'Connor and Waddell, 2015). Mentors for instance may provide pastoral support, help with job searches, encourage the mentee to

engage in leisure and/or social activities, suitably challenge mentee's antisocial, racist and/or misogynistic beliefs and opinions and act as an effective role model (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2007).

Following a systematic review and meta-analysis, Tolan et al., (2008) found that young people defined as 'high-risk offenders', who were supported practically and emotionally by a motivated adult mentor, engaged in fewer episodes of aggressive behaviour. Notwithstanding such positive outcomes, it is worth noting that the reviewers found activities on mentoring programmes to differ considerably. Therefore, they were unable to confirm conclusively what the promising or progressive aspects of mentoring interventions were (Tolan et al., 2008).

Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) conducted a rapid evidence assessment on the impact of mentoring on re-offending and found that, when delivered as part of a wider suit of interventions, mentoring could have the beneficial effect of reducing engagement in subsequent offending. Crucially, some of the studies reviewed pointed to mentoring also being most successful when delivered as part of an appropriate after-care package (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2007). However, the studies that were judged to be more rigorous and systematic did not appear to indicate a statistically significant reduction in re-offending for those who were mentored (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2007). Whyte (2009:142) notes, 'there are limited data to demonstrate whether, and under what circumstances, mentoring is effective in reducing offending' (also see Newburn and Shiner, 2005). This is perhaps understandable when we consider that

such a diversity of goals and roles can make outcomes rather difficult to quantify (Buck, 2016).

Peer mentoring can be described as an approach that involves a mentor who has shared experiences or backgrounds, giving advice and support to a mentee who is experiencing personal, social and/or emotional difficulties (Buck, 2016; Creaney, 2018). For example, peer mentors may have first-hand experience of how problems can be overcome (Boyce, et al., 2009). They may have experiential knowledge, described as 'truth based on personal experience with a phenomenon' (Borkman, 1976:445) and be able to relate to mentees in similar circumstances, situations or with those experiencing a comparable issue.

Participation in peer mentoring schemes can be beneficial for both mentors and mentees. This is perhaps due to, *inter alia*, mentoring 'relationships [often] emulating 'normal' familial or friendship relationships [giving] it a legitimacy that professional client-worker relationships do not' (Brown and Ross, 2010:32). Mentors who are current or former 'offenders' - especially those who have had intensive involvement in the justice system - who have overcome adversity, for instance emotional distress pain and suffering, may be perceived by mentees as positive role models and a source of hope (Brown and Ross, 2010; Kavanagh and Borrill, 2014). Ostensibly, children who are criminal justice experienced can be empowering role models, able to influence the attitudes/behaviours of their peers in a positive way, potentially

preventing others from taking similar destructive paths of violence and criminality (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018).

It has been argued that peer mentoring is in line with the dominant right leaning political perspective that sees the 'cause' of criminality the result of individual 'malfunction', personal failure, and 'faulty' thought processes that need correcting (Fletcher and Batty, 2012). Personal responsibility for one's actions and the need for self-improvement to overcome difficulties experienced, have often been emphasised (Fletcher and Batty, 2012). Thus, this type of practice directs less emphasis at resolving the underlying issues, notably the social and economic problems that influence the onset and continuation of problematic behaviours. What is more, some may discount the idea that children can be 'effective' mentors, perceiving them as untrustworthy, their knowledge unreliable or treated with an element of doubt (Hylton, 2014). Notwithstanding concern that the evidence base is limited or 'unscientific', peer mentoring has potential as an antidote to adult led practices, disengaging/disempowering processes and jaded systems (Buck, 2016; Clinks, 2016).

Those who are criminal justice experienced and have overcome adversity, can be living proof that positive changes can be achieved and replicated (Borkman, 1976:4; Peer Power, 2018). Mentees can be 'especially appreciative of receiving help from someone who has walked in their shoes' (Boyce et al., 2009: ix). Mentors may have 'authentic empathy', be capable of 'knowing' from their direct or lived experiences

(Beresford, 2016:227), and perhaps better relate to mentees than professional authority figures (Peer Power, 2018).

As Borkman, (1976:3) notes one 'respects a certain authority in those who have experienced what [she] has experienced'. Essentially, mentors can put their lived experiences of offending and contact with the justice system to 'good use' (Clinks, 2013:6), and draw 'on their experiences to help others avoid their mistakes…' (Maruna, 2017:9). They can impart knowledge and provide advice and guidance to mentees who are experiencing difficulties, feeling isolated or disempowered and in need practical and emotional assistance (Fletcher and Batty, 2012).

Conclusion

There has been limited empirical research conducted on young people's participation in decision-making in the Youth Justice System, including how or to what extent they are involved individually and strategically in processes that concern them or matters related to the service and how it functions (Case and Hampson, 2019). This chapter has offered a critical perspective on children's involvement in the design and delivery of youth justice services. It has also examined the efficacy of assessment practice in youth justice, homing in on children's ability to exert influence and shape decision making in risk-based systems and processes.

The preceding analysis also explored how risk-laden practices, in emphasising the negative aspects on young people's lives, can hinder engagement and adversely affect the child/worker relationship. The chapter highlighted key challenges balancing 'children first' enabling

priorities and community protection enforcement-led imperatives. It explored the main features of peer mentoring, investigating whether this type of practice can be used to mediate some of the negative effects of adult-led assessment and intervention.

Whilst there is research evidence on the benefits of mentoring and its non-significant effects, the practice of peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System has received little empirical attention. The research that has been undertaken has tended to be positivist/quantitative or quasi-experimental and aimed at evidencing the absence of recidivism (Buck, 2016). Thus, there is a gap in knowledge and need for further interpretivist/qualitative research to investigate the potentially inimitable impact of using young people under supervision as peer mentors (Buck and Creaney, in press).

The next chapter presents an insightful and critical analysis of Bourdieu's theory of practice and his associated thinking tools, exploring how and why his scholarship and empirical work was considered relevant and important to this PhD thesis on the under-explored subject of children's lived experiences of participating in processes and systems in the field of youth justice practice. For instance, it explores how a Bourdieusian approach can be particularly useful when conducting field analysis. It can also be beneficial when seeking to explore the extent and nature of the inseparable relationship between individual circumstances and a person's individual characteristics, their socialised subjectivity and personalised set of dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990), their environment, social context.

Such factors can direct, and shape children's lives and subsequent attitudes and behaviours in the fields they are operating within.

Bourdieu's conceptual framework is useful in terms of offering a level of understanding regarding the tension and conflict that exists between different schools of thought. It can also assist in relation to understanding how people can simultaneously be active social agents albeit with limited agency (Haines and Case, 2015) alongside being moulded by society.

Chapter 3: 'Thinking with Pierre Bourdieu: the practice of theory'

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the key focus of this PhD study. It referred to the principal purpose of exploring children's involvement in decision making processes. It also discussed the practice of involving children in youth offending service governance arrangements (Hart and Thompson, 2009). The chapter explained how there appears to be burgeoning and exponential interest in children's participation. However, despite multiple claims regarding children's voices being of central importance to how systems - in the future at least - will operate, it is a topic that has evaded or escaped research/academic agendas for a substantial period of time (Case, 2018; Case and Hampson, 2019).

This chapter provides an overview of Bourdieu's main concepts of habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence. Although his thinking tools have mainly been applied to studies on adults and geared towards understanding adulthood (See Alanen, et al., 2015; Garnier, 2015), Bourdieu's theory of practice and his practical instruments are useful also in terms of conceptualising/theorising childhood and children's criminal justice experiences (Barry, 2007; France et al., 2012).

I aimed to deploy Bourdieu's tools in an attempt to capture how professionals and those under supervision – who one could describe as being 'in the thick of it' (Allen, 2007:125) - interpret the youth justice world and negotiate everyday processes, forces, conditions, imperatives and

manage expectations (Webb, et al., 2002). Furthermore, his conceptual framework was utilised with a view to providing insight and offering critique into the factors or forces that shape (help, hinder, restrict or deny) the choices of social agents, notably their ability to exercise power and influence over decision making processes (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

The nature of the topic lends itself nicely to the application of Bourdieu's concepts. I will remain consciously alert, though, to the danger that 'theoretical discussion [can] drift too far from the empirical problems for which it was developed' (Garland, 2004:165). Nevertheless, Bourdieu's thinking tools can assist in addressing 'gaps' or shortcomings in knowledge and understanding related to children's involvement in the design and delivery of youth justice services. It is anticipated that his analytical tools will assist when unpicking whether and to what extent children's situated, and experiential knowledge is (de)valued/potentially dismissed, or on the other hand, privileged and awarded status.

Bourdieu's ideas were 'tools for thinking', meant for adaptation, designed to be applied or tested in specific fields (or structured spaces) to assess relevancy (Lane, 2000). Thus, in this chapter there will be a critically reflexive account of how the concepts of habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence relate, and can be applied to, an exploration of children's experiences of youth justice supervision and their involvement in the development of services.

It is argued that, through acknowledging the distinct yet overlapping nature of agency (internal or individual) and structure (external or social/environmental) on young people's behaviours (Bourdieu, 1990), the complexity of life for many young people who are court-involved, can be conceptualised. The constraints and demands that are imposed on professionals, who are supervising them, can also be recognised.

The habitus of young people and professionals is 'structured', influenced by past experiences of situations, events and treatment, and stocks of capitals agents have retained over a given period of time (Bourdieu, 1990; Rogers, 2014). It is also 'structuring' in that such histories and access to types of power influence the composition of their present and their future trajectories/life-chances (Bourdieu, 1990; Rogers, 2014). It is a 'structured structure' in that the habitus of human agents is crafted through internalising or embodying the structures of society (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Social agents are also exposed to the effects of a 'structuring structure' in that human beings then duplicate elements of those structures through their practices and interactions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu's theoretical concepts have been deployed extensively by sociologists, notably in relation to education, revealing how schooling systems are not generally set up to facilitate advancement of those from a low social class background (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Hastings and Matthews, 2015).

More specifically, his concepts have been used in the education field to explore the mechanics of social and cultural reproduction. His tools have been adopted to shed light on the roles/relations of class, providing an insightful account on how this impacts upon a person's educational experience and affects outcomes (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). His social theory and thinking tools, however, have been applied sparsely to youth justice practice. Lane (2000:194) posits,

> "the greatest compliment one can pay to a thinker like Bourdieu is, of course, precisely to take up his ideas and concepts and attempt to apply [adapt or re-work] them in new areas of enquiry".

Bourdieu's theory of practice: beyond 'sharp demarcations'

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) initially studied philosophy and then progressed to the study of anthropology. Eventually, he became a renowned critical sociologist (Jenkins, 1992). He was not only a highly regarded scholar throughout much of the twentieth century, particularly towards the later part of his career he became a well-known activist with a rebellious or subversive temperament, intervening in the political sphere on many occasions (Bourdieu, 1998b; Grenfell, 2014e). For instance, he was politically engaged, campaigning against the pernicious effects of right leaning neo-liberal policies on the poorest in society, and to be blunt the harmful impact of the 'withering away of the state' (Bourdieu, 1998b:40).

Interestingly, although reportedly he was not a member of any political party, purportedly he was persistently on the left of the political spectrum, albeit he did not refrain from offering constructive criticisms directed at both right oriented neo-liberal, and left leaning 'inclusive' socialist policies (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In addition to being anti-neo-liberal, Bourdieu was committed to exposing inequalities in society.

He was noticed particularly for his mixed methodological and anti-dualist stance, during an era of the paradigm wars, leading numerous quantitative and qualitative forms of inquiries, in so doing analysing/synthesising data in a number of sophisticated ways (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). He was principally concerned with relational practices, uncovering what 'lies behind' (underpinning or driving) people's everyday actions, perceptions, and thought patterns (Alanen, et al., 2015; Jenkins, 1992). The controversial and, at times, confrontational French social philosopher promoted a form of 'social praxeology' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:11) he branded paradoxically both a 'structuralist constructivism' and a 'constructivist structuralism' (Bourdieu, 1990:123).

The French scholar was interested in the interaction of the micro and macro or the interplay of agency and structure and how these different aspects impact on people's struggles for social recognition and power in a society riddled with persistent inequality, which to a degree, continued unabated (Grenfell, 2014a; Jenkins, 1992).

Bourdieu's scholarship, influenced by the thoughts and ideas of an array of key thinkers/intellectuals, including: Wittgenstein, Nietzche, and Goffman, centred around how the social world is jointly constructed and re-constructed by social agents both individually, collectively, consciously and unconsciously (Bourdieu, 2007; Jenkins, 1992; Reay, 2004). As Reay (2004:432) notes, he exposed how 'not only is the body in the social world, but also the ways in which the social world is in the body'. He was committed to both theory development and 'practical research operations' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:34).

As a critical and applied sociologist and a renowned social thinker, through his scholarship, he evoked theoretical and empirical controversy (Jenkins, 1992). He was particularly respected for getting 'his hands dirty in the kitchens of empirical research' (Bourdieu, 1990:19; Bourdieu, et al., 1999:109) - testing his theoretical concepts in practice. Through, notably his empirical observations, or what have been referred to as landmark studies, in Bearn (France) and Kabylia (Algeria), he contributed extensively, both theoretically and methodologically, to various fields and sub-fields (Jenkins, 1992).

He contributed to the physical and social sciences, politics, religion, the economy, artistic and literary works, writing about topics as varied and wide-ranging as disinterested acts to the role of the state, types of power (capital), and the economy of symbolic goods (Bourdieu, 1998a; Bourdieu, 1990). This cumulated in the production of an extensive body of theoretical and empirical work (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015: ix;

Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). He used a mixture of research methods, including case study analysis, ethnographic description and sophisticated statistical analysis (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015: ix; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu's work had a direct impact on various schools of thought not least anthropology, media studies and the field of philosophy (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015: xix). As noted, he was also a fierce and persistent opponent of neo-liberalism. He set out to expose the damaging effects of free markets and an enduring political commitment to laissez-faire economics (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:181). In *the weight of the world: social suffering in contemporary society* (Bourdieu et al., 1999), for instance, alongside other key thinkers/committed intellectuals, he specifically detailed the consequences of a free-market economy. In this collective undertaking, Bourdieu exposed how neo-liberal bureaucracy particularly disadvantages the poorest, economically and socially, in society (See Bourdieu, et al., 1999). He aligned himself with the trade union movement and adopted an activist role, particularly towards the latter part of his life.

Towards the latter part of his career especially, he became a public activist in an attempt to 'resist the scourge of neo-liberalism' by engaging in, what he described, as a 'legitimate rage' (see for example *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market,* 1998b). He initiated a campaign, (with colleagues) for a socially just society, exposing unequal distributions of capital/power in society, revealing, in theoretical form yet grounded in the empirical reality, what appeared to him to be the root

causes of injustice and human suffering (Bourdieu et al., 1999; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

As previously noted, through an analysis of the educational system in France (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015), he utilised the word inequality to characterise the educational field. Bourdieu argued it was a system that supported the cultural capital of the upper classes (i.e. those who were socially and economically privileged and affluent) extremely disadvantaging children from low socio-economic backgrounds (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Such children, who did not possess such required capitals, tended not to be rewarded by the system (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

Notably, he uncovered the harmful impacts of reduced state support on vulnerable groups and marginalised communities in society and interrogated the validity and value of the *equality for all* mantra perpetuated by the State and others in positions of power and privilege, exposing how 'social games' were not 'fair games' (Bourdieu, 2000:216). He problematised the presumption that society was 'egalitarian' (equality of opportunity for all), and 'meritocratic', namely the achievement of positive outcomes was the direct result of a person's abilities, talents or attained on merit (Bourdieu, 1998a; Moi, 2001).

Ultimately, Bourdieu uncovered how those with a low social standing in society experience capital deficit more profoundly, and acutely feel a sense of inequality and structural disadvantage, constraining their ability

to accrue the 'right' types of power and recognition (Bourdieu, 1998a; Moi, 2001).

Bourdieu problematised the agency versus structure debate and in so doing, offered a 'third way', navigating objectivism and subjectivism to emphasise 'the primacy of relations' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:15). His school of thought revolved around objective structures and personal agency being interconnected and 'inextricably bound up together' (Jenkins, 1992:19). More specifically, he was interested in studying every-day practices, exploring how human action was regulated, how people think, act and feel and how 'systems of domination persist and reproduce themselves…' (DiMaggio, 1979:1461).

He offered insight into the underlying causes of 'societal ills', how oppression disproportionately affects the disadvantaged or how power operates (unequally), and individuals maintain privilege (Aguilar and Sen, 2009). To reiterate, he theorised and in an empirical sense exposed how class division and social inequalities are reproduced and in turn maintained within societies (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

In relation to my study, Bourdieu's theoretical perspectives and analytical tools will be applied to understand children's and practitioners' habitus, their interaction with the field of youth justice supervision, and the difficulties experienced accruing and retaining capital/power (see Chapter 1). A central focus will be directed towards uncovering the individual habitus or sets of dispositions of both children under supervision and

front-line professionals and managers, with a view to analysing the 'meaning of their actions' (Grenfell, 2014b: xi). More specifically, I will research the aptitudes of social agents, or how they may be inclined to think or act - both consciously and unconsciously – about children's involvement in decision making and assessment in a risk oriented system.

Habitus

> "For in habitus the past, the present and the future intersect and interpenetrate one another" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:22).

> "No doubt agents do have an active apprehension of the world. No doubt they do construct their vision of the world. But this construction is carried out under structural constraints… essentially the product of the internalisation of the structures of that world" (Bourdieu, 1989:18.)

Habitus is a complex, ambiguous or rather vague concept which defies straightforward definition (Jenkins, 1992). Nevertheless, it was dubbed Bourdieu's 'hallmark concept' (Shusterman, 1999:4). Put simply, habitus is a system of dispositions or a person's 'whole manner of being' (Bourdieu, et al 1999:510). The habitus 'designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination' (Bourdieu, 2002: 27-28). It shapes practice (action and perception) (Bourdieu, 2002), including an individual's life-chances.

It is underpinned by an ontology that does not split object from subject or divide the subjective from the objective (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:5). As noted earlier, the concept of habitus was intended to

'transcend' the divide between the person and society (Bourdieu, 1994:31), and solve the perennial 'contradiction between determinism and voluntarism' (Jenkins, 1992:21). Utilising this concept, can at least in part shed some light on why individuals experience certain difficulties or challenges in life, including those emanating from the barriers agents erect themselves (i.e. self-imposed limits or censorship), engineered through, at least in part, internal cognition (Bourdieu, 1990).

As Bourdieu discovered whilst doing fieldwork in Algeria, a person may lower their 'aspirations, goals and expectations by virtue of their place in the social order' (Jenkins, 1992:28). Yet, rather than the 'objective order' being subject to critique, those of a lower social class have a tendency to conceptualise their dominated position being the result of 'their own inadequacies as the [prime] explanation for their distress' (Jenkins, 1992:28).

Nevertheless, although not entirely unconscious, habitus comprises a person's past existing in present form, influencing perception, thoughts and how one behaves or is inclined to respond (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Garrett, 2007a; Mills, 2008). As a result, it can be argued that, people do not always conform to 'external sets of formal rules' (Swartz, 2002:616), rather, they tend act strategically or deploy a 'practical rationality' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19). Social agents can gain a more or less advantaged position in the field, depending on their ability to predict the 'future of the game' and initiate moves that are beneficial to them and do not bring about sanctions (Bourdieu and

Wacquant, 1992). Social agents 'actively pursue the prizes [the game] offers' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19).

The primary habitus of young people formed in their early years informs the future direction of their secondary habitus (Alanen, et al., 2015; Bourdieu, 1984). Whilst such 'primary social experiences' deeply affect its development (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:134; Bourdieu, 1984), both stages are impacted upon by socio-structural contexts, namely their experiences in the education field and relationships with friends and family members (Alanen, et al., 2015: 6-7).

Ultimately habitus influences how social agents feel and think about their position in society, how they conduct themselves (action or inaction) and form an opinion (Bourdieu, 2002). As Bourdieu observed, essentially habitus is simultaneously lived experiences of 'society written into the body' (Bourdieu, 1990:63) or 'history incarnate in the body' (Bourdieu, 1990:190). In other words, what influences their decision is not 'external constraints' or 'subjective whim' but rather a combination of factors that impact on one's body and mind, including the accumulated histories of deeply ingrained past experiences (Swartz, 2002:616).

As alluded to above, people's actions are influenced by their habitus, a combination of structural constraints and a socialised individual agency: 'the internalisation of externality and externalisation of internality' (Bourdieu, 1977:72). One's habitus is rooted in familiarity with situations. Using the analogy of a chess game, it can be argued that 'actors are

socialised to plan the best move in order to [access resources] accumulate prestige, kudos and wealth' (Houston, 2002:155), and to maintain privilege or advantage gained.

Whilst a person's habitus is subject to some change or transformation, it is also partly durable to the extent that it has a strong impact on how one is to respond. Bourdieu (1998:25) refers to decision making as a 'practical sense of what is to be done in a given situation' concerning perceivable immediate demands. Habitus can be viewed as a lens through which we interpret or 'make sense' of situations, and systems social agents operate within. This includes how people feel, see and respond to circumstances, including the extent to which social agents consider certain goals and ambitions as attainable or unattainable (Robinson, 2016).

Thus, there is a degree of purpose in our reactions/responses, in that it is what seems most natural or effortless to agents (Moore, 2016; Robinson, 2016). Nevertheless, Bourdieu's school of thought also indicates how one's habitus is chiefly unconscious – yet it is not deliberate/self-willed nor without purpose as alluded to above. As noted, it is 'a product of our upbringing and past experiences' (France, et al., 2013:14).

The preferences of social agents - for instance, tastes and lifestyle choices, or how one thinks and feels – are part of one's habitus (France, et al., 2013:14). Bourdieu problematised the perspective that actors behave in ways that are 'purposive, rational, [and] voluntaristic' (Camic,

1986:1040). Action, according to Bourdieu, is largely practical underpinned by informality and is of a 'taken-for-granted' nature.

If there are changes to field conditions, the individual and/or collective habitus of youth justice practitioners might either be reinforced or modified (Aguilar and Sen, 2009:431). During times of crisis, when 'routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures is brutally disrupted' (Bourdieu, 1992:131), where professionals are subject to anxiety provoking restructures, increases in workload or resource pressures, they may experience a 'cleft habitus', one that is 'inhabited by tensions, contradictions' and rifts (Bourdieu, 2007:100; see Chapter six). Alongside perennial challenges related to care/control, assist/confront, and enable/enforce, front line professionals may feel 'out of step' with new agendas and differing ideologies.

This is especially so if expectations/demands contradict existing policies and practices, viewed as incompatible with their own 'feel' for the game (Bourdieu, 1990). Similarly, if young people are experiencing an adverse childhood or upheaval in their life, including fractured relationships, they may struggle navigating the somewhat bewildering systems or processes when inducted into the system.

The environment can also appear alien and hostile, giving rise to a new set of challenges alongside exacerbating existing anxieties, leading to further feelings of tension and conflict. Moreover, children and young people, who are experiencing some type of capital deficit, may feel

supervision is primarily disengaging and disempowering due to their situated and experiential knowledge being devalued, trumped by professional wisdom and expertise (see Chapter five). As Moi (1991:1022) notes, 'the right to speak, legitimacy, is invested in those agents recognised by the field as powerful possessors of capital'.

Young people may be the recipients of negative social capital (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). They may be discriminated or prejudged against, due to their 'names' (especially if they are known troublemakers or have the 'high risk' label attached to them), their 'accent, and place of residence' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:185). There may be professional intelligence being shared that indicates their apparent associations with pro-criminal peers, which they feel unable to contest due to occupying a relatively powerless position in the social space (Bourdieu, 1990; see Chapter six).

Habitus can influence one's ability to access the 'right' types of capital, considered valued resources in a given field. Human beings may struggle to accrue such sought-after types of power, to benefit oneself and ostensibly improve field position (Bourdieu, 1993). Social agents may be precluded from progressing or manoeuvring present and future trajectories in a positive direction (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Burke, et al., 2016).

Forms of Capital

> "…the moves that she makes, more or less risky or cautious, subversive or conservative, depend both on the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens she

retains, that is on the volume and structure of her capital" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:99).

Bourdieu (1986) conceptualised and presented multifaceted yet connecting forms of capital, namely: economic, cultural and social capital. There are obvious and at times profound benefits to wealth generation, not least it can lead to social agents accumulating power and being able to access worthwhile or fruitful opportunities in society. However, it is not exclusively economic power that maintains societal structures and is of benefit to human beings, in terms of their personal, social and emotional development (Bourdieu, 1990). Rather, cultural and social capital significantly influence the reproduction of privilege and inequality alike in society (Bourdieu, 1990; Cochrane, 2015).

Cultural capital for instance can exist in many forms, not least in the embodied state, presentation styles, mannerisms, and language use or in objectified forms such as 'works of art' (Bourdieu, 1990). It can also relate to the contents of a person's academic curriculum vitae, their qualifications, intellect and competencies. Bourdieu divided social capital into two forms, namely *networks*, including contacts and group membership, and *connections*, this includes the sustainability or longevity of valued resources or power that one accumulates (Barry, 2007; Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1990).

Social capital relates to a person's ability to accrue advantage and build valued resources in a given field. Investment is required from social agents if such forms of capital are to be maintained and utilised to better

one's field position (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1990; Cochrane, 2015:20). The symbolic value attached to such forms of capital is provided by individuals or groups who are in positions of power. The perspectives of these agents are viewed as legitimate. These individuals, key players in the field, are recognised as being able to judge others due to having garnered, over time, some form of respect (Bourdieu, 1990).

Central to Bourdieu's thesis was how economic (financial resources or a stake in stock markets for instance), social and cultural capitals interact with structures and systems, and in so doing reproduce social inequalities (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). When such capital is valued and seen as legitimate, agents can occupy more beneficial positions in fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Knowing who or knowing how?

Social capital defies precise definition and is thus difficult to measure. Nevertheless, social capital has been described as valued relations, acquired through 'relationships which in turn bring resources' (Barry, 2007:11). It relates to social networks, and the production and maintenance of useful resources. Portes (1998) notes the beneficial effects of joining a group, including increasing one's sense of belonging. As Putnam (1996) notes, mutual trust can increase as individuals build relationships by expanding their networks and connections.

In recent years, social capital has received significant attention across the social sciences. As a concept, it been used to explore various topics or areas of interest (See Field, 2003). Interestingly, Bourdieu (1992) wrote about the benefits of becoming a member of a golf club, in that subscribers can develop contacts and networks, accruing stocks of social capital in the process. However, he also cautioned that this requires ongoing effort and commitment on the social agent's part to maintain such privilege. This involves 'a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed' (Bourdieu, 1986:250).

Putnam (2001) described bonding social capital as a resource, emerging from established but restricted social networks, formed through positive, and constructive relationship building, functioning as a 'sociological super glue'. It can be beneficial in that it allows agents to 'get by', feel a sense of protection and deal with life's challenges and situations that present themselves.

Bridging social capital can be described as a 'sociological WD-40' providing opportunities for people to 'get on', and 'access resources of other societal groups' (Rogers, 2014:37). McDonald and Marsh (2005:203) refer to this as a 'paradox of networks', as disadvantaged young people tend to 'get by' but experience difficulties 'getting on' due to a lack of opportunity. Similarly, as Leonard (2005) notes, although young people tend to have stocks of bonding capital, they are often restricted by their distinct lack of bridging social capital.

Putnam (2001) flags up the importance of trust and discusses how acts of reciprocity can be valuable resources and indicators of the strength of one's social capital. Indeed, when building relationships and establishing the 'right' type of networks/contacts, Putnam (2001:19) argued reciprocity played a key role: 'Social capital refers to the connections among individual's social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'.

It can be argued that individuals help or assist one another regardless of whether they will gain or not from the exchange. This is based on the idea that in the future they can seek assistance from that individual should they require it. More specifically, social agents generate a sort of credit slip to be exchanged in the future (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2001). In prioritising one's agency and in turn ability to make rational choices, the argument advanced by Coleman (1988) appears to downplay the role of structural inequality and how the privileged in society tend to be unfairly advantaged. Indeed, it has been argued, people are 'pushed and pulled by forces beyond [their] control' (France and Threadgold, 2016:624).

Bourdieu (1986) raised the issue of power and its unequal distribution, noting how social capital can reinforce inequality in society. The privileged, according to Bourdieu, maintain power, and prestige and generate capital wealth through strengthening or building access to wide-ranging networks and valuable resources, whereas the dominated experience social exclusion and other disadvantages that restricts their life chances and movement within fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Ultimately, social capital – as argued by Bourdieu - is an unequally distributed resource that considerably benefits the privileged or those rich in capital (Field, 2003). Moreover, decision making according to Bourdieu is not necessarily rational or calculative where social agents meticulously plan or ponder the benefits and risks of deciding one way or another. How one acts is often dependent on their tacit or unconscious knowledge, based on their internal logic or one's 'feel' (habitus) for the 'game' (competition for capitals) and situations as they arise (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Understanding that 'a sense of belonging is an integral part of social capital… as well as being significant in children's development and identity formation' (Weller, 2006:568), young people may offend as a means of social integration. As Barry (2007) found - in a study using Bourdieu's analytical framework to explore the onset of offending, desistance from crime and processes of youth transitions - engagement in criminal offences can result in those who cause harm generating types of capital in the form of 'kudos' and 'recognition'.

As part of a pathways into and out of offending research study, France et al., (2012) explored the role of habitus in young people's offending. In France et al's (2013:18) study, for some children and young people, they viewed their involvement in illegal activity as driven by personal choice, or a way to manage everyday life, notably risk/danger, a desire to accrue cultural capital - status and street credibility amongst the peer group - and in so doing strengthen their position in a specific field (France, et al.,

2013). These children mastered the 'rules of the game' and became skilled fighters for instance. Although engagement in this type of activity resulted in the accumulation of power and recognition from the peer group, the capital they had was often temporary and specific to that field, thus had limited use value.

Field and the 'space of play'

Field is also an important concept and merits discussion. As Grenfell and James (1998:15) note, 'if habitus brings into focus the subjective end of the equation, field focuses on the objective'. Bourdieu used many analogies in his writing. For instance, he likened a game of football, which has boundaries and is governed by rules and regulations, to the social field in that actors similarly compete for power and prestige with those who have an accurate 'feel' for the game being played, being rewarded (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu also used the metaphor of a casino where players use different coloured chips to position themselves in the field (Harding, 2014; Rogers, 2014). Some players are privileged, arriving at the game 'with larger stacks of chips than others … inherited from their family' (Rogers, 2014:28). There are important distinctions, however, not least that social fields are much more unequal – the rules and boundaries are especially vague:

> "a field is a game devoid of inventor and much more fluid and complex than any game that one might ever design" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:104).

Although similar to a game, it differs in that 'a field is not the product of a deliberate act of creation…' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98). Nevertheless, it is less a person's intellectual ability and more the type of capital accrued and subsequently utilised that results in their ability to negotiate situations or circumstances and accumulate advantage in the field. Moreover, social fields can be depicted as battlefields or spaces of conflict and competition (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:17), with fierce or epic conflict for the accumulation of such capital in its various forms. In other words, as structured spaces and sites of competition/conflict, fields comprise continuous struggles for domination over resources. Social agents fight for rewards and influence over the preservation or alteration of ill-defined boundaries (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Each field has a 'doxa', known as conventional wisdom or common opinion (Harding, 2014), 'things' that appear to 'go without saying' and therefore seemingly 'go unquestioned' (Bourdieu, 1977:166).

Despite the perception that such norms and cultures are 'natural' or standard practice unable to be altered, doxa masks or conceals forms of social disadvantage:

> "… even the most disadvantaged… tend to perceive the world
> as natural and to accept it much more readily than one might
> imagine…" (Bourdieu, 1989:18).

Agents jostle for advantage and engage in a battle to prolong, sustain or strengthen their field position. The outcome of the battle is 'determined by the amount of capital (or resources) possessed by competing actors'

(Houston, 2002:158). Indeed, one's position in the field is determined by their access to economic, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990), with the privileged having more access than their underprivileged counterparts.

It is the dominant – rather than the dominated - who are 'endowed with large amounts of capital' (Houston, 2002:158). This leads to the reproduction of inequality and continuation of the status quo, perceived as taken for granted or self-evident by actors or social agents. To reiterate, the non-privileged tend 'to perceive the world as natural and to accept it much more readily than one might imagine' (Bourdieu, 1989:18).

Previous experiences, current situations and stocks of capital, inform dispositions (habitus), and impact on the position people adopt in fields (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014). They may for example feel certain activities are not for the likes of them, and a fish out of water, constraining their aspirations/expectations (Rogers, 2014:47). This can negatively affect their outlook, ostensibly placing them 'out of the system' and removing the chance of them partaking in certain activities (Maton, 2014:57).

The position one adopts in a field is linked to their access to power and resources. Those who have more experience (i.e. expertise or high expectations placed upon them), tend to have a more accurate feel for the game, acquiring 'know how' in terms of playing the game strategically (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:228).

Social fields are governed 'by a set of unspoken rules for what can be validly uttered or perceived within it' (Eagleton, 1991:157). Capital rich social agents may seek to preserve the status-quo and in so doing maintain and strengthen their position in the social space (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Alternatively, those who are less fortunate and have limited capital may seek to disrupt norms or challenge structures in a bid to unsettle the accepted wisdom (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

As a result, in such fields there is competition for advantage and the accumulation of capitals, with an individual's position 'characterised by the volume and type of capital it has access to' (Peillon, 1998:216).

Symbolic violence

> "The dominated, in any social universe, can always exert a certain force, inasmuch as belonging to a field means by definition that one is capable of producing effects in it (if only to elicit reactions of exclusion on the part of those who occupy its dominant positions)… there is no denying that there exist dispositions to resist…[yet] the dominated seldom escape the antimony of domination" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:80).

Symbolic violence is a type of injustice that is subtly forced yet unwittingly accepted as truth thus perceived as reasonable, in some way, by both parties involved in the interaction (Bourdieu, 1993). This situation, whereby agents misrecognise - and thus do not contemplate questioning - relations of power, results in the social order continuing, unabated (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Jenkins, 1992). Those harmed or affected adversely in some way, can become desensitised to repeated expose to unfair or degrading treatment. This potentially clouds their

judgement during the interaction/exchange (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Jenkins, 1992.

Aguilar and Sen, (2009:435) describe symbolic violence, as when for instance, 'middle/upper class parenting practices… [are] misrecognised as the appropriate method to parent, [or when] heterosexuality [is] viewed as the natural way of being, or … the Western form of democracy [is] deemed as the norm'. A further example relates to criminal justice professionals and their attempt to 'force' young people on court orders to fit into certain 'categories' whilst all the time themselves being governed by the system and taking orders 'from above' (Crossley, 2017:34).

Professionals possess the ability to improvise and may resist pressures from bureaucratic systems and organisational processes, just as their clients – those subject to supervision – may thwart measures that seek to control or contain them (Crossley, 2017; Moi, 1991). Although, misrecognised by professionals and service users, they both 'belong' to a structure of domination (Houston, 2002:160).

Symbolic violence then is the non-physical, 'gentle invisible form of violence, which is never recognised as such' (Bourdieu, 1977:192). It is thought of as a form of soft power (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) that is inflicted on agents, interpreted by those on both the giving and receiving ends, as natural or self-evident. Yet it is put upon agents by those in positions of authority.

The dominated or exploited accept it, perceiving their treatment as natural, and at times with surprising respect and fondness for those in authority (Bourdieu, 1990). However, they are not 'slaves to rules' (Wolfreys, 2000:5). It is possible that agents become aware of their mistreatment and then master the skills or equip themselves with the confidence to mount a challenge to the status quo. They may endeavour to embark on a project of resistance, with the principal aim of challenging the legitimacy of certain claims perpetuated by those who are judged to hold superior knowledge and status in the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Those who have accrued material capital and fought to retain symbolic power may be challenged by those who seem to be benefiting the least from the existent systems and processes. More specifically, they may not only query the acceptability of their treatment but revolt against the system they do not feel they have a stake in. They may act against expectations, and question authority figures who are seemingly imposing their vision whilst disregarding the perspectives of those who occupy 'inferior social positions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:174).

Inevitably, there are those who attempt to conserve or maintain the status quo and in so doing preserve familiarity or a sense of normality in a world otherwise beset with complexity, ambiguity, differing interests and positions (Bourdieu, 1998a, 1990). However, how professionals act is influenced by structural constraints affecting their ability to be sufficiently

innovative, creative or bespoke with children when supervising them and delivering either individual activities or group work interventions.

They may be reluctant to comply, and attempt to resist 'order' (Bourdieu, 1998b:103), and break away from the formulaic risk-led bureaucratic system. This may involve not completing copious amounts of paperwork – producing or 'churning out' vast amounts of assessments and a deluge of reports – and instead substituting an obsession with 'writing about children' to one that involves spending more time working with them.

Such a resistance disposition or strategy of rebellion could be used to halt their enduring pain and suffering, a method deployed with the purpose of transforming their precarious position, to overcome unequal or unfair treatment. This is perhaps especially the case in relation to the current context of a managerially-driven discourse (Phoenix, 2016; Robinson, et al., 2014). Front line practitioners may be subject to a sort of legitimate 'soft power' deployed by those in more senior positions of authority, to secure their compliance to the universal agenda. This may then result in front-line professionals being denied a voice or the opportunity to meaningfully shape organisational matters that they internalise as being out of their control, such as organisational priorities and acceptable ways of working (Bourdieu, 1998a and 1998b).

Children are perhaps unaware that they are, at times, the recipients of symbolic violence. They may remain complicit, due to feeling incapable or unable to provide a competent viewpoint, either due to age/maturity. They

may feel 'in minds' and 'in reality' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:84) that being classified as 'high risk' indicates to them that they have forfeited the right to a voice on their care or how the service operates (see Chapter two and Chapter five). They accept this judgement, ultra-negative focus and 'exclude themselves' from processes and systems that should ordinarily concern them, feeling the prospect of them being able to have influence is either extremely limited or an impossibility (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:74).

They perhaps do not recognise it as an 'arbitrary' perspective or judgement (that it is, one of many ways of exploring or responding to an issue or subject), 'temporarily and spatially bound' and one that can be corrected at least in theory (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:52). Instead they present as docile in terms of personality type (Bourdieu, 1990; Dean, 2017), receptive to what those in authority dictate. Perhaps a discovery that is unfathomable to those not directly involved in the game and aware of its stakes - ignorant of the power of the 'specific illusio' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:117) in operation - is young people may refrain from levelling criticism at authority figures.

They may avoid interrogating the legitimacy of such knowledge associated with the dominant stance or position operating in a field or social space that is more favourable to the adult perspective or top-down practitioner-led practices (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; see Chapter two). In other words, young people may have an acute sense of what 'can' and what 'cannot be said' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:257).

'Hyper-determinism'

Despite being eloquent or expressive in terms of his chosen writing style, Bourdieu received criticism for his rather complicated phraseology or use of jargon and for presenting a rather technical and ambivalent conceptual framework (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu famously and ironically reacted by espousing: 'what is complex can only be said in a complex way' (Bourdieu, 1990:51; Garrett, 2018). Nevertheless, there was some vehemently fierce resistance directed at Bourdieu in response to his ideas and critiques of reason and logic (Bourdieu, 2007; Jenkins, 1992). He received some negative reactions to his analysis and interpretation of the individual and society. For instance, some of his explanations were met with scorn and treated as a 'frontal attack on the sacred sense of individuality' casting doubt on the longstanding perception, and ability of agents to be 'free' and 'conscious' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:44 and 133).

The discovery that a person, especially the dominated, often lacked control over their life, and that the prospect of being liberated was an illusion, were ideas either particularly difficult to fathom or repugnant (Mahar, 1990). Bourdieu's solution, to escape the trap of deception or fantasy, and to realise 'the limits of their autonomy' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:110), was for social agents to engage in a comprehensive project of self-analysis.

He persistently pledged to engage in a project of critical reflexivity to guard against allegations of researcher bias and particularly that of

alleged 'determinism or fatalism' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:210). More specifically, he self-identified flaws and in a *Sketch for a Self-analysis* (Bourdieu, 2007) wrote candidly about his own contradictory positions (Bourdieu, 1990:107 and 116), detailing the particularities of a critical reflexivity. This is important, as Crossley (2005:70) postulates, conscious thought and reflexivity tend to be directed towards 'a very small portion of our lived reality; the rest is a matter of habit, routine and assumptions which are never questioned'.

However, in relation to the present study, children - especially those who are severely disadvantaged - may refrain from engaging in critical reflexivity due to being unconvinced that positive change to their circumstances is possible (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Young people's ability to engage in reflexive practices can be hampered by their material and social circumstances. As France and Haddon (2014:307) note, although young people may believe they are able to take control of their own lives, they may be unaware of other forces that are shaping their lives and influencing decisions that affect them.

Habitus, as a concept, has been subject to criticism. For example, Brubaker (1985:760) referred to it as 'a concept made to do an extraordinary amount of theoretical work'. However, in response it was claimed habitus is not 'set in stone', it goes 'hand in glove with vagueness and indeterminacy' (Bourdieu, 1990:77). This theoretical concept has been criticised for being deterministic, in that agents, constrained by social structures, act in unconscious, uncritical ways to maintain

dominance and privilege in the field and reproduce inequalities (Jenkins, 1992). It is relevant to note Bourdieu's (1984:471) perspective here on how one's habitus can be a self-fulfilling prophecy:

> "objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, "a sense of one's place" which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded".

Jenkins (1992) described Bourdieu's theory of practice and set of thinking tools as ultimately telling a depressing story that revolved around people being unable to 'intervene in their individual and collective destinies' (Jenkins, 1992:91). Elsewhere, some sought to condemn aspects of his body of work, depicting his framework as Bourdieusian 'miserabilism' (Wolfreys, 2000:3). However, although people possess limited agency or space and awareness to challenge norms, entrenched values and beliefs, especially in doxic societies, that their situation remains the same is not a forgone conclusion.

Despite limited 'scope for protest, let alone revolution' (Wolfreys, 2000:4), there is some 'room for manoeuvre' in that social agents do have the ability to exercise or deploy agency, display a 'margin of freedom' and in turn execute a level of discretion over the direction of proceedings (Bourdieu, et al., 1999; Fowler, 2003:485). There can be opportunities for change as social agents question the status quo and this is especially the case during times of crisis.

During challenging times, social agents can become hypervigilant and engage in some reflexivity or awareness raising and embark on a progressive project in an effort to overcome for instance, their precarious situation or disadvantaged position they find themselves in (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Others have similarly observed that, such critical reflexivity can ignite 'a redefinition of experience' (Moi, 1991:1027). Systems and processes do not determine how agents respond in a given field, after all they are not 'automatons' or 'mindless vehicles' (Houston, 2002:157).

As alluded to above, we can think of habitus as 'embodied history', internalised as 'second nature' – 'a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks' (Bourdieu, 1977: 82–83). Although, it was argued habitus operates 'below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control of will' (Bourdieu, 1984:466), certainly people are not 'mindless dupes' and neither is their habitus unchangeable (Garrett, 2007b:367).

Social agents are capable of being reflexive agents. Yet, it could be argued that due to its seemingly fixed nature, habitus is not a useful framework or means of understanding the complexity of social practice. However, to reiterate, certain routes are not inevitable (Bourdieu, 1990).

Naturally, preferences and tastes evolve or change shape over time, and one could say are ostensibly endlessly transformed. More specifically, habitus is durable according to Bourdieu yet not eternal in that it is 'constantly subjected to experiences and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structure' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:133).

As Houston (2002:157) notes, '…habitus acts as a very loose set of guidelines permitting us to strategize, adapt, improvise or innovate in response to situations as they arise'. Whilst established preferences or tastes can be reversed over time, they are partly adaptable and partly set. Nevertheless, dispositions predispose agents to strategize in order to acquire capitals and maintain advantage in a field where there is unequally distributed power (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Although a person's habitus can predispose them to perform in certain ways, it is important to acknowledge the context and the various fields of practice (Jenkins, 1992). People strategize when pursuing wealth generation or seeking to maximise profits. Nevertheless, as noted, regardless of how one thinks or attempts to alter their situations, the privileged – those rich in capital - appear to gain advantage in the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Those with a low social standing tend to possess limited stocks of economic (generated wealth or revenue) and symbolic (reputation, status and prestige) capitals (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

This argument appears somewhat pessimistic in that only reproduction (not social change) appears possible. However, depending on the context, there remains the prospect that change within systems can occur (Bourdieu, 1989) and that people can gain capital and enhance their status/reputation in the field.

Conclusion: beyond 'dualistic typologies'

> "…the intentionality without intention, the knowledge without cognitive intent, the pre reflexive, the infra conscious mastery that agents acquire of the social world by way of durable immersion within it" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19).

In recent times we have witnessed somewhat of a 'Bourdieusian moment' in the discipline of criminology (Shammas and Sandberg, 2016:196). More specifically, there have been contemporary criminological studies that have made use of Pierre Bourdieu's 'conceptual arsenal' of thinking tools (Wacquant, 1998:220), to empirically uncover central concerns related to crime and offending, notably in the areas of policing (Chan, 2003), the penal system (McNeill et al., 2009), youth crime prevention (Bowden, 2014), 'gang' involvement (Harding, 2014) and illicit substance use (Allen, 2007).

In tandem with his commitment to seriously unpack the apparent 'logic' associated with 'dualistic typologies', Bourdieu sought to bridge the allegedly illogical gap between subjective experiences and social structures (Houston, 1992:149). It was an attempt to reconcile the rivalry between the distinct positions of Levi-Strauss' structuralism and Sartre's

existentialism (See Jenkins, 1992; Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2005). As Bourdieu (1989:17) notes:

> "just as subjectivism inclines one to reduce structures to visible interactions, objectivism tends to deduce actions and interactions from the structure".

In relation to the present study, Bourdieu's theoretical perspectives and analytical tools will be applied to understand young people's and practitioners' habitus, their interaction with fields, and how they accrue (or not) capitals. It will be acknowledged that fields 'are sites of struggles between the holders of capitals' (Jenkins, 1992:85). As Wacquant (1992:16-17) asserts: 'agents struggle, depending on the position they occupy in that space, either to change or to preserve its boundaries and form'.

It is my intention to expose opportunities for change in, or transformation of, the field conditions and the varied positions agents occupy in the 'space of differences' (Bourdieu, 1990). The intention of the study is to capture young people's and practitioners' varied 'points of view' and examine their multiple interests as a consequence of differing positions occupied in the social space (Allen, 2007; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:107). It is anticipated this goal will be achieved through empirical observation of practices, critically questioning accepted or what present as dominant discourses operating in the field of youth justice practice.

As discussed within the chapter, there will be a systematic and rigorous analyses of the accounts of front-line professionals and children's

narratives related to their lived experiences. A central focus will be directed at uncovering their individual habitus or sets of dispositions, with a view to analysing the 'meaning of their actions' (Grenfell, 2014b: xi).

This will include the aptitudes of social agents, or how they may be inclined to think or act both consciously, unconsciously or advertently and inadvertently. There will be an understanding that their preferences and tastes are formed in childhood, yet adaptable and susceptible to a change in direction, through interaction with others in social spaces (Bourdieu, 1990). Their dispositions guide but do not necessarily direct their practice in a sort of pre-determined or rigid way (Bourdieu, 1998a).

The next chapter proceeds to set out the methodological stance, providing justification and critique on the chosen methods of data collection, explaining how the study was rigorous and systematic, committed to both theory development and empirical exploration (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In line with a genetic structuralist stance (Jenkins, 1992), I subscribed to the view that social reality exists, on the one hand 'inside' social agents, and on the other, is external to the minds of human beings (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127; Jenkins, 1992). Thus, the chapter presents a methodological approach that is considerate of both structuring and structured structures.

It also offers insight into how devoted I became to establishing equitable partnerships and trusting relationships with key stakeholders. The purpose was to expose/uncover the multiple - contingent and dynamic –

viewpoints or varying perspectives of social agents (Bourdieu, 1990). I aimed to capture their 'coexisting' and 'sometimes directly competing' or incoherent 'points of view' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:3). This is a challenging enterprise not least due to the prospect that social agents are themselves not entirely aware of what was or is driving their motivations and triggering their thought processes.

Children and adults are conditioned and affected by structures, knowingly or otherwise, and thus are not entirely consciously mindful of the logic of events or able to fully articulate and thus confirm or dispute the circumstances or rather, at times, fraught environments they are operating within (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

In accordance with Bourdieu's 'signature obsession with reflexivity' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:36) and his clearly defined stance on how it is not possible to aspire or remain impartial when doing social research, I embarked on a project of self-analysis. This is important not least due to the fact that, when conducting interviews and observations investigators can influence the results obtained, to varying degrees and without social agents necessarily realising (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:608). I wrote and subsequently presented an account of the objectivation of myself, reflecting on my thoughts and perspectives both those 'gratifying and painful' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:615). However, due to it being a lengthy section, much of the critical reflection on my positionality, including teasing out my own perspectives, 'innermost thoughts' and dissecting my

obvious biases (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:46), is tackled in a separate chapter, entitled self-analysis (Chapter nine).

As acknowledged within the chapter to an extent I was 'distant from the agents and the stakes [I] observed' and thus it was impossible to be fully aware of internal 'rivalries', past and present disagreements between front-line practitioners and between young people (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:259). Nevertheless, I gathered data that was authentic and credible, providing insight into the realities of youth justice practice and supervision.

Chapter 4: Methods and methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter explained how Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence were to be utilised as part of the analytical framework. This chapter seeks to show how the study was rigorous, systematic, and methodologically sound. The chapter seeks to be critically reflexive, drawing on my own experiences of conducting the research including how I gained access to respondents, and difficulties I experienced identifying and engaging suitable participants. I also reflect upon ethical considerations and other distinctive issues encountered (also see Chapter nine).

As I explain towards the end of this chapter, when analysing my data, I endeavored to not 'lose touch' with the accounts of the interviewees. This is important as Bryman (1988:81) notes: theoretical constructs should not depart 'excessively from the views of participants'. I felt this was best achieved by aspiring towards a reflexive research practice to guard against bias, and pre-conceived ideas I had about my study. It was felt this would also offer some protection against claims that my findings were pre-conceived or my conclusion pre-written prior to careful analysis.

This chapter shows how my study was exploratory, 'applying very abstract schemes of thought to very concrete things' (Bourdieu, 1993:22). In so doing, I aimed to produce 'in-depth, rich and detailed data' (Braun and Clarke, 2013:21).

The chapter sets out how I aimed to tap into young people's first-hand knowledge gained from using criminal justice services. It also explains how I aimed to capture the experiences of professionals who deliver interventions and supervise young people on court orders.

Research aim and objectives

This study involved 15 months of fieldwork undertaken between 2016-2017. The aim was to explore children's involvement in the design and delivery of youth justice services at a Youth Offending Service in the North West of England. As was explained in Chapter one, as the recipients of interventions and assessments, the focus was to centralise the authentic voices of children and young people.

The aim was to prioritise the voices of the most excluded or subordinated, those often depicted by authority figures (adults) as 'hard to reach' or so-called 'difficult to engage' or unresponsive (France, et al., 2013; Goldson and Yates, 2008; Hadfield and Haw, 2001:487). I also set out to privilege the subjective experiences and situated knowledge of front-line professionals (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013:426). To this end, the following objectives were formed:

1. Investigate how participation is perceived from a child/young person and practitioner perspective.

2. Explore child/young person and practitioner experiences of participation.

3. Evaluate the application of user-led/participatory approaches.

4. Evaluate the characteristics of 'effective' child worker relationships and how notions of partnership are contracted in these relationships.

5. Analyse the challenges practitioners and children encounter in practice with regard to participation.

6. Critically appraise suggestions to promote participatory practice.

7. Critically review Youth Offending Service policy documentation in relation to participation/engagement.

The argument was advanced in Chapters one and two that there is a dearth of empirical research dedicated to exploring children's perspectives on the 'effectiveness' of the service they are receiving (Hart and Thompson, 2009). Thus, first, this study focused on uncovering the nature and extent of children's involvement in assessment and decision making, including their input into governance and casework matters (Robinson, et al., 2014:130).

Second, the purpose was to evaluate the characteristics of 'effective' child worker relationships and how notions of partnership were contracted in these relationships. The child/practitioner relationship 'has enjoyed something of a renaissance' (Ugwudike, 2011:255) in recent times. I aimed to investigate what helped and hindered the establishment of positive and constructive relationships between children and their supervising officers.

Third, I aimed to evaluate, from child and practitioner perspectives, the application of user-led approaches. More specifically, I intended to explore the potential or apparent benefits, limitations or challenges of different, potentially unique or innovative participatory practices. I aimed to subject such types of practice to rigorous investigation and analyses through empirical observation and use of the in-depth interviewing technique with social agents. Lastly, I aimed to critically review in-house policy documentation related to risk management and participation/engagement.

Methodology

This PhD was underpinned by the idea that meanings and experiences are socially produced (Burr, 1995, 2003). Thus, I sought to reflect multiple truths and versions of reality in terms of 'the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live' (Holloway, 1997:1). In turn, I treated 'differences between data as significant and enlightening as similarities' (Wincup, 2017:12). Crucially, there was an emphasis on researching the experiential knowledge or lived experiences of a 'hard to reach' group of young people alongside 'giving voice' to front-line professionals. This focus on accounts/narratives has traditionally been depicted as inferior to more quantitative methodologies and experimental approaches akin to those used in medicine (Beresford, 2016:227; Case, 2018; Stephenson, 2013:79).

Positivist approaches derive from the methods developed by chemists, physicists, and other natural scientists and focus on the measurement and analysis of causal relationships (Creaney, 2015; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:10). Such methods, used to test ideas and concepts and to produce findings that can be generalised (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), have been represented as objective, scientific and free from bias (Creaney, 2015). The results of quasi-experimental type studies and Campbell Systematic Reviews, informed by such a narrow positivist tradition, have influenced the development of youth justice policy and specifically risk focused practices (Stainton-Rogers, 2010; also see Case, 2018).

Qualitative researchers do not test a hypothesis as such, rather they allow the 'theory to emerge from the data once it has been gathered, and may be constantly adjusted as more data emerges' (McKechnie, 2002: 48). It is an approach, underpinned by an epistemological and ontological stance, that focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality and seeks to understand people's experiences, viewpoints and perspectives of the social world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 10; Ingleby and Oliver, 2008).

Although there has been vast amounts of research activity concerning the nature and extent of 'youth crime' (Case, et al., 2017), there has been a paucity of empirical qualitative research undertaken *with* children on their experiences of criminal justice supervision, especially their 'individual, complex stories of personal change' (Stephenson, 2013:81; also see Stainton-Rogers, 2010 and Case, 2006) and particularly their participation

or involvement in the design and delivery of youth justice services (Case and Hampson, 2019; also see Chapters one and two).

'Experts by experience'

I endeavored to enable the participant's experiential knowledge, acquired through first-hand or lived experiences, to take centre stage (Beresford, 2016:229). Children and young people who participated in this study were viewed as 'experts by experience' and capable of 'knowing' from their direct or lived experiences (Beresford, 2016:227; Borkman, 1976; also see Peer Power 2018). As Borkman (1976:44) notes,

> "experiential knowledge is truth learned from personal experience with a phenomenon rather than truth acquired by discursive reasoning, observation or reflection on information provided by others".

Practitioners can possess experiential knowledge accrued for instance through personal experience of working with clients in the criminal justice system. However, this is largely defined as a subsidiary part of their professional knowledge (Borkman, 1976:3). Moreover, although each source of truth - that is children's experiential knowledge/expertise and practitioners' professional knowledge/expertise - may appear opposing, inevitably tensions exist between the two schools of thought, they are not mutually exclusive (See Borkman, 1976). In fact, there is a germane relationship between the two. However, as was explored in Chapter two, some professionals appear to have underestimated the capacity of children and young people to contribute meaningfully to processes, and in

doing so, devalued or undervalued their ability to provide insight and possess expertise (Winter, 2015:210).

Accessing the research site

Not least for ethical reasons, diplomacy with gatekeepers was considered crucial. After all, without the approval of practitioners and managers I would have been unable to speak with children and young people to gauge their interest in the study. Firstly, I wrote to a Youth Offending Team in England about the purpose and nature of the study to seek formal permission and negotiate access (See Appendix D, H and K). I was subsequently invited to present my research proposal to managers and senior professionals. The study's aims and likely demands on the organisation's time, were explained. Following the meeting, they approved my request, and it was agreed that I would present at a team away day on my interim findings and at a further meeting on my overall findings and analysis.

Following the positive and constructive meeting with managers and senior professionals, it was also suggested to me that it would be beneficial to attend a staff forum to not only explain the aims of the study but begin to build trust and credibility with 'front line' practitioners. At both the management meeting and staff forum, I provided practitioners with information sheets about the study (see Appendix A, B and C), 'assuring the anonymity and confidentially of all participants, with the usual caveats regarding child protection and serious harm to self or others' (Sharpe, 2012: 49).

I then provided my contact details and a consent form that they were required to sign if they agreed to be interviewed (See Appendix F). I revisited those who agreed to be interviewed and asked them to provide signed consent.

It was agreed that professionals would inform children and young people about the research study and issue them with information sheets, consent forms and my contact details (See Appendix B and E). In addition, I met regularly with one manager who oversaw the project and arranged meetings with relevant case managers to discuss the possibility of interviewing their clients. One manager in particular helped me to identify suitable research participants. In addition, further access to children and young people was provided through one practitioner who invited me to attend a weekly music project to observe and build relationships with children who may be interested in participating in the research study (See Chapter 7).

My request to conduct a piece of research on children's participation was timely. It coincided with the organisation's interest in promoting more meaningful service user involvement in the design and delivery of their services. More specifically, according to their participation policy, the service was interested in developing a partnership with a local user-led organisation in order to train a pool of credible, authentic mentors, participation champions and ambassadors. In accordance with their participation policy, the service aimed to consider employing the services of an external agency to assist them in their quest to develop more user-

led services. They stipulated that this agency needed to have acquired a good industry standard reputation for undertaking consultation work with children and young people. Promoting the voice of the child, as an area for development, was clearly high on their agenda. Yet, as I explore further in Chapters six, eight and nine, this contrasted sharply with the risk-oriented practices which appeared 'firmly embedded in discourse and culture' at the youth justice service where the fieldwork was undertaken (Robinson, et al., 2014:136).

Sample

Unlike probability sampling where the aim is to produce a sample size that is statistically representative, this PhD focused on achieving depth with a small number of participants. I used a purposive sampling method (Denscombe, 2014:41). This meant that the participants were selected based on their apparent relevance to the aims and objectives of the study and the potential insight they could provide into the topic being investigated (Buck, 2016; Denscombe, 2014). This meant I could 'home in on people or events … believing they will be critical for the research' (Denscombe, 2014:41).

I liaised with the Youth Offending Team to ensure the research sample was representative. I included young people on different court orders with differing cognitive abilities, ages and diverse interests. I interviewed children and young people (n=20) with current or recent involvement in the Youth Justice System and interviewed professionals and managers (n=20) from diverse backgrounds, including health and speech and

language (See tables one and two). Professionals had knowledge of children's personal wellbeing and capacity and this provided me with 'a safeguard against the unintentional recruitment of especially vulnerable people [who had experienced a traumatic childhood] who were unable to give fully informed consent' (Buck, 2016:110).

However, I feared opportunities were being missed to capture a diversity of voices (Buck, 2016). In response, I used the snowball sampling technique. This involved liaising with existing participants, and asking children, young people and professionals of the 'target population…to locate other members of that population who they happen to know' (Babbie, 2011:208). Opportunity sampling was also used with those who were not included as potential participants when the study was designed but nevertheless expressed a '[willingness] to take part in the research' (Martella, el al., 2013:130).

All twenty of the young people (N=17 male and N=3 female) interviewed for the study were White British, aged between thirteen and eighteen years old and living in the North West of England. They had either completed a divert intervention, or were either subject to a referral order, Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO), Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) or a Detention and Training Order (DTO).

The twenty practitioners interviewed were employed within one large youth offending service within the North West of England and their experience of working within the youth justice service ranged from two months to over thirty years.

Pseudonym, Age of children and type of community sentence

Pseudonym	Age	Community Sentence
Aaron	17	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance
Anthony	17	Detention and Training Order
Baden	15	Referral Order
Ben	16	Referral Order
Charlotte	13	Divert
Cullum	15	Youth Rehabilitation Order
George	17	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Bail
Jim	17	Youth Rehabilitation Order
Jon	14	Referral Order
Joseph	15	Referral Order
Justin	15	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance
Kelvin	17	Youth Rehabilitation Order
Logan	17	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Bail
Lucy	16	Referral Order
Paul	16	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance
Sarah	17	Referral Order
Taylor	16	Youth Rehabilitation Order
Tim	15	Referral Order
Tommy	16	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance
Zain	17	Intensive Supervision and Surveillance

Pseudonym and job titles of professionals

Pseudonym	job titles of professionals
Alice	YOT Support Officer
Anna	YOT Volunteer
Aria	Speech and Language Therapist
Brandon	Ex-Offender
Colin	YOT Manager
Esme	YOT Officer
Evelyn	YOT Officer
Freya	YOT Officer
Grace	YOT Manager
Grayson	YOT Manager
Hayley	Health Worker
Jackson	YOT Manager
Levi	Ex-Offender
Lorna	Supervision Worker
Mason	YOT Support Officer
Olivia	YOT Manager
Poppy	YOT Manager
Scarlett	YOT Officer
Sienna	YOT Support Officer
William	YOT Officer

Research methods

Semi-structured interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with children (n=20) and professionals (n=20). Each interview lasted between 30-90 minutes. This data collection method was appropriate as it enabled participants to discuss personal and sensitive issues. I then probed deep and captured participant thoughts, feelings and essentially accessed their own 'accounts of their experience' (Greig, et al., 2013:178). I attended to what children and professionals had to say and subsequently gained access to the meaning 'they themselves attached to their experiences' (McKechnie, 2002: 45). The approach was collaborative, whereby participants were perceived and treated as subjects rather than being dealt with as objects (Burr, 1995, 2003).

The flexible semi-structured approach to the interviews facilitated interaction, with participants sharing their experiences on issues which they considered important to them and their life (Wincup, 2017). Crucially, there was a concerted effort to allow participants opportunities to 'make themselves heard' especially 'thoughts long kept unsaid or repressed' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:615). This was achieved through redressing power imbalances in the investigator/research participant relationship, equalising the inferior/superior positions agents, symbolically at least, occupy in the social space (Bourdieu, et al., 1999).

When interviewing participants and attempting to capture their perspective, the accuracy of such accounts can be subject to debate. As Wincup (2017:100) has observed 'the focus is on individual [subjective] experiences and understandings rather than verifiable facts'. Although interviews provide the space for dialogue, there is the possibility that participants may not be honest or provide a truthful account of their thoughts, feelings and experiences. There is also the danger that children and practitioners say what they think the researcher would like to hear from them. There are also other issues to consider such as a person's memory of an event being potentially unreliable and 'hindsight' influencing an individual's 'construction of the past' (Wincup, 2017:103).

I used interview schedules (See Appendix I and J), designed and executed to encourage meaningful conversation. Many of the participants seemed to prefer a more structured approach to the interview. However, some interviews were more unstructured, and this was sufficient in that it allowed young people and professionals, at least in part, to co-construct the research agenda, influencing them to define 'the issues they considered to be important' (Sharpe, 2012:50). I was somewhat apprehensive about asking young people to share their story as they had often done this on many occasions previously. However, children and young people were often forthcoming, discussing their personal lives and on occasion recounting distressing events.

As will be explored further in Chapter nine, I had previous practice experience of working with children and young people in conflict with the

law, as a volunteer referral order panel member and as a youth offending team support officer. Thus, I felt appropriately positioned to understand the 'workings of these settings, to gain access and to engage with gatekeepers in the field' (Buck, 2016:87). I felt confident to encourage young people to elaborate on their own feelings and perceptions. I also felt able to help and support participants should they become upset.

On one occasion, a practitioner was particularly upset during the interview. I asked if she wanted the interview to end but she was happy for it to continue following a short break. If I felt continuing with the interview would cause personal harm or distress, I would have ended it. This particular worker was discussing issues that resonated deeply with me. For example, I had recently resigned from an organisation due to workload pressures (see Chapter nine for further discussion). Nevertheless, I endeavoured to end each interview with positivity, reflecting on the future aspirations or goals of interviewees.

As a middle-class man, with modest financial means, employed as a university lecturer, I also differed in many respects to the research participants. However, this in itself was not necessarily a limitation. Indeed such 'social distance between interviewer and interviewee can be beneficial' (Sharpe, 2012:50). For example, the 'interviewee can recognise [themselves] as an expert on [the topic and] experts on their social worlds' (Miller and Glassner, 2004:132; also see Tickle, 2017 for discussion on how the characteristics of researchers influence interaction when doing fieldwork).

For some participants, they may have suppressed their willingness to provide honest accounts due to the interviews being recorded (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). What is more, some of the children may have felt compelled to answer in a certain way due to their caseworker being present during some of the interviews. However, to potentially overcome this issue, on occasion I encouraged children to discuss the thoughts and feelings of others rather than their own. Harding (2014:11) who utilised Bourdieu's conceptual framework to analyse street gangs, encouraged some participants in his study to 'articulate experiences in the third person'.

Many children and young people found this a cathartic experience. They had not previously had the opportunity to speak at length about their life and experiences of being on a court order to anyone other than their worker who, it is important to note, is not an independent advocate. Also, they rarely if ever had the chance to provide a perspective on whether they have been treated fairly by the system, how the system should be designed, and how services/ interventions should be delivered.

I tried to make the interviews engaging and interactive. Consequently, I introduced an exercise likened to Hart's (1992) ladder of participation. I asked children and young people to place themselves on the ladder and provide suitable justification for their choice. I also asked children where they would want to be placed on the ladder and what would cause them to move up and/or down the stages.

This exercise resulted in young people reflecting upon their experiences of the Youth Justice System, on whether they had been provided with opportunities to 'have their say', experiences of childhood/adolescence and their future aspirations and goals. I also asked practitioners and managers to place children on the ladder and provide suitable justification for their decision. I asked them where they thought young people would like to be on the ladder and for them to reflect on what potentially causes young people to move up and/or down the ladder of participation.

Although I recognised that in reality the phases or levels in the ladder are not necessarily sequential or linear (Crossley, 2017:50), this activity was a 'useful tool' (Farthing, 2012:74), and prompted children and professionals to think carefully about the nature and extent of participatory practices. Due to it being an informal exercise, with the purpose of provoking discussion/debate, I have not included a column of figures in the appendices related to how the participants ordered the set of cards, in terms of least to most important stages.

I could have used other methods, such as drawing workshops and or reflective diaries. Although some children and young people may have been receptive to engaging in these exercises others may have had negative experiences of such research instruments and/or be nervous/generally reluctant to take part. Nevertheless, a reflective diary could have provided a fascinating insight into the life of a child/young person on a court order. It could have been offered on a voluntary basis to participants. If so, it would have been an opportunity for participants to

share and record their intrapersonal communication, that is values, thoughts, reflections and feelings (Gray, 2009).

Nevertheless, I used a reflective diary documenting my thoughts, feelings and experiences (see Chapter nine). Furthermore, I included 'reflections on the interpretation and presentation of results, including important changes in direction' (Gray, 2009:187). This reflective approach was important in that my personal beliefs and values can influence what is said in response to questions, and how such interviewee responses are interpreted.

Participant observation

Participant observations provided me with opportunities to assess whether what a person said during an interview was similar or different to what was observed in practice. As Gray (2009:185) notes, 'observational data is primarily descriptive of settings, people, events and meanings that participants ascribe to them'. However, if researchers become insiders they run the risk of going native (Adler and Adler, 1987) in that potentially important data is lost as researchers become familiar with the setting and choose not to record certain events as they see them as irrelevant. It was a methodological approach that revolved around making the 'mundane exotic and the exotic mundane, in order to render explicit, what in both cases, is taken for granted' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:86).

Conducting participant observations enabled me to build constructive/meaningful relationships with participants (also see Tickle, 2017). I frequently visited youth offending team offices and had a number

of informal discussions with managers and professionals during the data collection phase. Notwithstanding the potential limitation relating to 'the presence of the observer [changing] the nature of the interactions being observed' (Hall, 2008:205; also see Tickle, 2017) through potentially causing disruption to the setting, I was a participant observer at bi-monthly service user feedback meetings.

This group was established to critically reflect on how the organisation hears and responds to the views of young people, including discussions on how to meaningfully capture children's experiences of supervision or monitor levels of engagement with service design and development.

I was also a participant observer at a substantial number of music project sessions. As will be critically explored in Chapter seven, this project aimed to be participant led, by way of noticing young people's strengths and talents, and subtly encouraging them through the medium of music. Young people were taught rapping skills, how to sing, play musical instruments and write songs/compose music. It was often young people on intensive court orders (perceived as 'hard to reach' or 'difficult to engage') who attended the music project sessions.

Attending the project sessions provided me opportunities to build empathic trusting and respectful relationships with not only the young people but also the professionals who facilitated the workshops. I considered it a safe setting to interview participants as I had built trust with participants and an understanding that they could be open and

honest with me about their viewpoints on matters and that this would remain confidential, within limits, as explained below.

However, at times, it was difficult to find suitable space free from interruptions to interview the participants. More specifically, although there was a room to interview young people and this offered a level of privacy, on occasion it was difficult to hear what participants were saying because of the background noise (loud musical instruments which subsequently meant the recordings were not crystal clear) and partial interruptions (workers often entering the room unannounced to speak with the young people). It was very difficult to overcome such distractions.

I also experienced difficulties note-taking when observing children and their workers directly. Indeed, as Noaks and Wincup (2004:127) note, 'devoting attention to writing down what is said can detract from achieving a rapport with the interviewee and the researcher's observation of non-verbal cues'. Nonetheless, it was an appropriate setting for children to express their views comfortably.

I dressed appropriately and endeavored to use child friendly language. I felt this helped to facilitate dialogue and interaction with children and young people. Moreover, interviewing children in this setting enhanced the quality of the interviews, as children often felt relaxed in such familiar surroundings.

Ethical and inclusive research practice

The study was scrutinized and subsequently granted approval by Liverpool John Moores University's ethical review committee. It was

pertinent to proceed ethically not only because the study involved researching the relatively 'powerless' (i.e. vulnerable children) but also because I deemed it morally right to treat participants with respect and sensitivity. I also considered it important not to pressure children or practitioners into participating in the study. Ethical principles and standards were integral and 'embedded in the totality of scholarly practice' (Baarts, 2009:423). This was especially important as some of the children and young people had complex needs and vulnerabilities, with varying levels of literacy and language ability (Wincup, 2017). Indeed, a continuing concern has been the high number of children on court orders experiencing challenges with their emotional health and wellbeing (Peer Power, 2016). When inducted into youth justice systems/processes, children frequently present with unmet individual/structural social care needs (Bradley, 2009; Peer Power, 2016).

As Teplin, et al., (2002) observed, young people 'with childhood histories of trauma, abuse and neglect make up almost our entire criminal justice population' (cited in Liddle et al., 2016:49). Disproportionately, these children have been the victims of unfair treatment by the care and criminal justice systems (Shaw and Greenhow, 2019:4). What is more, a substantial number also have learning disabilities (Taylor, 2016). As was alluded to in Chapter two, it could be argued such children have diminished or limited capacities, lacking the ability to make informed decisions. Matters of vulnerability and competence are of particular significance when researching with children.

However, judging whether a child is sufficiently competent to provide informed consent can be challenging. As Wincup (2017:53) notes,

> "linking this to chronological age is unsatisfactory as there are a range of factors which can influence a child's ability to provide consent".

It might well be that children under a certain age, for example, may be prevented from taking part and having their voices heard because they are presumed to be incompetent. Some children may have cognitive and emotional difficulties and may be unable to understand the elements that make up the research process. Arguably, in relation to my study, there was no certainty that participants fully understood what was happening or what they were a part of.

Nevertheless, I remained committed to the task of building relationships with all children and young people, focused on understanding their individual needs and wants and explained the research process in a child friendly and child-appropriate way. In particular, I communicated clearly with children and practitioners why they had been selected and what was to be expected of them as a participant. I considered it crucial that consent was provided freely. The children and young people I interviewed all understood the purpose and nature of the research and in turn were judged to be competent to take part.

Participants were fully informed about the purpose and nature of the study, using language free from technical jargon. It was also explained to them that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study, at any time, and that there were no negative

consequences should they decide not to participate, should that be expressed verbally or communicated non-verbally through body language and gestures. This could happen for a wealth of reasons not least when participants perceive it as rather intrusive or unnecessary (Kirby and Bryson, 2002). I was respectful of children's wishes not to participate.

That anonymity and confidentially would be guaranteed was clearly explained to participants and reiterated not only prior to but also during and at the end of each interview. This helped to encourage participation in the study (Buck, 2016:85). The research participants names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities (See Table one and two). I was unable to provide 'an iron-clad guarantee' of confidentiality (Braun and Clarke, 2013:65) and as a result explained clearly to participants the consequences of disclosure and how I had a responsibility to 'break' confidentiality and inform relevant authorities if there was a risk of harm - to self or others – identified (Wincup, 2017).

There are other complex issues associated with confidentiality and anonymity. For instance, during the write up phase, when using the words of individuals, there is the danger that they will be identified in reports. Furthermore, as Braun and Clarke (2013:64) observed, in anonymising data,

> "we have to be sensitive to what we might be identifying, and how we might change it to increase anonymity but change it not so much that it alters the meaning substantially".

I was keen to build rapport with all interviewees. Consequently, I maintained good honest and respectful relationships with professionals

and the children and young people throughout the study, showing interest in what they had to say in a non-judgmental manner. As alluded to in Chapter one, I viewed participants as 'experts on their experiences, views and practices' (Braun and Clarke, 2013:96). I endeavored to be as unobtrusive as possible (Denscombe, 2010:175), actively listening to their accounts throughout the interaction. This enabled the participants to feel relaxed, comfortable and to open up about their experiences. Furthermore, it was explained to each participant that the signed consent forms they returned, and transcript documents with their real names/places or other identifying information erased, were kept securely in a locked cabinet that only I had access to.

Analysing the data

Analytic procedures were adhered to in a rigorous and systematic way. I applied 'appropriate techniques, to ensure that study findings [were] well rooted in data' (Hennink, et al., 2011:205). I described and critically discussed participant experiences in an attempt to provide an illuminating analysis. More specifically this involved:

> "…managing and making sense of people's multiple and contrasting perspectives. It involves developing a 'story' from the data, but not in the fictitious or imaginary sense, rather a coherent presentation of people's experiences that reflects the grit, complexity and seemingly irrational nature of human behaviour" (Hennink, et al., 2011:205).

Data collection and analysis was ongoing and iterative, adhering to 'the generation of theory from data, rather than the testing of prior hypotheses' (Sharpe, 2012:42). Although, I was unable – nor was the

intention – to approach the field without pre-conceived ideas, 'expecting to simply "discover" theory from…emerging data in a theoretical vacuum' (Sharpe, 2012:42).

Thematic analysis was the strategy employed to analyse the data. I used Braun and Clark's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis: familiarisation of the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; production of written report. I followed the procedures not in a linear fashion but rather in a flexible way to allow for the emergence of themes that were not anticipated. The study was rigorous and systematic, unearthing a 'rich and detailed, yet complex account of data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 5).

Interviews were audio recorded (with participant consent). They were then transcribed verbatim. When organising and managing the data, I was keen to remain as close as was practically possible to the data. More specifically, I read through each of the transcripts thoroughly and immersed myself in the data to become familiar with 'the depth and breadth of the content' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:1). Then I coded transcripts inductively. This was a reductive process as I went 'beyond the data, thinking creatively with the data, asking the data questions, and generating theories and frameworks' (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:30).

As I searched for themes amongst the rich data that had been collected and observed, I detected 'patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:15). This included, for instance, children's involvement in the supervision process (see chapter

five) and their participation in risk-based meetings (see chapter six).

Notwithstanding the argument that categorising sections of the data can result in fragmented and decontextualised interview narratives (Sharpe, 2012:53), I remained 'open to the data' with a view to amongst other things exposing 'subtle meanings' (Buck, 2016:89; Charmaz, 2014:137). For instance, I discovered issues related to passive compliance and inauthentic transactions (see Chapter five) alongside children's experiential knowledge being devalued (See Chapter seven).

This involved applying codes to aspects of the data that appeared interesting, relevant to the research objectives, narrow questions and influenced by matters of prevalence and significance. Specifically, open-coding was utilised to organise the data, eventually shifting to more focused coding. In so doing, through a type of constant comparison, I identified

> "similarities and differences between accounts… [explored] relationships, and continually [refined] codes and [developed] categories and sub-categories until theoretical saturation was achieved with no new data emerging in the final interviews" (MacArthur, et al., 2017:33).

Subsequently I identified, described and presented overarching themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The analysis was not informed by a pre-existing coding frame as the themes identified emerged from the data. The themes were checked and verified by (re) examining the sample and (re) analysing the findings. The rich and detailed data that was described and interpreted was then cross-referenced with Bourdieu's social theory, his 'thinking tools' (namely habitus, capital, field and symbolic violence)

and other literature and evidence, where similarities and differences were observed (see Chapter three).

Responses were interrogated, informed by a social constructionist paradigm 'where broader assumptions, structures and/or meanings [were] theorised as underpinning what [was] actually articulated in the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:13). Such a paradigm subscribes to the view that meanings and experiences are socially produced. Consequently, such knowledge is context-bound. Indeed, there is not one homogenous social world: there are multiple realities in existence. Knowledge is socially constructed human-meaning-making, as Burr, (1995) notes:

> "our current accepted ways of understanding the world is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other" (Burr, 1995:4).

Qualitative researchers do not subscribe to the view that there is one truthful perspective to be discovered or that the accuracy of the results increases following the removal of such things as emotion, values and any other biases that could interfere with the investigation and the path to seeking 'truth' (Burr, 1995). Rather, in accordance with a qualitative stance, knowledge is socially, culturally and historically situated, in a specific 'place and time' (Graue and Walsh, 1998:9). I studied such socially constructed realities. Specifically, I explored the experiences, viewpoints and perspectives of children/young people and youth justice practitioners. Subjectivity was prioritised within my approach and deemed to be highly important.

It could be argued that positivism and its pursuit for 'certainty' is a misnomer – a futile exercise: all knowledge is partial, complex and ostensibly relational (Humphries, 2008; Jenkins, 1992). Claims to knowledge are relative and consequently difficult to generalise. It is such universalistic 'truth' claims - often associated with the positivistic tradition - that have been depicted as problematic by social constructionist researchers (Burr, 2015). The idea that researchers can be objective and distance themselves from the study and its participants to prevent contamination, removing any personal bias, has also been subject to criticism from critical social scientific researchers (Bourdieu, et al., 1999; Burr, 2015).

The analysis is my story about the data. After all, 'themes…reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them' (Ely et al., 1997:205:6). My story, albeit compelling and grounded in the data, may have differed, to a greater or lesser degree, to the participants stories (Braun and Clarke, 2013:64). Essentially, in this context, 'the power to choose which standpoint or way of seeing [lied] with the researcher' (Morrow and Richards, 1996:99). Data analysis 'involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit and deploy to border our arguments' (Fine, 2002:218).

Limitations and challenges

The research was undertaken with a vulnerable, a background of deprivation and social exclusion, and 'hard to reach', disempowered and disengaged, group of children and young people - whose views and

perspectives were often marginalised. Although I recruited young people who were less frequently involved in research studies, it was a small-scale qualitative piece of research and thus difficult to generalise the findings. In other words, the results of the study, whilst being distinct or specific to a youth justice service, cannot be applied to other Youth Offending Teams.

However, data were rich, and the results - having sampled for diversity, recruiting participants who were 'good' sources of information - were insightful. Furthermore, it was reiterated to participants that their participation in the study was voluntary, not compulsory. As alluded to previously, in accordance with the British Society of Criminology's (2006:3) code of practice,

> "participants [had] the right to refuse permission or withdraw from involvement in [the] research whenever and for whatever reason they wish".

However, children, who were on a court order, could have felt compelled, at times, to attend an interview and this could have reduced their level of meaningful participation in the study (Hampson, 2017b:169). Indeed, researchers may be perceived by children as 'agents of the state' (Wood, 2010:53), and as a result young people may have felt obliged to take part, 'fearful' or 'wary' of the negative consequences of withdrawing their consent (Wincup, 2017:51). This is perhaps most acute if the request to take part in the study is from their Youth Offending Team Officer who, it could be argued, is in a position of power and has particular influence over them.

Participation in the project was not a formal part of a child's order, they had the right to withdraw from the study or decline answering questions they felt made them feel uncomfortable (Hampson, 2017b). I explained that I would not then pressure them to answer a question, especially if there was a risk their response would potentially incriminate or upset them further. I was mindful of non-verbal cues as a potential indicator of distress or dissatisfaction. I was observant of body language and this assisted in terms of measuring participant understanding, expectations and readiness or willingness to engage. In relation to young people, non-attendance at interviews was not recorded as non-compliance with their court order requirements (Hampson, 2017b).

There was also a pragmatic approach to data collection. For instance, at times I was informed by case managers that specific young people had read the information sheet and agreed to participate in the study. However, although I secured informed consent without deception, they were then almost immediately interviewed with little time for reflection. This approach differed to the standard system which involved allowing participants sufficient time to process information about the purpose and nature of the study and, within a reasonable timeframe, reflect upon whether or not they wanted to participate in the interview. However, it could be argued young people in the Youth Justice System are a 'transient population' (Wincup, 2017:50), and thus – albeit used on rare occasions - this approach was appropriate.

Influencing this pragmatic approach, was the fact that two young people who had agreed to be interviewed were subsequently re-arrested and returned to prison. Despite their apparent optimism to share their story with me and provide insight into their life, they were unable to participate in the study as I did not have ethical approval to enter prison and speak with inmates. There were other issues accessing the sample with some young people declining to participate and were not ready or willing to share their experiences or viewpoints on matters. I recall accompanying case managers on home visits. I observed the workers interacting with the young people. Some of the young people's lives were so chaotic that seeking their participation in this study was not appropriate. These young people also resisted engaging with their workers and other adult authority figures.

Although it was agreed that I would have access to various forms of information, including organisational policies on risk and participation, I did not access young people's case files. With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been useful to access such data, namely young people's frequency and type of offending, as this could have been a potentially rich source of information, as they relate to a child's past and present circumstances and experiences (Sharpe, 2012:43). I could have gathered standardised data about the participants. Nevertheless, I prioritised the voice of the child and in turn privileged accounts of their lived experiences.

A further challenge related to professionals, on occasion, informing me that it was not appropriate to interview certain children or young people, adversely affecting the representativeness of the sample. The reasons for this were varied yet perhaps related to the fear that giving young people the opportunity to 'speak out' to an outsider may result in external scrutiny. Possibly professionals 'did not want to risk giving [young people] the opportunity to talk negatively about them' (Sharpe, 2012:49). Moreover, it was felt, at times, during interviews, there was 'a tendency for individuals to present themselves in a favourable or socially desirable manner rather than respond in terms of their own characteristics or views' (Hall, 2008:205). In relation to professionals specifically, there is the obvious danger that during interviews, they attempt to 'deflect criticism, negotiate or even reconstruct events' (Scraton, 2007:16).

Nevertheless, I received substantial encouragement and support with the fieldwork from the organisation. The practitioners and young people were extremely generous with their time and I was grateful that they talked with me often at length and shared intimate details about their lived experiences. I facilitated honest and somewhat therapeutic conversations. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to engage in reflexivity, critically examine current and previous practices, provide insight into key challenges and consider 'new' future ways of working.

I did not pilot my study and in turn 'test out' my line of questioning prior to conducting the fieldwork. This could have been beneficial, particularly regarding potentially useful feedback on whether the proposed interview

questions were clear and not reliant on jargon and in relation to children and young people, were user friendly.

Conclusion

I decided the best or most appropriate way to capture subjective experiences and perceptions on the voice of the child was through in-depth interviewing and observation not, for instance, through designing and distributing a quantitative survey comprising closed questions. Qualitative research is not neat, uncomplicated or an 'exact science'. Researching the experiences and views of children with varied communication skills, different degrees of self-confidence and trust and alongside trying to engage practitioners in the research process make for complexities that can only be represented by approximation (Creaney, 2015).

My intention was not to craft an 'absolute knowledge' through a scientific or positivist stance that involved being in a 'distant' or 'detached' researcher/participant relationship (Bourdieu, 1990:21). I acknowledged the influence of objective structures, which according to Bourdieu, are 'independent of the consciousness and desires of agents' yet 'capable of guiding or constraining their practices' (Bourdieu, 1990: 123). This is important as youth justice practitioners do not practice in a political or economic vacuum.

Crucially, however, participants were not seen as passive sufferers of structural inequalities but rather active agents who could negotiate the social world. I acknowledged the values, beliefs and norms of participants

and how they influence or direct actions and behaviours. Consequently, I started from the premise that social actors are able to take control of their own lives, and in so doing construct their own identities and mediate structural barriers. Crucially, however, there was an important caveat: their choices are limited, as agents can often be constrained by wider societal structures seemingly outside of their control (Bourdieu, 1990).

The study employed a methodology that acknowledged both subjective and objective aspects of the habitus, otherwise known as constructivist structuralism but also labelled structuralist constructivism (Bourdieu, 1990:123; Bourdieu, 1989). As alluded to in Chapter three, this focus transcended dualisms of agency-structure, namely 'patterns of perception, thought and action' on the one hand, and 'social structures' on the other (Bourdieu, 1990:123). I found Bourdieu's conceptual and epistemological framework enormously helpful when interpreting the data, as I endeavor to explain in more depth in Chapter nine.

The next chapter presents the research findings related to children's participation, critiquing their involvement in decision making processes. It also presents professional perspectives on young people's levels of involvement in systems and processes.

Chapter 5: "When you're on YOT, you do have to follow what they're saying" - Children's participation in the Youth Justice System

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on children's involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of youth justice services. It explores their participation in systems and processes; in particular their ability to express their viewpoints and influence matters that affect them. In addition, the chapter explores the difficulties professionals experience centralising or foregrounding the voice of the child and enhancing opportunities for young people to put forward their own perspective or 'world view' (Haines and Case, 2015; Wood, 2010:50).

The chapter also presents the findings on the challenges professionals experience building and maintaining positive and constructive partnerships with children. It acknowledges the barriers motivating them to participate in a process that they perceive as punishment that they want 'over and done with'. Furthermore, the difficulties professionals experience working with a core group of young people depicted as 'hard to reach' or 'difficult to engage', are also discussed.

Finally, this chapter critically reflects upon whether young people feel comfortable or not being provided with opportunities to influence decisions that affect their life. This includes whether they feel equipped in terms of possessing the necessary skills and abilities to contribute meaningfully to the design and delivery of the services they are receiving.

Passive compliance, knowing and 'getting round' the rules: how the system works as a 'game'

> "The good player, who is so to speak the game incarnate, does at every moment what the game requires" (Bourdieu, 1990:63)

> "They see it as a punishment. They see us as part of the… well, and we are, the officers of the court. And a voice of authority. Erm, and they wanna get through it for six months, for nine months, for twelve months. And they don't think of participation in a way that, you know… that a practitioner might". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

> "…when I first got my YOT order – I was told what I was doing. I wasn't involved in that process". (Levi, ex-offender)

Several children and young people who participated in this study, described having a 'feel' for how to navigate systems or processes to gain a sense of a slight personal advantage in the field towards the end goal of completing the order successfully. It seemed to be an outcome most desirable by professionals and those under supervision. Crucially, however, there were 'degrees in this feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990:109). Children participated, to a greater or lesser extent, to at least maintain a sense of power. Some young people appeared more skilled, than their peers, at 'playing the game' and knowing the written and unwritten rules in terms of what was required of them (Harding, 2014).

How they would respond to professionals was not exclusively determined by adherence to rules. Their practical sense of how to respond to situations (Swartz, 2002:263; Winter, 2015) was not deliberate but counterintuitively activated through unconscious thought (Bourdieu, 1990:76).

Several young people wanted their meetings 'over and done with'. Young people were aware of the nature of the 'game' and 'its stakes' (the illusio) and, at times, explicit in declaring their specific interests, revealing their game strategy (Grenfell, 2014d:165). They were aware of the system of rewards and sanctions, namely that progressing with the requirements of their orders, 'dictated' to them by the court and youth justice professionals, was a chore worth pursuing.

In accordance with the doxa – an often unstated but shared belief – this resulted in them having a vested interest in participating (Bourdieu, 1990; English and Bolton, 2016). They planned to 'toe the line', and despite ambivalence, comply, and they subsequently become attached to the established order (Bourdieu, 1998a:55). This also reflected their 'tacit recognition of the stakes of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990:110) namely the consequences of potentially excessive treatment should they disengage or fail to comply.

One support worker, Mason, who was relatively new to the role, was typically provocative. He queried whether professionals should be discerningly digging more beneath the surface of appearances (Harvey, 1990:6), especially with regard to those who appear pleasant and to be 'pretending' to comply. He queried whether workers and young people were playing an 'elaborate game' and in so doing, discouraging children from being 'angry' and 'distressed' in supervision meetings.

In proposing that such 'strategising' on the part of young people should be detected and 'knocked on the head early on' by professionals, he went on to propose a fascinating set of questions:

> "Do you see that strategising – is that what we count as good? Or actually, are the ones who chafe against this and actually flipping…throw the dummy out, and all of that sort of stuff – is that actually more meaningful? Their participation, more meaningful?". (Mason, YOT Support Officer)

Thus, Mason described some of the young people's attitudes and dispositions being symptomatic of passive compliance. He felt young people tended to give a 'false impression' they were content with the 'specified objectives', hiding or concealing their true perspective on proceedings (Leigh, et al., 2019:3).

Despite concerns regarding genuineness, the service appeared to value young people occupying a 'ready to conform' or a 'respect for conventions' mindset (Bourdieu, 1990). Those with a malleable personality, an almost diffident type child, who cooperated and was complicit to demands, either directed implicitly or explicitly at them by their workers, were placed in a slight 'position of advantage' (Basford, 2018:46).

Abiding by the rules, however reluctantly or unwittingly, they did what was required, from their point of view, for 'the order to disappear' and the Youth Offending Service to 'leave them alone', ostensibly acting in a way that was well matched with the status quo (Grenfell, 2014d). Essentially, they felt being on a court order was an inconvenience and a 'waste of their time' yet had an 'interest' in it ending successfully (Grenfell,

2014d:154). Thus, they sensed the limits in terms of what attitudes and behaviours were, and were not, permitted or could potentially be advantageous to them (Grenfell, 2014d).

Yet, they were, neither 'particles subject to mechanical forces and acting under the constraint of causes', nor were the young people 'conscious and knowing subjects acting with full knowledge of the facts...' (Bourdieu, 1998a:24). Rather, although constrained by the external forces which they ultimately 'internalised and accepted' (Scraton, 2007:8), they acted in accordance with their 'acquired system of preferences' (Bourdieu, 1998a:25) using agency and a practical sense, applying the 'know how' to 'get through' the criminal justice experience, and overcome its 'monotonous regularities' (Bourdieu 2007:92), swiftly:

> **"Cos if I don't join in, then… they'll just start, like, saying "why?" and it just pisses me off, so then I argue with them and then get sent home... I just do something for like 20 minutes, and then they can't say that I haven't done anything". (Baden, 15)

> "Stick to my meetings. Stick to my curfew. Do as I'm told up until my next court date". (Logan, 17)

> "not making a fuss… getting it over and done with". (Tim, 15)

> "I don't wanna spend time talking when I could just go…I just try and get the meetings out the way". (Justin, 15)

> "some kids want it over and done with, don't they?... cos it's obviously their time wasting… maybe they just want to get out, and see their friends and stuff". (Charlotte, 13)

These quotations illustrate children's ability to anticipate outcomes, and reflect patterns of compliance, with young people acting in accordance

with the environment, conforming to routine and repetition (Bourdieu 2007:92).

They were obeying the rules or regulations alongside using know-how or a 'second nature' in terms of how to take 'liberties with the rule' (Bourdieu, 1990:63) and 'plan an escape' (Wolfreys, 2000:5).

The above quotes do indicate young people's ability to 'play the game', and, as alluded to above, gain the sense of some sort of 'feel for the game' that is being played. Yet, they do not depict a situation where young people are either in the process of winning/beating the game (Bourdieu, 1998a:80), gaining the 'upper hand' or, acting like 'automata regulated like clocks, in accordance with laws which they do not understand' (Bourdieu, 1990: 9-10 also see Swartz, 2002). As Mason indicated, in what seemed to be a form of strategising, or a coping mechanism deployed, children appeared to be of the view that 'getting through the order' did not require their active participation in the process.

Participants felt that if they complied with the conditions of the court order and were respectful and responded appropriately to practitioner requests, avoiding creating tension, conflict and reacting negatively to situations, in the process, they could complete it with few complications.

The conditions of the youth justice field were precarious for both practitioners and young people. Nevertheless, in terms of how they governed, case managers infrequently 'gave orders' or issued commands, yet seldom attempted to state explicitly what was required of young people.

This was unless during 'times of crisis'. For example, when young people were not complying and/or when ordered to attend a compliance panel with the threat of breach action looming over them (See Chapter six). Another example of a crisis situation was when children were potentially complying but there were concerns regarding the risks they posed to the public, which were subsequently discussed at 'high risk' multi-agency professional meetings, with the threat of (further) restrictions on their behaviours (see Chapter six).

The rules were interpreted by some young people, at times, as elusive or confusing. They did not fully understand expectations, or notably how their risk scores were calculated other than that the risk level determined by their case manager indicated how often they were required to meet with their supervising officer (Bourdieu, 1998a).

Yet what resulted in practice was minimalist compliance, tokenistic opportunities for young people to participate and engage with professionals. The system in place appeared to value (or even reward) young people's passive compliance.

Talking truth to power

Ben provided some insight into how young people may be nervous and fearful of speaking out or providing a critical perspective on the service they are receiving:

> "They don't want to say anything bad about it and they're too scared to… or they're too shy to say, "Oh I wanna do this" or "I don't like this". Yeah. Yeah. Be nice for you to be able to change it as well. Like, if you just decide that that's not what

you want to do, you should be able to be like, "Oh I want to do this instead". (Ben, 16)

Children and young people may appear apprehensive about phrasing and expressing their point of view not least due to feeling insecure or suspicious of authority.

One former service user described how some children and young people do not want to speak out as they fear the consequences of talking truth to power:

> "I think a lot of the time kids are scared to speak up about what they want to do, especially within youth justice, about changing the system, in case they get in trouble". (Levi, ex-offender)

Lucy (16) who was subject to a referral order, talked about how children and young people might not want to talk or 'open up' about their experiences due to the fear of being judged, labelled and potentially subject to further 'trouble' if they divulge too much.

Some young people said they felt they were not the ones in authority and had to comply with what was being asked of them:

> "When you're on YOT, you do have to follow what they're saying". (Anthony, 17)

This was also reflected in discussions I had with practitioners:

> "I think they probably assume that they're just gonna be told what to do. And in a way, they are. Because they're told that they've got to go to these meetings, and things like that…They're sort of, "Oh, I've only got so many months left. I've only got so many weeks left… they probably do see it as a nuisance, and they have to do appointments, and things like that". (Anna, YOT Volunteer)

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> "Well the statutory obligations sort of – you know, how many times they're seen a week, and stuff like that – there's no say in that really. In relation to their intervention, I suppose they have part-say in that. You know, staff will do an intervention plan with the young person, and look at the different styles and ways of working. However, at the end of the day, the young person might say, "Well, I don't want drugs. I don't want substance misuse work in the intervention plan." However, [if] their offence is directly linked to substance misuse [they will have to]". (Grace, YOT Manager)

Children felt that it was most important for them not to fail to attend appointments. They felt this course of action they would not 'get away with' (Bourdieu, 1990:64). It would almost certainly, from their perspective, result in non-compliance. They knew both the logic and necessity of taking part in the game (Bourdieu, 1990). If they were breached and returned to court, young people felt they would not profit from this course of action.

Children were 'acting in accordance with [their] interests while all the time seeming to obey the rules' (Bourdieu, 1990:63). However, it is worth noting Callum's point. Callum, who was subject to a Youth Rehabilitation Order, explained how being sent back to court was a wake-up call for him, resulting in him re-engaging in supervision sessions with the service:

> "They gave me a couple of chances and then they went back to court. And then I just thought, "I can't miss any of these meetings." So I just went to every one after that." (Callum, 15)

Nevertheless, young people tended to realise that they were unable to withdraw from the process or 'reject the terms of the debate' (Farthing, 2012:78-79), without risking the likelihood of being subject to further

punishment. One young person Logan explained why he does what is required of him:

> "because I have to, don't I. So, just get on with it. Better than refusing and getting nicked for it again." "Might as well get on with it". (Logan, 17)

Relationship-based practices

Aaron (17), who was subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance, initially described saying the things he thought the youth justice service wanted to hear. He was resistant to discussing the details of his offence and reflecting upon the harm he had caused because it brought back uncomfortable memories for him. This resulted in him feeling anxious and experiencing a sense of hysteresis – namely a disconnect between his habitus and the objective field (a new and unfamiliar world) (Bourdieu, 1998a). He felt vulnerable in such changed circumstances.

In addition to this, he was deliberately using distancing tactics and completing activities with minimal effort, partly to test the worker to see if he was genuinely interested in forming a constructive relationship with him. However, through engaging in a process of self-conscious reflexivity and having established a trusting relationship with his case manager over time, with requirements being introduced smoothly and incrementally (slow and steady), as opposed to abruptly, his habitus adjusted and become attuned to the 'doxa' and associated expectations, resulting in him developing 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990).

He described feeling he mastered 'in a practical way the future of the game' (Bourdieu, 1998a:80; Friedman, 2016). Subsequently, he participated more meaningfully in supervision sessions. He described his worker as being consistent in terms of approach, and because of his worker's caring but assertive style, he felt empowered and became emotionally available, eventually 'getting his feelings out' and talking about the offence:

> "He knows my ins and outs – I've been with him for four years, so I know him and he knows me". (Aaron, 17)

Similarly, Zain (17) - who described his worker as fair, and patient but he felt used persuasive force - said how he only trusts certain people, his Intensive Supervision Surveillance worker being one:

> "I'll only trust, like, certain people. With [my worker] I trust her with everything. Like, you: [the researcher] you're building my trust up". (Zain)

This was not too dissimilar from Taylor's (16) experience. Taylor was 'looked-after', having experienced a traumatic childhood being the victim of domestic abuse; pain inflicted on him by close family members. These experiences, combined with his poor social origin, which limited his opportunities and life-chances (Harding, 2014), formed his dispositions towards the social world (Bourdieu 2007:84). He reflected on how these experiences resulted in him finding it difficult to trust others, especially adults.

Taylor's habitus was shaped in his early childhood subsequently influencing his 'ways of acting' during adolescence. He experienced the death of a close friend which had a profound impact on his attitude to life. Such a traumatic experience ignited the onset of mental health problems.

Nevertheless, Taylor, who was subject to a Youth Rehabilitation Order, reflected upon the constructive relationship he had formed with one of his workers:

> "Because she [YOT worker] knows me the best and I don't particularly… enjoy… getting to know so many people". (Taylor, 16)

However, one Youth Offending Team Officer, Scarlett, reflected on the challenges she was experiencing engaging one child who was refusing to attend his initial referral order panel meeting. She remained optimistic despite a number of missed appointments but felt the only realistic way to communicate with this particular child was to 'catch him on the fly'. However, she felt this stance was inevitably reactive as opposed to proactive and capable of achieving only tokenistic rather than meaningful participation.

Nevertheless, this practitioner appeared committed to persisting in her efforts to have regular contact and build up rapport with this particular young person. This worker explained how previously, due to a child not attending appointments, she had written an entire Asset Plus in his absence, and reflected on her disappointment that she was unable to capture his view in his own assessment.

"You can either learn to play the game, or not" - inauthentic transactions and a shared habitus

There appeared to be mutual understanding of the 'rules of the game' between young people and their case managers. Many practitioners felt their main purpose was to ensure the court order was completed, not for substantial change/s to be achieved. Some professionals had trouble judging to what extent a child or young person had complied with their court order requirements:

> "Someone could turn up for a session with me and I could say, "God, they did really well. They sat there. They listened. Okay, they didn't speak, and their head was down the whole time. But let's hope they took something away from it." Someone else could say, "Well, they didn't even look up the whole session, therefore they've not engaged. We're going to put them in breach". (Freya, YOT Officer)

Nevertheless, professionals were acutely aware of young people's reluctance to meaningfully engage. They were committed to overcoming the issue of some children not being in a 'position to conform' (Bourdieu, 1998a:71). They were somewhat complicit in what Buck (2016:236) described as a process of fake or 'inauthentic transactions'.

It was an instrumentalist ideology, driven by a desire to avoid hassle (Bourdieu, 1998a). In this context, there appeared to be an affinity between young people's individual habitus and the habitus of professionals. There was a shared interest; consequently, an arrangement of submission and obedience was reached (Bourdieu, 1998a:37; Davies, 2015:178).

This meant professionals, at times, were purposefully employing techniques such as rescheduling appointments within a short (or even no) notice period. They were also repeatedly reminding children, through various formats, of scheduled meetings and avoiding issuing warning letters for non-compliance, at seemingly all costs (also see Phillips, 2016), as these quotations illustrates:

> "…And I think I go more like an extra mile, in that I'll go and pick them up, or I'll ring them and say, "Right, you know you've got an... an appointment now. I'm on my way! Come on, get ready, be at that door!". (Lorna, Supervision Worker)

> "I know we don't really want to breach, and it's about numbers and facts and figures and this, that and the other. But it's like, "Oh right, they didn't turn up today." "Right, well give them another chance." We'll go, "Right okay, right okay. So, they didn't turn up for that one. They've not turned up for this other one. Right, we'll go and do a home visit." Okay, fair enough. On certain cases, you don't know what's going on. But there's some where you just think, "You're just giving this person chance after chance after chance after chance". (Sienna, YOT Support Officer)

Viewed critically, these moves were designed to secure some form of participation and reduce the likelihood of complications. The aim was to increase the chances of the child partaking in the 'game', completing or 'getting through' their court order successfully:

> "I think it's really hard, isn't it? Because you've just got to get them through the order, haven't you? And that's just the way it is…You can either learn to play the game, or not". (Hayley, Health Worker)

> "So I think sometimes you're just constantly trying to get them on board, on a session-by-session basis. Not on an overall level: "Alright, let's talk about participation." We're just, probably, firefighting every day, trying to get them to buy in to what your agenda is". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

"…maybe they're just playing a game with us, and actually what we want to see is them being really angry and distressed in our sessions. Maybe that would be better? And telling us to F off. Maybe that would be…? That is them participating more…he has this really hard shell that you can't penetrate. And if anything pisses him off his immediate response is violence … But he needs a lot more complex, a lot more in-depth therapeutic work … He'll get through his referral order. Cos he turns up to his appointments, he nods his head". (Mason, YOT Support Officer)

"But there's not much choice, really… They don't want to engage with anyone extra or any extra services. So they just think, "Well I've gotta come to you, so I'll just stick with you. I'm not doing X, Y and Z as well". (Freya, YOT Officer)

"I think when they initially come to the YOS, they'll think, "Oh," erm, you know, it's us against them. And, "I've been naughty," and it's that sort of process". (Anna, YOT Volunteer)

"So it's like, "Right, we just need to get them through it. We need to do whatever…Sometimes … they are just going through the order. They don't want to engage". (Sienna, YOT Support Officer)

"…so we've had a girl, who has not complied at all with her order. And she's learnt that she can get around that by, you know, presenting us with sick notes. Which is fine. And she has been doing that. So she's actually – I think there's something about feeling that you can beat the system, isn't there? I guess. Which is fair enough. And I'm sure that she feels that she has beat the system on some level". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

Several practitioners felt children did not want to participate or engage in supervision, at least initially when they entered the service. They described it as a sort of contractual arrangement between the practitioner and their clients – by their own admission they were guilty of 'process-driven' thinking.

However, Grayson, a manager, put forward an alternative perspective on this matter. He acknowledged how young people may 'go through the motions' in order to 'tick the box', and subsequently enter into a sort of

contractual arrangement with their supervising officer. However, he also noted how it could be the case that the opinions young people express or how they appear to be acting, are deliberate 'distancing tactics' deployed to test if the worker is genuinely interested in forming a trusting partnership with them, as this quotation illustrates:

> "I'm not gonna do this easily. You're gonna have to work for this. You're gonna have to work for me to trust you. Cos why should I be involved in this? …Classic stuff is with children who've been through the care system, who have had so many disappointments with staff over the years that they deliberately will use distancing tactics". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

Decision-making, an 'adults know better' mentality and the notion of responsibility

Although young people disliked being treated as 'mini adults' or silenced, some children also felt it inappropriate for them to set agendas. Being an 'offender', they felt they were not in a position to influence decision-making processes.

Some young people preferred not to be the ones in control of the decision-making, feeling they would not engage if participation was strictly on their terms of reference. Nevertheless, children and young people felt it was appropriate that they were on a court order and subject to some form of punishment (also see Phoenix and Kelly, 2013). As Sarah said, a consequence of being convicted of involvement in criminal activity for young people is being required to engage with the Youth Offending Service, and undertake tasks that may not be enjoyable for them:

> "Cause, obviously, if you've done something wrong, you need to take the punishment, obviously. So you can't really change anything about it. Maybe it could be a bit funner, but not everything's fun. You don't enjoy everything, do you?".
> (Sarah, 17)

Anthony, a young man who had not long been released from youth custody at the time of the interview, described the Youth Offending Team's role as to listen to children and young people experiencing problems or issues in their life and provide appropriate help and support to young people.

In reflecting an internal locus of control, he argued that, if the child chooses not to accept the support and disengages, the responsibility for this decision lies with the child:

> "They will try and help you. But obviously, they help you – but if you fuck it up, that's your fault. Do you know what I mean?".
> (Anthony, 17)

Thus, Anthony alluded to young people being responsible for their own plight. If failure occurs, it will be the fault of the child or young person, they should not level criticisms at the system. Other children also felt that those who commit crime must take responsibility for their actions and 'deal' with the consequences. Accordingly, they talked about how it is a young person's responsibility to seek the support they feel is necessary to achieve positive outcomes and lead a crime free life:

> "Well, I don't know. They committed the crime. So they kind of, like, brought themselves on to it. So if they don't enjoy it then… But I suppose if there was something that they really needed help with they could always ask for it". (Ben, 16)

> "It's one of them things. You just have to get on with it. Or just don't do the crime! Then you don't have to do all that stuff". (Sarah, 17)

> "It's just simple, isn't it. If you want to get the help then you have to put the effort in yourself. It's not like, you know – it's not gonna happen overnight". (Taylor, 16)

For there to be success, namely the refraining from further engagement in criminal activity and/or the achievement of positive outcomes, these children emphasised the role internal forces play. They spoke about the importance of effort required on their part and acceptance of responsibility to alter their circumstances and modify their attitudes and behaviours. In the process, they downplayed the role of external forces in shaping behaviours, namely socio-economic forces that can be beyond their ability to control, and relationships with others who could influence them and, or their life trajectory (Bodovski, 2015).

There appeared to be an 'illusion of freedom' littered in their accounts. The young people referred to above also dismissed any sense of entitlement on their part thus perhaps this is a reflection of their lower-class position in society. It is relevant to refer here to the neo-liberal project, and specifically the illusion perpetuated by government and the privileged in society, that human subjects are reflexive agents who are able to control or influence their own destinies (Rogowski, 2018). There appears little acknowledgment within neo-liberal discourses, that children, young people and their families, especially those from a low socio-economic background, adjust and indeed lower 'their aspirations [and

perceptions of their place in the world] according to their perceived chances of success' (Bodovski, 2015:44; Rogowski, 2018).

Several children perceived adults in positions of authority as 'the ones in the know' or the 'experts'. In turn, they felt unable and unwilling, at times, to adopt a decision maker role or even contemplate the idea of being in a position of power and control over matters that affected them.

Notwithstanding this argument, it is important not to caricature or homogenise young people's experiences (Haines and Case, 2015). As explored in Chapters four and nine, researchers have an ethical responsibility to conduct a rigorous/systematic analysis and present an accurate, yet critical reflection of participant views, their lived 'ordinary' experiences and the 'manysidedness, of social reality' or 'plurality of worlds' (Bourdieu, 1990:21). More specifically, researchers have a responsibility to reflect diverse viewpoints, knowledges and varied practices, questioning and treating the 'differences' or contradictions 'between data as significant and enlightening as similarities' (Wincup, 2017b:12).

Thus, on the other hand, some children and young people felt a more participatory approach to decision making was needed:

> "…they should have more of a say. Like, obviously, you can't just give the kids this and that. Or whoever's on it. But they should have more of a say. Cos I think they should have a bit more – obviously the adults have still gotta be in charge – but the youths should get a better say in what they want". (George, 17)

George was, to a greater or lesser extent, receptive to the idea of sharing power/control.

Service user feedback meetings

As noted, I was a participant observer at several service user feedback forums. No service users were present. The reasons for not establishing a service user council (or equivalent) often related to the challenges deciding which children (i.e. the type of court order or nature of the offence) should be 'targets for participation'. For example, whether it should be children who appeared disengaged/disempowered or those complying/participating who should be actively recruited to participate in such steering or advisory groups.

Levi, an ex-service user, passionately discussed how young people should be involved in designing policies. If children are denied the opportunity to take on a scrutinising role or a place at the negotiating table with professionals, he felt the policies will inevitably be fragmented and partial, grounded in an adult rather than a child world view. Nevertheless, the focus appeared to be on seeking the views of young people who completed a divert intervention, as opposed to those with more prolonged involvement with the service, thus not capturing a 'diversity of voices', hearing some perspectives but in the process silencing others (English and Bolton, 2016).

Professionals were apprehensive about recruiting ex-offenders to such roles as this risked them retaining an 'offender' identify (see Chapter seven). It was felt this could be counterproductive in terms of preventing

their involvement in further crime or contact with the justice system. Similarly, Grayson, a manager, referred to the potential limitations providing former 'youth offenders' who entered adulthood with such opportunities. He felt their experience was filtered through an adult lens.

> "sometimes the people that get trotted out at conventions and conferences and all the rest of it are, you know – they're high-achieving adults talking about their experiences as a child. Which has its own validity – you know, I'm not decrying that – but there's nothing quite like speaking to the kids as it's happening as well…if we're trying to get kids to be involved in engagement and design and delivery of the services that they are involved with, you've gotta speak to them here and now". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

This manager was supportive of the idea of a focus group that involved current 'young offenders' or children on different types and lengths of court orders. However, he cautioned that there would have to be careful consideration about any potential power imbalances. He was also receptive to the idea of inviting young people who were ex-offenders to be a part of the group. However, as alluded to above, he was hesitant about this in that those young people may not be representative of the 'voice of the child' and indeed those former 'offenders' themselves may not be supportive of the idea, feeling they are in the process of 'moving on with their life'.

These young people may not feel motivated to continue their contact with the service once their court order has been completed. Nevertheless, putting young people's involvement (or lack of) in governance and the potential and actual benefits of user involvement at the individual level to

one side, some children alluded to a gap between the rhetoric and reality of participatory practices.

The rhetoric and reality of participatory practices

Several practitioners and managers acknowledged the importance of giving children a voice in youth justice:

> "so if you've got a young person on a court order, they're the ones that are being affected by interventions, resources, activities – so they should be part of what happens to them". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

They felt that by involving them in the design or development of supervision, this helps to secure their 'buy in'. However, although young people were not described as 'undeserving' rights holders (Whitty, 2009:120), some professionals were of the view that children were not entitled to influence certain aspects of the decision-making process. Indeed, one Youth Offending Team Manager, not too dissimilar to other managers, was unsure, and had 'mixed views' as to what extent children should be entitled to shape interventions or influence how services are delivered:

> "Yeah. I'm a bit on the fence with this. I think young people should have some say in, sort of, the way that their interventions are delivered, and things like that. But in other ways, sort of in the way that the service is structured, what we're directed to do under our statutory obligations, et cetera, there shouldn't be any say from them, if you like". (Grace, YOT Manager)

What is more, if the child does not want to complete a particular intervention and voices this opinion to their worker, the youth justice professional can override the child's decision and impose an intervention:

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> "… he's committing burglaries to fund his cannabis use. And he's told the police in police interviews. But when it comes to us, he's not, he's saying, "No, no, I don't want to see a drug and alcohol worker. I can't not put drug and alcohol on his change plan, even though he's saying, "No, I'm not gonna do it". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

According to George, who was subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Bail, denying young people a voice can result in them feeling angry and potentially result in acts of non-compliance (also see Ugwudike, 2011). If children are prevented from passing judgement, they might disengage and/or avoid attending meetings with the Youth Offending Team.

If they have a say in the process and are involved in deciding the content and format or framework of the interventions, this can result in approaches that better reflect their interests and circumstances. This can result in their meaningful participation, facilitate compliance and a positive experience of supervision. As George went on to say:

> "And they don't have a say in what they do, it's just gonna get them more angry. And more… for example, say if they didn't want to do something, and they're not getting spoke to, and they're just taking orders and taking orders – they're not really gonna benefit from it. They're just gonna be more angry at the YOT. So if young persons get a say in what they can do, then it'll help 'em. Cos it'll be a more positive experience for 'em". (George, 17)

One child talked about how opportunities to input into his own intervention plan were severely limited. He referred to the service tending to impose their vision, compelling him to adhere to their agenda and its requirements. Organisational needs, not children's wishes, tended to be at the forefront of service delivery, as this quotation illustrates:

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> "It should be, but what it is and what it isn't is two different things, innit. Like, obviously I'd like to have more of a say in what I'm doing…What meetings I'd go to, and stuff that I think's productive for me. But, obviously they've got the way they work, innit, so…". (Tommy, 16)

Similarly, Callum, who was subject to a Youth Rehabilitation Order, and was interested in securing an apprenticeship near to when his order was complete, wanted to be more involved in discussions on matters that affected his life. Specifically, he wanted to have more of a say on how often he was required to attend meetings with his Youth Offending Team Officer:

> "…cos it would give me more of a say, wouldn't it? Like I could say, like, once every two weeks. And then I'd have like a week break. But, dunno – they choose innit. Not me who chooses." (Callum, 15)

Relatedly, Justin reflected upon his experiences of being on an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance court order. He said how sometimes it would be nice to influence his timetable of activities that was devised by his worker. Justin felt he provided minimal input into deciding the content of supervision sessions:

> "…I get a timetable, like, for a week, and it shows me what I've got to do in the week… Obviously, like, they'd listen to my opinion. But it's not up to me to choose". (Justin, 15)

However, although Logan, whose case was going to the Crown court, disliked being on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Bail (and especially disliked the curfew element that was imposed), he was appreciative of the support he was receiving from his workers, notably assistance with securing a place at college to study plastering:

> "Being involved in YOT – it's just shit, innit. I don't want to be involved with them. Didn't want to be. But, like, the people who do the meetings and that – they're sound people. I get on with them". (Logan, 17)

Logan (17) described his meetings as 'easy' because of a relaxed, informal atmosphere that was created by his workers who he says were committed to establishing good relationships. He was particularly pleased at not being forced to complete written tasks during his one-to-one sessions. Opportunities were 'opened-up' for him by his workers, and in turn he was successful in gaining entry onto a plastering course.

However, Joseph (15) reflected upon many negative experiences he has had with his social workers prior to involvement with the Youth Offending Team. On many occasions he felt they let him and his family down:

> "But she never come. She said, "Erm, I'll be there at 12." So I sat in with my mum till 12. Well, sat in till three. Waiting for her. Cos, you know, in case she was a bit late. She didn't ring my mum to say she weren't coming. So I thought, we might have got the wrong day. So I done it again the next day. And she didn't come again. And then I've not seen her for months and months and months, and then, I was thinking that she'd stopped doing her job – do you know what I mean?" "And this car's pulled up on my front, man. It was only my social worker. She didn't come and see me – she went to the house in the corner". (Joseph, 15)

Jon (14) was equally damning of the support he received from his social workers:

> "We've had like five social workers, and they don't know what they've been doing. The first one was horrible to us. And, went to court – at the beginning, when the police were involved, there was this one person who treated us like monsters." (Jon, 14)

If the requirement is that children accept responsibility for their actions they may feel a sense of injustice, perceiving their treatment as illegitimate, if they witness professionals being absolved of their duty to care (Robinson, 2014).

One manager referred to the concept of legitimacy. According to him, professionals should demonstrate a sense of moral and psychological commitment to the relationship with a view to the child viewing their treatment as fair and just:

> "It's got to be legitimate, it's got to be non-abusive, and actually, for real power to work, the person on the receiving end has got to recognise the legitimacy of it". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

Despite Grayson's points about a sense of justice or 'fair play', Justin (15) described the Youth Offending Team as 'nosy' asking too many questions about his personal life:

> "…say if you've got a meeting with CAMHS or summat, they wanna know everything about it. And I don't really want them to know, to be honest. Like, all's their job is to do is to stop me from reoffending – they don't have to know about my personal life". (Justin, 15)

Although Justin (15) described his workers as going 'out of their way to help', he felt frustrated at having to answer further questions as part of assessments. He described being interviewed on numerous occasions - for example by the police, and as part of the pre-sentence report that was being written – and felt the youth justice workers were 'over-assessing' him.

He referred to them as being too 'nosy', asking further questions and probing into many aspects of his life that he felt did not always have relevance:

> "I don't see the point. Cos that's what the court's for … They're basically doing the same thing. That's what I mean about them being a bit too nosy sometimes". (Justin, 15)

Zain had been with the Youth Offending Team for a few years on different court orders. He had a troubling childhood, having lost his close friend to suicide at a young age. He reflected upon his experience of attending a meeting where he felt he was judged negatively, viewed as having a 'difficult character' (Bourdieu 2007:94). Consequently, he felt prevented from having his say and ventilated his frustrations.

Despite trying in vain for the Youth Offending Team to listen to his side of the story, he felt the service induced personal feelings of 'otherness' (silenced/excluded). This was due to the service not - or seldom - acknowledging his perspective about a problematic relationship he had with one worker:

> "… If I tell them, they'll just sit there. Like, I was telling [one worker] that I didn't like [the other worker]. She was like, "Don't speak…" "No, I need to tell someone." She was like, "Well don't be telling me. Tell [another worker]". (Zain, 17)

Zain also reflected on another occasion where he felt the author of his pre-sentence report presented a distorted view of the situation. As a result, he felt a sense of betrayal in that he had read - and according to him provisionally approved - a version of the report, but it was then severely altered, unbeknown to him, until appearing in court.

Throughout his account, he expressed a sense of fatalism or hopelessness about the situation (English and Bolton, 2016). Nevertheless, several young people felt their workers were open to negotiation and compromise or 'a bit of give and take' (Sienna, YOT Support Officer) with a view to reaching 'a shared understanding… in a language that [was] clear, explicit and accessible…' (Trevithick, 2012:259).

George acknowledged the unequal distribution of power in the child/worker relationship (also see Chapter six). However, he discussed how, although he was subject to a court order and had to comply with requirements/conditions, he felt he had not forfeited the right to have his say. According to George, the young person's viewpoint should not be peripheral, opportunities to have his say should not be foreclosed; practice should be empowering and consultative, acknowledging that he is an 'active agent in his own development' (Davies, 2015:168).

According to George, children and young people are entitled to influence the type of support they receive, and deserve to be understood, as this quotation illustrates:

> "…if you're on an order or something, you've done summat wrong. So it's not like you can have everything your way. But, someone's gotta be in charge. But I think it should be more understanding about what the person wants. And not just, "This is what you're doing, this is what you're doing – I'm in charge. Like, obviously they're still in charge, but they should be a bit more understanding. And listen. And there should be more options for kids to do stuff". (George, 17)

It can be inferred from this extract that if children are 'done to', this can disrupt their willingness to comply and engage positively in the supervision process (Barry, 2000). Interestingly, although Jon (14) was broadly supportive of decision-making being shared between him and his worker, at times, he felt it necessary, for professionals to impose their views or take charge of setting the agenda:

> "Cos, sometimes I don't even know what I want, and they might know what can help me... sometimes you don't know what's best for you, really". (Jon, 14)

Some children were uncomfortable with the idea of recommending to panel members what should be included in their referral order contracts. Whilst Logan acknowledged that young people are human beings, and more specifically the 'next generation' who deserve a say on how they will be treated, he was also not particularly interested in influencing the decision-making process:

> "I'm not interested in court, YOT, or all the other things like that. So, I've got nothing to say on it, really". (Logan, 17)

If he was to be the principal decision maker, Logan alluded to feeling like a 'fish out of water' in such a situation. He would not be able 'feel the weight of the water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127). Thus, he would self-exclude from participation if he was asked to shape the contents of his intervention, including discussing, negotiating, or contesting a professional judgment or asked to provide feedback on his experiences of being cared for by the service.

One practitioner described children sometimes not wanting to be involved in decision-making:

> "I think it depends which young person you talk to, because I have certain young people that I talk to that are just... just wanna do their order and get it over and done with, and they're not really interested in anything else, they don't really care, erm, about, kind of, changing the way that things work for other young people, if you like". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

When asked about what improvements could be made to the service children were receiving, some children were hesitant in answering. Some felt they were not qualified to pass judgement:

> "I'm not gonna answer that… questions like that! I dunno myself, do you know what I mean? It's just, like… the only thing I can say is, like, give, like… us – my age people – give more, like, chances to do something else. Not just, like, music. Do some form of, like, arts. Whatever they're interested in, do you know what I mean?". (Anthony, 17)

> "I don't think it's up to me to say that, is it? I don't think… I don't get a say in what the YOT do, do I?". (Tommy, 16)

> "Yeah. Well, I don't know. I'm not... It's not really for me to say … Maybe there should be [greater opportunity for children to have a voice]. I don't know". (Sarah, 17)

These responses could be due to feelings of apprehension or insecurity and are perhaps reflective of the tacitly imposed discourse of 'know your place' and 'do as you are told'. Some young people felt they were expected to comply with the 'order of things' and in so doing provide their assent. Nevertheless, as these quotes indicate, contributing to discussions on youth justice policy/practice, or how the service operates, would be a discomforting role for some young people.

Although Anthony, Tommy and Sarah did allude to the need for the service to offer more leisure and social opportunities that they could be a part of, it could be argued, they ultimately appeared to have persuaded 'themselves of the legitimacy of their exclusion' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:209) from broader decision-making processes.

Offender focused activities

Professionals experienced difficulties maximising engagement notably as they felt pressure to deliver offender focused activities (Haines and Case, 2015). Some professionals subverted offence-focused policy and mediated risk infused rhetoric (see Chapter six). Several practitioners discussed the need to tackle children's underlying issues and complex backgrounds - which may not necessarily be criminogenic issues - prior to offence-focused work:

> "We've done a timeline approach to try and talk about the positives that have happened to date, to take it away from the offending behaviour, to then bring it back to it. So eventually we will come back to it. But he's been on this referral order for like… he's been to his review panel, so he's already been on it nearly three months – we've not done any offence-based work yet. We've literally just looked at his past, looked at his learned behaviours, and his family". (Freya, YOT Officer)

Although some professionals felt a focus on offending behaviour was intertwined with a needs-led approach, others described being apprehensive about the appropriateness of focusing on matters that were non-criminogenic, as this quotation from one Youth Offending Team Officer, illustrates:

"they're giving you something. They're engaging, communicating their thoughts with you. It's just not about what you wanted to focus on all the time. he's not done any of his offence-based work and I'm thinking, "Does that make me look a bit… rubbish?" If you like, as a case manager? Because I've not actually addressed any of his offence with him yet. But, I mean, don't get me wrong – he has got a lot… for me, it's been a lot better, cos we've looked at his learned behaviour and where it's come from". (Freya, YOT Officer)

Despite desistance being a 'gradual process with a number of false starts' (Gobbels, et al., 2015:67), practitioners felt anxious that criticisms may be levelled at them for not carrying out work that was sufficiently offence or offender focused. What is more, some practitioners felt compelled by their line manager to record the case as completed successfully despite evidence of poor engagement, thus distorting completion rates. They felt discouraged, at times, from choosing the partially completed option on the system.

Some professionals discussed how they tended to be clear and explicit with children about the remit of their work. Some were particularly committed to sharing power and control with children due to the difficulties securing participation in supervision sessions. This involved not being deficit based or perceiving children as morally corrupt (Humphreys and Teater, 2018).

This approach involved being positive and strengths-based, recognising their evolving capacities and acknowledging that it is the practitioner's responsibility to allow children opportunities to share their experiences, opinions and reflections on their care.

In relation to one child, it appeared, throughout the process, his right to choose was respected not as a token gesture but in a meaningful way:

> "Like the young person I'm talking about, it's been a positive experience. Because he's had a lot of choice, and we have kind of let him lead what work we do. Because he's so not willing to engage, anyway. We might as well go off what he's willing to talk about. Cos otherwise we're getting nowhere fast". (Freya, YOT Officer)

Nevertheless, some young people who had come into contact with the Youth Justice System described supervision as something that 'just happens' (France, 2015) and was 'done to', not 'with' them. Paul (16) for example, who was subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance and had been on an order of some type since the age of 12, thought being on an order was an inconvenience. He described it as taking up too much of his time and felt he wished he was not on it.

Several young people did not see any substantial benefit to sharing their opinions, experiences and reflections, and contributing extensively to discussions or influencing the shape or design of their supervision, as these typical quotations illustrate:

> "It's pointless me doing it man. Cos they're trying to learn me about knife crime, mate. But it's not working. Cos they're coming in and just chatting shit". (Joseph, 15)

> "Cos I don't get owt out of it. I don't see any... any point in it. It's just stupid". (Zain, 17)

> "there's some stuff that shouldn't be there. There's some stuff that's a waste of their time and mine". (Tommy, 16)

> "it's just shit being involved with them, innit. I don't really want to be involved with them, like. But what can I do?". (Logan, 16)

Some young people were keen to provide insight into what does and does not work for them and their circumstances (Nacro, 2008:6). Nevertheless, although practitioners often referred to the importance of being creative and proactive with their cohort of young people, they described the difficulties they encountered when attempting to motivate some children.

As noted, some young people appeared reluctant to engage or to participate in processes that they essentially viewed, initially at least, as a punishment that they wanted 'over and done with'.

> "… we bend over backwards... to get them through their Orders…I have certain young people that I talk to that ... just wanna do their order and get it over and done with, and they're not really interested in anything else…". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

> "… trying to get them to engage, to focus on what you're trying to teach them [can be challenging]". (Sienna, YOT Support Officer)

> "… I'll go and pick them up, or I'll ring them and say, "Right, you know you've got an appointment now. I'm on my way! Come on, get ready, be at that door!" You know, things like that. Whereas people'll just say, "He's had an appointment, he's had a text, which... he's had all that, and that's enough." But I just, like, wanna: "Come on." You know, 'cause you've got to get them motivated". (Lorna, Supervision Worker)

> "I know if I was a young person out on the street, entrenched in the criminal justice system, getting involved in dealing and stuff like that – would I shite want to participate. I'd just be like, "What the fuck?" I'd just get my order done, and that's that, innit". (Grace, YOT Manager)

In terms of the court ordered face-to-face work the Youth Offending Team delivered, several children and young people viewed reparative and worksheet activities as meaningless. Kelvin (17) who was subject to a Youth Rehabilitation Order, had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and an Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) diagnoses. He was receiving support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. According to Kelvin, he had a reputation within his neighbourhood for being a 'troublemaker' (he had a 'very big name for himself' which he said 'wasn't good'). He reflected on the difficulties he experienced shifting such a negative perception, which, he felt, severely restricted his chances, constraining his opportunities and choices, to 'move on' with his life.

Although Kelvin had a long period of abstinence from using illegal substances, at the time of the interview, he reflected on how he was using cannabis as a coping strategy having been denied access - for several months following the restraining order being issued – to see his child. Kelvin's mental health problems and learning disabilities, and on-going difficulties with his ex-partner, formed his dispositions towards the social world (Bourdieu 2007). Although he spoke favourably about the relationship he had formed with his drug and alcohol worker, he viewed his meetings with other professionals as a 'waste of their time', 'a pain in the arse', tokenistic and demotivating.

Similarly, practitioners described a lack of creativity in sessions. They felt the experience was quite a dull one for participants:

"It seems very structured and always quite boring, really, for them. Even though it's not meant to be, erm… a really good experience, because they've done a crime and they're sort of paying back for what they've done, I still think we could be creative, and actually then the young people would take things on board". (Esme, YOT Officer)

Practitioners described how some young people were required to attend and participate in anger management courses they had completed on previous occasions. Although some practitioners felt this was inappropriate, others regarded the decision to include this intervention in a child's action/change plan or referral order contract as relevant due to the nature of the (further) offence(s) committed.

Several young people articulated narratives related to other activities they had completed with their supervising officers. Aaron (17) having committed a serious sexual offence, had long and intensive involvement with the Youth Offending Service. He reflected upon a specific intervention he had completed with his worker. He described it as a 'life snake', a timeline activity of what he expected to achieve between entry and exit from the service, within four years, the length of his court order.

He described having to write on post-it-notes what he wanted to achieve but reflected upon how initially he wanted 'everything there and then' but following discussion with his worker realised this was not realistic. He negotiated expectations with his worker and agreed that for success to happen it would require commitment and dedication on his part and would not be achieved instantly.

During the interview, he explained how he was nearing the end of his court order and how now he felt a sense of satisfaction, becoming a more empathic person in the process. Similarly, other children and young people reflected upon some of the offender and offence-focused activities they had participated in:

> "…I did about, like getting into trouble and that. If that's like me or if it's not like me". (Tim, 15)

> "…she had this big sheet and there was two people and it said "not like me" and "just like me". And you had these little cards, and you had to put it on which one. So like a card would say "I get in trouble all the time". (Ben, 16)

> "About reoffending and that, and how you can stop reoffending. What you can do to, like, help keep away from it". (Paul, 16)

> "The negative gets brought up a lot, which pees me off, cos why would you want to talk about that? But I am focusing on more positive stuff". (George, 17)

George, who was completing a sports course at college and was optimistic about his future, explained how, at times, his workers did not recognise or praise his positive attitudes and behaviours. Nor did they, at times, seek to build his strengths and competencies and fulfil his personal goals. However, Ben (16) did not feel he was being judged for his past behaviours. He felt he had been given a fresh start:

> "I like that about them – that they don't really keep bringing it up and that, and keep giving you lectures on why you shouldn't have done it". (Ben, 16)

Tim (15), who was subject to a referral order, reflected on an anger management intervention he had participated in, particularly the beneficial effects it had on his thinking and behaviour.

Specifically, he said how this activity helped him to develop his problem-solving skills and ability to cope in difficult situations. Jon (14) who was also subject to a Referral Order, talked about how the work he undertook with the Youth Offending Team made him feel 'happier' and had particularly helped him to control his anger better and not "bottle things up". However, Sarah's (17) experience differed somewhat describing such meetings as tokenistic and bureaucratic:

> "…it's boring. I never... like, [with] my old YOT worker, when I used to, like, sit in a room with her, like, paper, all I used to do is, like, change the subject, and just talk about something else. So I didn't have to do anything. And that was it. She'd be like, "Oh, I'll... I'll do it." And then just say, "Oh no, I can't be bothered," and then just talk about something totally different. 'Cause it's just boring. Filling all things out and stuff. I'd rather just be, like, hands-on, than thinking. Don't know". (Sarah, 17)

To affirm or deny the voice of the child?

Youth Offending Services can experience difficulties ensuring young people comply with requirements when children present with complex backgrounds and are 'labelled unstable' (Bourdieu, 1990:116). Indeed, as was highlighted in Chapter two the lives of most young people who populate the Youth Justice System are shaped by poverty and social exclusion (Yates, 2010). Expecting young people, who have often experienced multiple adversity and trauma in their lives, to find their own solutions to problems can be a task seemingly impossible to achieve (Liddle, et al., 2016).

Children and young people, especially those with disabilities – perhaps who are not particularly articulate, literate and may lack confidence and assertiveness - may need specialist assistance to articulate their feelings or communicate their wishes, at each stage of the decision-making process, as these quotations illustrate:

> "most of them have got so many issues that the issues need to be tackled before we can even think about their offending behaviour. 'Cause you've got young people that have got, sort of, complex trauma, and... but ... they're committing criminal damage or assault, 'cause of this... 'cause of what they've been through, there's no point me telling them, "Ooh, we should do an anger programme!". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

> "…if you're in such personal turmoil, and you feel hypervigilant, and you feel that, you know, any kind of really small criticism pushes you over the edge, you're gonna find it really hard to do any of those things, aren't you? A relationship, employment, training. Because the minute you feel backed into a corner, and your shame is activated, you're gonna kick off." "And I think that that's perhaps what we don't… we don't consider. We just think people are being difficult. But actually, they're really struggling". (Hayley, Health Worker)

When attempting to engage a child in service design and delivery, according to the speech and language therapist, it is important to be mindful of a number of variables that can affect outcomes, not least the length of the court order, and how volatile the child's life is.

This worker explained how the vast majority of children who were referred to her for a speech, language and communication assessment were in need of strategies or specific interventions. This worker reflected on the many young people she works with who have language process abilities of seven-year-olds, experience difficulties understanding abstract

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language and reasoning, and struggle with flexible thought. More specifically, these children experienced a range of difficulties, often related to not properly understanding the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others. Underlying issues related to attachment and unresolved trauma added further complexity when working with such vulnerable individuals:

> "…grappling with emotional difficulties, mental health difficulties, long-term differences in the way that people think, long-term differences in the way that people understand and make relationships…". (Aria, Speech and Language Therapist)

Young people can be reluctant to talk about their traumatic histories. They can also deny that they have speech, language and communication problems. Approaching such issues requires sensitivity, acknowledging such factors as: age, maturity, the child's interests, individual needs, and cognitive abilities.

Some professionals acknowledged the difficulties expecting young people to change or step out of their persona. Young people may not be able to conceptualise the youth justice 'game'. They may lack the ability to understand what is required of them and feel unable to navigate complex systems and processes. Alongside this, children may not feel ready or in a position to take some control of their care and supervision, and may require assistance to achieve their potential, as these quotations illustrate:

> "…if you're going to reach them, you have to go about it in a slightly more subtle way". (Aria, Speech and Language Therapist)

"Participation can be all different forms…dependent on the child's upbringing, the child's environment, the child's situation, family factors, environmental factors, developmental factors and stuff like that, we have to consider that when we consider levels of participation… It may be about getting them ready to be involved in that situation, getting them geared up towards it as well, at the same time. So, from a YOT's perspective, it all depends on the child's needs and the child's abilities". (William, YOT Officer)

"I've got a young person that I work with who can't read or write, ... he's proper traumatised child from like, massive, massive domestic abuse, sexual abuse in his childhood, and he can't function, like, at all in a situation. He couldn't function in a group, 'cause he... he gets quite violent if ... he feels, like, threatened. So I have to think of ways to work with him… it is getting them to participate in different ways, I think". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

"I am very concerned that I am seeing a lot of kids who are in too difficult a place to really make many decisions, who are being expected to make some major decisions, but they're not in a position to understand the information to inform that… I do believe that kids should have some control over their lives. And I do believe that everybody should have some control over their lives. But if you are trying to give them control they are unable to manage, I think in some respects you're taking that control away". (Aria, Speech and Language Therapist)

"…they're always just in such a mess. They've got no sense of self. They don't know what they want from their lives… And when people feel ashamed, they cover that up by being angry, and sweary, and stompy, and difficult, and telling you to F-off, and, you know… And you've got to be able to see past that – allow that to happen". (Hayley, Health Worker)

Some professionals felt young people did not have the skills to participate, and were unable to manage their emotions effectively, at least without professional assistance.

Conclusion

This chapter presented findings on children's involvement in decision making. It discussed how young people tended to want their meetings over and done with and their involvement in the service to end. Professionals were aware of this, and of the view that, despite good intentions, at best they would often achieve passive or minimal compliance with court order requirements.

The chapter also discussed how some professionals referred to young people as often presenting in a vulnerable and emotional state, projecting anger and distress, rooted in experiences of adversity and trauma (Liddle et al., 2016). Some professionals felt because of this, those under supervision experiencing such 'existential crises' were ill-equipped to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process, without dedicated assistance. Whilst these were valid points, it could be argued, some professionals were overlooking children's potential. They were devaluing children's agency and service user experiential knowledge. In so doing, they were prioritising or legitimising, albeit with 'good intentions' (Pratt, 1986:229), professional expertise and their 'superior grasp of the truth' (Snook, 1990:160), which confers distinction and value.

The next chapter explores the niche, under-researched area of children's involvement in high-risk multi-agency professional meetings. It also explores issues related to managerialism, resource and workload pressures and interrelated discourses of risk management, public protection and children's participation.

Chapter 6: The nature of and interplay between 'deficit-facing' and strengths-based participatory oriented practices

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of empirical data related to the 'logic', form and function of high-risk multi-agency professional meetings. The hybrid, ambiguous and infinitely complex nature of youth justice policy and practice is also explored. The prospects of a homology of participative approaches, managerialist bureaucracy and risk-oriented practices will be critically considered.

Children's involvement in multi-agency high-risk meetings: a practitioner's perspective

Youth Offending Services have systems and processes in place to define and classify risk. At the research site, young people who were deemed to be 'high risk' were subject to additional supervision and monitoring. At the central core of high-risk meetings was the aim was to reduce the harm to the public and/or prevent adverse outcomes to the child - safety and wellbeing were key considerations. This, at times, resulted in the instigation of restrictive external controls (i.e. curfew) being put in place and other relevant or 'appropriate' measures of surveillance and control imposed on young people.

According to an in-house policy on risk procedures, the service provided young people with opportunities to input into multi-agency high risk professional meetings, either in writing or verbally through their case

manager (Baker, 2009:105). The in-house document included the words 'where possible' in relation to the involvement of young people in risk assessment and management processes, indicating that it is not always possible to be respectful to the child's perspective or reflect their views.

As several workers explained, young people should know how and why they are assessed, and professionals should instigate a discussion with the young person about how their risk level can be reduced. However, several professionals felt they did not need the young person physically present at the high-risk meeting to have the voice of the child and their thoughts, their feelings, and their sentiments present. The high-risk meetings involved professionals discussing the risks or vulnerabilities a child posed. The professionals decided on a plan of action to manage such risks and prevent negative outcomes from occurring.

However, I probed further. I embarked on a path somewhat unexpectedly, questioning the 'way things have always been done' (France, 2015:82) by some of those practising in the field (see Chapter nine). I was aiming to strip away certainties (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:9) by questioning aspects of practice. These aspects were, at times, uncritically viewed as 'standard' or 'second nature'. It was subsequently discovered that the organisation did not invite children to attend the meetings with professionals to discuss how the risks identified could be managed effectively:

"…I know initially, the Youth Justice Board, when they were looking at, you know, like the ROSH [Risk of Serious Harm] and stuff like that, and the RMP [Risk Management Plan], and the risk management stuff – you were actually meant to share that with the young person. So they knew what risk they were. They knew how many contacts they'd have. They knew what was in the ROSH, in relation to their risk. This is – I'm talking years ago, when it first come out. You were meant to actually share that. And there were even some youth offending services, many moons ago, that used to invite the young person to the risk meeting, and the family. … that doesn't happen now. Cos it – I suppose, as you all sit round the table, discussing the risk, it's difficult to discuss it openly and honestly, with the young person and their mother or father or carer sat there". (Grace, YOT Manager)

I attempted to 'make problematic' what appeared 'as taken for granted' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:9). In so doing, it was discovered that the structures, systems and processes, including the justifications for their exclusion, were not clearly articulated and did not appear to be transparent to young people – I suspected it was a 'quasi-mysterious' (Grenfell, 2014d:166) process to children. Young people appeared not be offered legitimate opportunities to participate 'in a way that they [were] comfortable with' (YJB, 2016:4).

Some discarded the idea and for others it was almost unthinkable to not have them present - essentially it was a hotly disputed topic. Several professionals said how, retrospectively, the voices of professionals eclipsing the child's wishes, was an error in judgement. It resulted in them experiencing challenges 'on the ground', as these typical remarks from practitioners illustrate:

"I think it's a bit bizarre actually…I've got one upcoming with – social care are coming, management here are coming, I'm coming, obviously. I've invited the support worker. So but the most important person is not there…how can we change anything if that child's not included and able to give their views? So I find it a bit bizarre, that we're making decisions about the young person, who's not attending…". (Esme, YOT Officer)

"Because, really, you know, you're making big decisions, particularly around risk and vulnerability on someone, when you're not really getting any kind of buy-in. The problem with the high-risk meetings is you can make these big decisions – everybody's like, "Yep. I think that's the way to go." It's down to me then to go and sell that to the young person. And what if they don't buy it? I've got to do it to them, haven't I, really?... I can tell them that "we've assessed you as high-risk, for these reasons", but I don't think it really means anything to them. But if they're in a meeting, with maybe a small number of people saying, "Right, we think that, you know, at the moment you're high-risk because of these reasons." It might just bring it home to them and might help with the interventions as well". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

These accounts describe the challenges practitioners experience, striking a balance between their roles and responsibilities as 'law enforcers' and their duty to involve children as partners in processes. To deny young people, even those enmeshed in crime/offending behaviour (Robinson, 2016), who arguably can be 'expert risk managers and survivors' (Mitchell, et al., 2001:218), the opportunity to attend, using the justification that it would be inappropriate or ineffective, is somewhat myopic or short-sighted (Phillips, 2016).

Having said that, as Grayson, a manager acknowledged, 'sometimes a child knows much, much better than you do [in terms of where] the danger points are'. Despite a focus on capturing the views of the child about the risks they pose, it was essentially adults who 'framed the

'problem' in particular ways, valuing certain factors and ignoring others' (Tisdall, et al., 2008:347).

To argue that young 'violent or sexual offenders' should be given an opportunity to confront professionals at a meeting and influence decisions concerning how their risk level should be managed, is a stance that could draw fire from some (Bourdieu, 2007; Robinson, 2011). If they were to be invited to the meetings, this could disrupt the status quo. It is perhaps disconcerting for those who would be disadvantaged by this stance and those vying for power and influence over the content or process of high-risk management meetings (English and Bolton, 2016). Arguably, it is not a particularly appealing argument, given the potentially serious nature of some of the offences the young people may have committed (Robinson, 2011).

Nevertheless, it became a polemical (controversial) argument or at least a contentious and seriously complicated topic. As some of the accounts from practitioners indicate, the consequences of not ensuring the views of 'high risk' children were given due weight in decision-making, was frontline professionals struggling to secure 'buy in' from those under supervision. This was most acute when attempts were made to justify the decisions to children during subsequent one-to-one meetings. Consequently, case managers discussed the difficulties of moving beyond passive compliance, and creating and sustaining change, with children who reacted negatively, at times, to the decision that external restrictions were to be imposed.

Some of these measures were perceived by children as intrusive, not reflective of their preferences or interests, resulting in their reluctance to comply (See Chapter five).

Nonetheless, if professionals provide suitable justification or reasoning to the child on how the decision was reached, this can help to prevent them feeling aggrieved or resentful and potentially increase compliance with conditions or the restrictions imposed (Wood and Kemshall, 2008:151). It is crucial that professionals avoid manipulating young people into submission, not least, to avoid a situation whereby young people retreat into non-compliance and/or become disillusioned.

A strategy of transparency has potential to help children overcome feelings they are unable to affect the direction of a specific course of action or power/influence over their care and treatment. This type of strategy may also pay dividends in the future, potentially enhancing children's participation/engagement in systems and processes.

Several professionals alluded to the importance of not 'abstracting' (or disconnecting) young people 'from the process of assessing and managing the risks they present' (Ministry of Justice, 2007:19). However, one Youth Offending Team Officer talked about how, at times, it was appropriate to override the young person's wishes on matters related to the format/content of interventions, in the interests of public protection, if they were assessed as high risk of harm or vulnerability:

> "…participation is kind of like the cream of the crop. The goal that you always want to achieve, but realistically we know we can't always get it. Because those – safeguarding, risk of harm to the public, you know, risk of reoffending – is just so high, that we do have to focus our energies there". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

Nevertheless, without the child present at such meetings, the risk-based plans may not be fully reflecting accurately the story behind the child's offending (McNeill, 2009). For example, '…the origins of [the child's] difficulties in the context of their relationships, social circumstances, life events, and the sense that they have made of them' (Johnstone, 2017, cited in Taylor, et al., 2018:197) may not have been comprehensively explored.

One professional considered the decision to exclude the child from attending high-risk management meetings to contravene the child's human rights. Indeed, at this practitioner succinctly put it:

> "I think it's morally indefensible, actually, to discuss people without them being there for at least part of it". (Hayley, Health Worker)

Symbolic violence

When I asked what substantiated their position, one Youth Offending Team Officer described professionals being much more candid in the absence of parents and service users. Symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990) was asserted and exercised by professionals yet unperceived by young people – they seemed unaware of this exclusionary mechanism.

Despite one manager emphasising the importance of engaging with the child about the management of their own risk and striving to achieve substantive compliance, according to one professional, the majority of children classified as 'high risk' were unaware of this judgement and the implications it had:

> "…the majority of young people don't even know that we class them as a high risk. Unless there's been a pre-sentence report written, and it's in there. No, I don't think they do. I think they think that we have concerns about them, but I don't think they realise the risk tariff ladder, if you like, and where they're placed on that…". (Grace, YOT Manager)

Nevertheless, I probed further and challenged what appeared to me to be their 'cherished beliefs', resulting in professionals sharing other reasons for not inviting young people to high risk management meetings. These reasons included: the fear that their presence at a meeting could hinder the core business of sharing police intelligence and detract from a focus on preventing opportunities for future criminal activity centred around 'restriction, surveillance, monitoring and control' (Kemshall and Wood, 2009:25).

Other reasons included: the sensitive and confidential nature of discussions; and the fear that, if children or their representatives were granted permission to attend, there would be an imbalance of power in the room. Young people may then potentially attempt to 'dominate the space' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:127), manipulate and control situations, leading to hostile encounters. This could be counterproductive to what is 'trying to be achieved' (Sutherland and Jones, 2008:32).

In addition, there could potentially be information, related to another child or a victim of the offence, that the 'young offender' who has allegedly caused the harm should not be privy to. This seemingly unconscious knowledge was brought to a conscious level through a critical reflexive discussion with frontline practitioners and senior managers, resulting in it becoming a somewhat contentious topic.

This was especially the case between professionals who possessed 'rigid' and those who possessed 'elastic' mental structures (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:58). Indeed, amongst some, the decision not to invite children and young people to the meetings, was largely perceived, initially at least, not as arbitrary and contingent, but as the 'natural order… which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned' (Bourdieu, 1977: 165-6).

Such order appears decided, imposed and maintained, with very little discussion with, or resistance from colleagues or young people, and 'made objective and incorporated into the habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990:83). This stance was reinforced or strengthened through professional discourse, reiterating that these young people had committed offences that were of a seriously violent and/or sexual nature and were deserving of their voices being marginalised or rendered invalid. This was the 'doxa', common opinion in the field (Bourdieu, 1977:166; see Chapter three), influenced subconsciously and consciously, as a 'precautionary better safe than sorry attitude to difficult (but not always risky) cases'

(Kemshall and Wood, 2009:32). Responses were 'based on classification and regulation over care and advocacy' (Scraton, 2007:6).

Essentially, it remained an adult-controlled agenda, at least partly anti-democratic, wherein power was not shared equally. At times, decisions were made irrespective of the child's own viewpoints on the matter, their aspirations or goals. Practitioners were making decisions on children's behalf. This was perceived as an ethically appropriate response to protect those under supervision 'against …making potentially harmful mistakes' (Kellett, 2009:44) in the future and inflicting potentially more harm on individuals within society.

One manager listed the difficulties inviting children to the meetings and reflected upon how problematic it would be to practically involve them and facilitate their meaningful input into the process. He also said he had previously held discussions with a select number of young people on the topic of their involvement in the meetings and was acting in their 'best interests':

> "Because we might be talking about some, you know, information in relation to the victim. Protective exclusion zones around victims' houses and all that kind of stuff… it would be quite difficult practically to see how that would work. And young people actually said that that's not something they would want to attend, but absolutely they would want to have their views represented, and the freedom to decide how their views are represented. And that that could be a letter – we've had one where a case manager's read out a letter. It was actually addressed to me as the chair". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

This account and list of reasons perhaps illustrates why their exclusion has been reinforced and perpetuated and gives a sense of the challenge making the process more democratic. I felt this view was more conservative or conformist than 'open minded' (English and Bolton, 2016:4).

If the meetings are underpinned by adult agendas, and adult assumptions/expectations, this could be an intimidating environment for a child, as this quotation illustrates:

> "… we'd have to have a think about how intimidating that would be. You know, if you're a young person, coming in a room full of professionals, including the police". (Esme, YOT Officer)

With that said, children may not be interested in participating in such meetings or contributing to forums of this type. Nevertheless, if young people are given opportunities to have their say and put forward their own views on the risks they pose, they may provide insights into what may or may not work for them.

For example, children could contribute to discussions on 'effective' external restrictions, and useful interventions/programmes or individual/structural approaches that might work for them and their circumstances.

As some professionals acknowledged, it is the child who will ultimately decide whether they are going to re-offend or not. Thus, securing their 'buy in' with regard to any assessment, plan or intervention is crucial:

"Because sometimes a child knows much, much better than you do when the danger points are. That's why we talk to them. So, you know, if you've not involved the child in management of their own risk, you've already gone… you've failed". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

"I think they should know how we assess them, and why we assess them at that level as well. And a discussion held about how they can reduce that risk". (Grace, YOT Manager)

"… we can manage risk but we can't eradicate risk. Ultimately they're the one that decides whether they're gonna go and pick up that, you know, knife and stab the rival gang member, or whatever it is". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

"they do have a say, because the... the Change Plan, they can... they can, erm, say what they think. Erm, if they... they wanna challenge something that's going in the Change Plan. But... and ultimately it's their... their Plan. You know, so if they don't buy into it, they're not gonna do it, are they?". (Lorna, Supervision Worker)

Redress the imbalance

Professionals feeling unable to speak openly and honestly in the presence of a child or young person was a challenge difficult to reconcile. However, if the service decided that young people were to be invited to the meetings, one practical suggestion would be to introduce or create a 'confidential slot' as a way to 'redress the imbalance' (English and Bolton, 2016:64). The young person could then enter the room for part of the meeting and hear what has been said about them and, where relevant, challenge any decisions related to, for example, judgements on the risk of their serious harm and/or vulnerability assessments or other relevant documentation that concerns them. This could help to maintain or enhance their engagement in the process. What is more, children may raise points here that professionals may not have considered.

Prior to the merger/organisational re-structure, one manager shared an example of where he had arranged for one young person's mentor, an ex-offender, to attend the high-risk meeting and act as an advocate for the mentee, whose case was being discussed:

> "he… absolutely represented that young person's views in a fantastic way. And altered the way that the case manager, and me as the chair of the risk meeting, had his risk management plan, intervention plan, you know. In terms of where he was seen, erm… you know". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

The advocate, a former offender and ex-care leaver, reflected on the support he had provided to a child. He discussed how, although the child's attendance at supervision meetings was sporadic, he was disappointed that the Youth Offending Team formally recorded this as non-compliance and, subsequently, was in the process of instigating breach proceedings.

However, he had the opportunity to attend a meeting where he advocated for him on his behalf. As a result, the Youth Offending Team provided the young person with an opportunity to re-engage in supervision sessions and continue on his current court order. The young person could have been compelled to attend youth court where the order could have been revoked and a different sentence passed, including the more severe option of youth custody.

One manager in particular valued this ex-offender's contribution in both high risk and compliance meetings. His challenging of the status quo - the way things were done - and the dominant adult discourse, based on so-called objective assessments, was not viewed with suspicion, a threat,

nor was his knowledge or viewpoint belittled or viewed as an unreliable source of information. His commitment to advocate for the child was not seen as an 'attempt to undermine proceedings' (Winter, 2015:204). Interestingly, another manager was receptive to the idea of an independent youth advocate role:

> "if we could have an independent youth advocate for every single kid who's under the supervision of the youth justice system. That would be brilliant. Because we do need somebody to hold people like us to account as well". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

As will be discussed further in Chapter eight, the Youth Offending Service convened compliance panels in an attempt to reduce rates of breach and enforcement measures. More specifically, if children were not complying with their court order requirements, they were invited to attend a panel comprising senior professionals and case managers, who decided whether breach proceedings should be actioned or not.

Although a minority of participants described the panels as overly rigid and, at times, uncomfortable for young people, it was considered an opportune moment to re-engage them in their court order in a positive and meaningful way. It was also considered, by a minority of participants, as a forum and a valuable opportunity for children, and their parents/carers, to reflect on their experiences and share their views on the quality of the service received. Children can 'air their views', and suggest areas for development, as these quotations illustrate:

> "…these compliance meetings also give a chance for the child to say what they want to say. Have parents or other supporters with them". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

"Some of them just kind of just sit and nod. Other ones would go on a… rant about how bad their YOT worker is… but those are good opportunities, cos you can have a bit of a backwards-and-forwards then, about that. And things. And the managers here are quite good in thinking about both sides". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

Power relations between children and professionals

Although research consistently demonstrates the central role of respectful and reciprocal child/adult partnerships (Stephenson, et al., 2007; also see Chapter five), there has been limited attention directed at how to establish and sustain 'effective' young person-worker relationships (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005). With that said, positive and constructive relationships are more likely to form when professionals avoid adopting a confrontational stance (see Chapter two).

However, having been asked to provide feedback on his experiences, one young person felt interrogated and judged negatively on his responses by a referral order panel member. A referral order is a community sentence given to children between the ages of 10 to 17 appearing in a youth or magistrates court. As part of the court order the child attends a panel meeting. Children are expected to participate and influence the decision-making process.

Ben (16), who was subject to a Referral Order, found attending the panel a positive experience, especially as, from his perspective, there was an opportunity to choose from a list of varied interventions and programmes, and provide his input into the contract.

However, Joseph, a young person who attended the panel meetings having been subjected to a referral order, spoke of dismissive attitudes from some adult panel members. He felt he was being labelled unfairly as un-cooperative, and out of frustration, reacted against this label:

> "Every time you go to a panel meeting you've gotta like fill in a little thing… I don't know what it is. I always just put 'yeah', 'no', 'yeah', 'no', 'yeah' 'no' on there… couldn't be arsed writing. I wanted to put 'nar'… "I put "nar" on it… She went, 'what's that?' Is that… slang?... cos she's like from a posh part of [the town]. And I said to her, I said "it fucking must be, mustn't it? … And, like, they kicked me out of the panel meeting and sent me home. She was really snobbery and that…". (Joseph, 15)

This young person did not want to provide feedback on his experience. Yet, when he did contribute, somewhat reluctantly, he felt there was rebuke or reprisal. There did not appear to be sensitivity regarding the differences of opinion between the adult and the child.

What occurred, it appeared, was a young person being asked for information but then being denied the opportunity to describe and 'give meaning to his own life' (Robinson, 2014:173). The results were then analysed – not by him or other service users – but from an *'adult perspective'* (Robinson, 2014:173 *my emphasis*).

Other young people I interviewed, described experiencing this process as consultation fatigue. They felt that by inputting into the process, this resulted in 'little tangible benefit to their daily experience' (Lundy, 2007:934). Relatedly, in terms of the panel questionnaire, not only was there cynicism on the part of young people about the whole process, practitioners queried the validity of young people's responses:

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"…the little questionnaires at panel now, I don't look at the young people and think they're giving their proper opinion. The parents are there, they're giving the opinions that they think probably the parents think they should write, and the people sat in front of them". (Alice, YOT Support Officer)

Grayson (YOT Manager) was frustrated that professionals were required to ask young people to complete the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation questionnaire and provide feedback electronically. It was perceived by others, similarly to the panel questionnaire, as a 'paperwork exercise' that was undertaken to adhere to targets. What was most disconcerting to him was the lack of clarity from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation regarding the process, related to how the information was to be analysed or how children's voices and responses would be acted upon:

"We're getting kids to fill in these forms. For what? What comes back?" Actually, nothing. Because all we're doing is asking kids for their opinions and then not valuing it". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

Young people's experiences of the referral order panel process

One Youth Offending Team Volunteer described the referral order panels as a disempowering and disengaging experience for young people:

"I feel that in the panel there's some work to be done in that way. Because the way we're sat and things – although we're supposed to be sat in circle, we end up sitting opposite each other. And it's sort of like us against that person. And it's quite a scary environment for them to be in. I feel like there needs to be more work in that way, for them to feel more comfortable and maybe so we can get more out of them. But, like I say, a lot of them do thank [you] at the end and say we've really had a lot of help from it". (Anna, YOT Volunteer)

Whilst acknowledging that young people are able to negotiate the contents of their panel contracts, one Youth Offending Team manager referred to the process as coercive in that if young people do not agree or accept the support and disengage, they can be returned to court. Furthermore, panel members can feel pressured to include in contracts offending behaviour interventions that have been suggested by report authors:

> "…I can see the frustrations of the panel members, because they're dictated to by a report which a professional YOS officer has written, to say what intervention's needed. So if that's so, what's the point of the panel?". (Grace, YOT Manager)

> "Like I've just written a Referral Order report today, erm, after an interview with the young person, and I've... he's in panel tomorrow, and I've made suggestions of what should go on his contract, and I'm pretty... a hundred percent sure that... ninety percent sure that when I look at the contract on Thursday, after panel, that whatever I've put will be on the contract. And the young person, kind of, won't have had much input into that, really. But that's because... that's the panel procedure that's a bit, kind of, tick box. And I think it needs to be improved so young people can say, "Well no actually, I'd like to do this," or, "I'd like to do that." But there isn't that much opportunity at the moment for them to do that". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

Grace, a Youth Offending Team manager, understood volunteer panel members frustrations in terms of constrained discretion. She explained how interventions seemed to be 'signed off' prior to the young person attending panel. Nevertheless, the acknowledgment from a volunteer, Anna, that young people were grateful for the help and support they received was reflected in the discussions I had with Ben, a young person studying creative media production at college.

This young person felt content, describing his experiences positively. He had opportunities to shape the content of his referral order plan:

> "Well yeah, I guess you get to choose what you wanna do. What you wanna work around. And you get treated nicely". (Ben, 16)

However, other young people described their experiences more negatively. They felt uncomfortable and in turn were unwilling to share their views with the panel members and influence the contents of their contracts:

> "… I don't really like being in meetings with pure people, me. I don't like having loads and loads of people, like, in a meeting, just talking about you". (Justin, 15)

> "They said, "Well you can pick up litter." And I just didn't… I just didn't talk, really. They didn't ask me to talk. They didn't say, "Well, what's your points on this. They didn't say that". (Baden, 15)

> "Just annoying. Dead stuck-up people, in the panel sometimes. Just don't like 'em. They just wanna hear what they wanna hear…". (Paul, 16)

Such feelings of dissatisfaction on the part of young people did not seem to be acknowledged nor were there attempts made to understand the roots of such discontent. To make the panels more inclusive, and engaging, one manager suggested several ideas. He was receptive, for example, to the idea of the chair of the panel visiting the young person prior to the formal meeting taking place to potentially reduce any worry or anxiety on the part of the child about the process. According to one manager, this approach could help to prevent non-cooperation and potential failure, and facilitate participation that is more meaningful:

> "…you'll [then] get the right type of contract, and you'll get the right type of order". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

This suggestion could help to reduce confusion, dispel myths and misconceptions about the process and ease, for example, the anxiety Ben experienced:

> "it wasn't, you know, intimidating people in suits. It was old people with their walking sticks". (Ben, 16)

Relatedly, Grayson, a manager, referred to how crucial it was that management bought into the benefits of giving children a stronger voice in the referral order process, and show commitment to driving a service user participatory agenda throughout systems and processes.

Unfair treatment inhibiting meaningful engagement

Zain felt a sense of injustice and described being subject to unfair treatment by his reparation worker. He averred that,

> "Imagine, right, your kid being on YOT. Like, one of your kids being on YOT. It's minus three, right? There's, like, snow just coming on to the ground. Your kid's got, like, a nice rig…he thinks he's gonna go and do summat else. …And they throw him in, saying, "Go and clean that stable" You'd be a bit fumed. And they didn't understand that answer. I said, "Why wouldn't you tell me, the day before or summat, what we're doing or what to wear?"…I said, "May as well turn back, cos I'm not doing it. Not in these clothes." She started flipping". (Zain, 17)

Zain was not acquiescent, accepting without contesting. Indeed, this quote illustrates Zain's resistance habitus and his somewhat rebellious temperament.

This seems the antithesis of a habitus the Youth Offending Team supposedly promote. Young people were discouraged from enacting any sort of 'legitimate rage' (Bourdieu, 1998b:viii) a 'taste for disputation' (Bourdieu 2007: 88) or attempt to 'enter into conflict' (Bourdieu, 1990:110) despite the circumstances.

Zain's hyperbolic doubt (Bourdieu, 1990) was understandable when considering how he was not issued with any prior information about what would be expected of him on the day of his reparation. Zain reacted to the situation by voicing his discontent, detailing how he had been mistreated. He became disinterested, choosing not to play the 'game' as he felt, *inter alia*, he would not reap the rewards if he shown effort and commitment (Bourdieu, 2004; also see Chapter five). These feelings were brought on as a result of not feeling 'valued' or 'listened to' (YJB, 2008:8), he depicted the system as not acting in his interests.

Subsequently, he withdrew his participation in the reparation project. It is important to note, the service has a complaints policy, and appears to seek to resolve dissatisfaction through an impartial, and fair investigation. This in-house policy encourages young people to provide valuable and useful feedback on the service they have received, not least to assist with improvements in 'customer satisfaction'.

According to Zain, his 'taste for disputation' or propensity to contest and resit the 'dominant definition' (Bourdieu, 1998a:70), was interpreted - possibly due to an aggressive tone/facial expression on his part - by the service as a confrontational and subversive stance.

It was seen as an 'hysterical outburst', and not in accordance with how the organisation expected him to behave. According to Zain, the decision to withdraw himself resulted in him being on the receiving end of a negative reaction/response from his worker, who he said 'started flipping'. Zain reported feeling judged negatively and excluded.

From his worker's perspective, Zain was 'disturbing the norm', intensifying the issue by not 'toeing the line' and complying with requests to 'clean the stable'. In the process, he was judged to be responsible for amplifying the tension and conflict which ensued between Zain and his reparation worker.

One child who was subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance felt he had minimal influence over his timetable of activities. Another child felt he had been denied permission to have his say over decision making. Several young people subjected to an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance order with differing lengths and intensities, described being subject to a somewhat restrictive programme (Robinson, 2014). They voiced concern at being issued with timetables that did not reflect their needs or wishes. Some felt interaction was overly negative and demanding (a litany of requirements) with the content often imposed rather than decided or agreed with them.

Justin disliked the insufficient focus on his goals resulting in him feeling dissatisfied with Youth Offending Service supervision:

> "I just don't see the point of doing these pointless meetings that are going nowhere for 16 month when I've got a chance there to go into the army when I'm 16". (Justin, 15)

His timetable did not appear to be tailored to his individual needs and appeared more controlling than centred on matters of engagement (Robinson, 2014). However, he was receptive to an approach that allowed him more influence over the process:

> "…the ISS, they set it as if everyone's, you know, like the same. But everyone's different. They should have, like, ISS set to their personalities…I've just got this big timesheet, there, and looking at it, thinking, "Oh my God. I can't be bothered." But if it was, like, summat I wanted to do, then I'd be like, "Yeah, decent". (Justin, 15)

Similarly, in a Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (2017) report, inspectors found that children and young people sentenced to the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) programme were often subjected to interventions that were insufficiently flexible, inhibiting their meaningful engagement, resulting in children being placed on orders with which they were 'unlikely to comply' (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2017). The authors of the report called for a more bespoke approach, specifically tailored to the individual needs of this vulnerable and challenging group of children and young people.

However, risk systems and offence-focused work continues to underpin the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspectorate framework (Case and Hampson, 2019). Desistance, constructive worker/child partnerships and promotional participatory practices appear to be more of a 'bolt on' as opposed to a true alternative or full departure from traditional risk-based approaches (Case and Hampson, 2019:11).

As alluded to in Chapter one, this is, to an extent, unsurprising when we consider the 'lack of' or limited 'evidence-based, research-informed consensus around new concepts and approaches in youth justice (e.g. the participation and desistance agendas) ...' (Case and Hampson, 2019:9).

Fighting on two demanding fronts: excessive bureaucracy and enhancing the lives of the disempowered

Despite rules, regulation, increased managerialism and audit-controlled approaches, there is inevitably some scope for discretion and an element of choice on how practitioners proceed within the 'rigidity of bureaucratic institutions' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:191). We should 'not confuse the presence of rules with determinacy' (Evans and Harris, 2004:891). Regardless of how 'precise the law, theory, or practice might be, there is always a certain flexibility, ambiguity or discretion in how it is applied in practice' (Gelsthorpe and Padfield, 2003:3).

Professional discretion is required if effective child/practitioner relationships are to be built and children's voices are to be heard and acted upon (Drake et al., 2014). Practice has continued to be predominately computer-based, interpreted by practitioners on the ground as overly focused on 'getting everything on the system' (Esme, YOT Officer).

As a result, this has impacted negatively on 'professional time and space to form supervision relationships with young people' (Ugwudike and Morgan, 2018:6), as professionals queried:

> "So what difference are we making to a child's life if we're just sitting purely behind a computer? … there is an over-focus on paperwork over the young people". (Esme, YOT Officer)

> "It's all the paperwork, yeah. That is why. And I guess it has to be like that. And in most services it's like that as well. Even in social care, it's hard to get out and actually see the young person". (Freya, YOT Officer)

> "we didn't do this job just to sit around a computer, we did this job because we want to make changes in children's lives, and families' lives. And it just feels like we're not even touching the surface anymore. Which is quite sad". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

These practitioners understood the importance of using information systems and how it could potentially be dangerous if an incident was not recorded properly. As one manager explained, a worker could go on sick leave resulting in the child having to repeat their story.

Nevertheless, as Briggs (2013:26) notes, practitioners are 'under immense pressure in respect of finite resources and time'. Indeed, there are challenges progressing and prioritising user involvement, not least time constraints, a diminishing pot of resources, geographical barriers and bureaucratic aspects/procedural requirements severely restricting the ability of practitioners to seek children's involvement in the design and delivery of services, as these impassioned quotations illustrate:

> "…making anything that is properly participative, just takes a lot more planning, a lot more time. It's just a lot harder. The truth is…with why participation isn't at the top and the User Voice isn't central, is because it slows everything down and makes everything a lot more difficult to do. And when we haven't got much time and we've got a million things to do, the

> stuff that's hard to do slips down the list, doesn't it?". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

> "Resource constraints, but geographical constraints, and getting, transferring young people from one area to another to be involved in something as a collective. That's our biggest challenge, I think". (Colin, YOT Manager)

Clearly, ascertaining the wishes of young people, and giving children's views due weight in decision-making can be resource intensive. It is perhaps particularly challenging in a context of austerity. In sum, it may not be, in the 'great scheme of things' 'uppermost' in the mind of front-line professionals in terms of day-to-day decision making.

Added to this, the proportion of children with complex needs on court orders has increased. Those under supervision tend to live chaotic lives, experience speech, language communication difficulties for example and require intense support, as this quotation illustrates:

> "We will still have some that are kind of lower risk …but that's a very small amount of the statutory work now compared to what it used to be…the majority are medium to high risk, majority of them have complex issues and a lot more who are open to children's social care or open other agencies". (Olivia, YOT Manager)

Practitioners felt nostalgic, reflecting on how previously (prior to the cuts and restructures) they had larger teams and tended to share the workload more fairly, whereas in the present time they described having 'more like a skeleton staff'. Workload pressures intensified by practitioners leaving the organisation and new information and assessment systems being introduced. Professionals felt, at times, such excessive bureaucracy was difficult to manage and navigate. What is more, some practitioners

described management as relying on their good will and not helping when the 'chips were down'.

For example, some workers, occupying a subordinate position in the field, described too much pressure being placed on them by managers, in dominant positions, with an expectation that they 'just get on with it' and not react against it. Interestingly, several professionals alluded to the dominance in 'top-down decision-making' and provided accounts that depicted a form of symbolic violence, namely a non-physical but 'gentle invisible form of violence, which is never recognised as such' (Bourdieu, 1977:192; see Chapter three).

The dominated legitimise such oppression and comply with the norms, values and beliefs inflicted on them, nonetheless. Indeed, professionals referred to such relations of domination. More concretely, as these professionals insightfully remarked:

> "… across the team, there is uneasiness about the workload and what's expected of us, for what money that we get, for the wages that we get. So we're expected to drive the whole of [the Borough], we're expected to do all these AssetPlusses within the national framework, we're expected to have quite high caseloads. And to get everything done to a high standard. Because [the Council] is a very high-functioning [one]". (Esme, YOT Officer)

> "... in our team at the moment, we've definitely got that low morale in terms of changes that may or may not be happening, and when they're gonna be happening, in that it's uncertain, it's uncertain times, I think. And I think it does affect people's ability to come up with new ideas, or... or be creative, because they're kind of like, "What's the point?... I think a lot of people are kind of like, "Well, we don't even know if we're gonna have a job by the end of it". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

> "we do this job because we want to show tolerance and compassion and care for the young people we work with. But that no longer, since the cuts I think, has been reflected up above. …It's like, "What have you done? What haven't you done? What are you gonna do next?" And the pressure is actually quite intense". (Scarlett, YOT Officer)

> "And then in the midst of that they've thrown new IT equipment at us. And then we're losing our recording system for three weeks. You know, and that heightens people's anxiety levels. But then, there's this narrative at the moment, that you should just be grateful, and positive, and put up and shut up. Rather than saying, "Well, actually, this is really feeling difficult for me". (Hayley, Health Worker)

> "… I understand why it needs to happen [the restructure]. I understand the reasons behind it. Me personally, yeah, it affects me, because I'm having to look at what area I want to work in. That might impact if I don't get the position that I want, in the team that I want". (Sienna, YOT Support Officer)

These quotations reflect a structure of domination with 'soft power', considered acceptable and even justifiable (Bourdieu, 1990), being inflicted by the dominant (senior managers) on the dominated (front line professionals).

Although practitioners did feel that there were a combination of factors making them reluctant to work in a more participatory way, as one practitioner said they felt they were being made to 'put up and shut up'. Thus, it could be argued that there was a doxic submission to the established order in that there was,

> "an agreement, between, on the one hand, the cognitive structures inscribed in bodies by both collective history and individual history, and, on the other, the objective structures of the world to which these cognitive structures applied" (Bourdieu, 1998a:55).

Practitioners accepted the message from officialdom that the merger would bring about efficiency savings, potentially prevent redundancies and provide them with access to greater resources. Moreover, following the perennial problems of inadequate staffing, high caseloads (intensified by savage spending cuts), generally financially unstable systems, and organisational restructures, many of them became disillusioned. They felt powerless to influence change or resist the pressures directed at them 'from above'. More specifically, they explained how decisions were often 'thrust upon them' by middle management, with little consultation or opportunity to challenge:

> "Having things done to you all the time, that you have no say in or no control over. It's kind of like when we had this bloody merger, and we had no control over that! And I was saying that: "Now I know how my young people feel!". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

Thus, some of those employed in criminal justice described the system as inherently disempowering for both them and their clients (Case and Haines 2015). Interestingly, as alluded to earlier, professionals attempted to resist pressures from bureaucratic systems or managerially driven processes, using subversion strategies (Winter, 2015) just as their clients (those subject to supervision) thwarted measures that were instigated seemingly to control them or monitor their actions or behaviours (see Chapter five).

Essentially, although, at times, misrecognised by professionals and young people, they both 'belonged' to a structure of domination in that they – the excluded - persuaded 'themselves of the legitimacy of the

exclusion' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:209; Houston, 2002:160). Notwithstanding this, when discussing the introduction of consultation or advisory groups, one Youth Offending Team manager warned:

> "…to land something else on a staff member to sort out would be maybe the straw that broke the camel's back". (Grace, YOT Manager)

Thus, at least in part due to the service being under-staffed and under-funded, the practice of user involvement did not take precedence. In fact, some considered it a luxury rarely afforded. Subsequently, it was 'degraded', 'diluted' or 'devalued' (Weaver, et al., 2019:6) due to the fear that front-line practitioners do not have sufficient time and space to operate in this way. If they advanced towards progressing user involvement, some feared their working conditions could intensify and become unmanageable.

'Irreconcilable perspectives' or 'artificial oppositions of thought'? Interrelated discourses of risk management, public protection and children's participation

> "when the consequences for being deemed to be a failing YOT, by what Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation have said about you – when the consequences are [senior professionals lose] their job, the service is, you know, crucified in the press. When the consequences are that dramatic, is there any reason why heads of service, senior managers and the whole youth justice system are, kind of, pretty safe?". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

This manager's experiences indicate, in a sense, a habitus clivé (Bourdieu, 2007). This concept can be defined as a habitus 'divided

against itself' torn or riven with conflict and 'in constant negotiation with itself and with its ambivalence' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:511, also see Bourdieu, 1990). I felt his account, at times, was contradictory or conflicting, drawing me to the concept of habitus clivé.

Habitus clivé, used interchangeably with 'cleft habitus', is one of Bourdieu's concepts that has rarely been used by social scientists, and is tremendously underutilised by criminal justice researchers exploring the lived experiences of 'offenders' and/or their supervising officers. Bourdieu (2007:100) reportedly experienced this sort of cognitive dissonance first-hand, an awkward mix of humble beginnings and academic acclaim. In other words, he experienced 'a discrepancy between high academic consecration and low social origin… inhabited by tensions and contradictions' (also see Bourdieu, 2000:64).

Through adapting this thinking tool, also described as a 'coincidence of contraries' (Bourdieu, 2007:100) to fit the youth justice context, the habitus of one manager at the research site appeared destabilised and in tension, divided against itself. There was a discrepancy between a concern related to a preoccupation with 'reputational risk' and a desire to be proactive and inclusive, and resist, at times, being reactive and defensive in a world of reputational risk.

This worker felt out of place practising in an atmosphere of distrust and at times having to act like something he was not due to the 'threat (or risk) or fear that it inspired' having, at times, to 'abandon all loyalty' to his beliefs when operating in a field of constrained possibilities (Bourdieu

2007:96). However, this manager was not a passive recipient of the structures, in that he exercised limited agency, restricted in terms of its application.

In so doing, he internalised the structures and accepted the logic for professionally-led risk-based systems in that they offered the illusion of a tidiness to the unpredictable reality of offending by children and young people and an element of control over the process. Alongside this, he felt, risk-led practices offered reassurance in that there was some sort of protection for the organisation against external scrutiny should there be a serious further offence committed and to preserve a sense of job-security (Ugwudike, 2011) predisposing him to act in a certain way depending on the situation.

Simultaneously though, although his acquired depositions influenced how he was to perceive, judge and respond in the bureaucratic field (France, 2015), he engaged in a process of reflexivity, distinct from mundane reflection. He reflected on how he became increasingly frustrated with excessive managerialism, in part inflicted by him a senior professional, on others. Subsequently, he contributed to the reproduction of the structures and the social space he was vehemently critical of and 'radically contested' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:8).

This manager had limited opportunities to alter the conditions of the field, which at times, appeared to be pre-determined or deterministic. He felt uncomfortable operating or 'performing' in such a risk infused environment that remained, despite attempts to alter the conditions of the

field through new systems and the introduction of an assessment tool, deficit-based by seeing the 'worst in young people'.

He experienced a combination of 'rebellion and submission, rupture and expectation' (Bourdieu, 2007:100). Nevertheless, there was a contradiction in that he sought alternative ways of promoting children's voices, namely through progressing peer mentoring opportunities for current and former 'offenders' (See Chapter seven). This involved not seeing young people as bundles of risk but rather as youth justice professionals of the future. He attempted to critically reflect on ideas regarding how to involve children more meaningfully in the risk-based approach.

Asset Plus and the new status quo: 'not quite a revolution' - Feelings of powerlessness and lack of voice

> "Resistance may be alienating and submission may be liberating" (Bourdieu, 1990:155).

Several front-line professionals described Asset Plus as a tool to identify and manage risk, safeguard the welfare needs of children and young people, and essentially protect individuals and the organisation from criticism. However, many practitioners described the assessment as an intensely time consuming and repetitive process, which made it difficult, in particular, to dedicate the time and space to progress with user involvement or build meaningful relationships with children and young people.

Thus, it could be argued Asset Plus merely offered an 'illusion of freedom' (Bourdieu, 1990:15). Despite one of its intended aims being to facilitate professional autonomy, according to some professionals, it did not address deep seated concerns related to excessive managerialism (see Chapter nine).

It seemed to hinder thought, resulting in one professional (which she declared at interview) wanting to leave the organisation as a result of having too many assessments to undertake. Nevertheless, one worker acknowledged why it was necessary to conduct assessments with children:

> "You need something to protect the organisation, to protect yourselves, and protect the people that you're working with. So it's a difficult balance, really". (Grace, YOT Manager)

However, one practitioner likened this unhealthy preoccupation with the identification and management of risk to a form of organisational obsessive-compulsive disorder. She felt it induced a collective fear resulting in a conformist culture, workers especially the most submissive and most fearful (Bourdieu 2007:96) being complicit with these demands.

Whilst not dismissing differing biographies or individualised patterns of thought, there was evidence of a collective habitus or 'mindset' in operation centred around an undue focus on risk and neo-liberal managerialism (Phillips, 2016; Robinson, et al., 2014; Swartz, 2002; Winter, 2015).

They were overly preoccupied with protecting professional positions in the event that a serious further offence was committed. Some professionals encouraged 'the most mutinous (rebellious colleagues) back into line' (Bourdieu 2007:96 also see Bourdieu, 1990:77). Essentially, the implementation of this new information and (risk-focused) assessment system appeared to constrain, as opposed to promote, practitioner expertise, discretion and innovation, as these practitioners averred:

> "AssetPlus …which was meant to actually be quicker than doing an Asset...is an absolute nightmare. For staff and for managers… Bring back Asset any day… it takes days to complete one... And I do understand that all the information needs to be there, because it's, you know, where we go with that, the intervention that we provide, and it's also an arse-covering exercise in case anything happens, and all the systems are up to date, et cetera. But in terms of staff, I'd say the majority of them spend more time in front of the computer than they do out on the street, seeing young people… we have had some staff that have come, and then they've left not long after". (Grace, YOT Manager)

> "[asset plus is] the most long-winded, repetitive thing I've ever seen in my life… if a child's got really complex needs, it opens up all sorts of boxes. So it'll open up speech – is there an issues with speech? Well if there is, then this whole dropdown comes down. Is there mental health? That comes down. Alcohol? Comes down. If they've ever been detained, that comes down. So, you know, you get to the point where you think, "Do I actually want to tick 'yes'?" You do. Because obviously, you know, you need to make sure that everything's correct for that child. But actually, there's stuff on there that doesn't need to be there. It's repetitive… I was on the verge of leaving this job. Because I was just getting so many AssetPlusses, where my whole week was taken with AssetPlusses – then you've got to do the visits. Got to be done in a certain timeframe, because of the national standards. But obviously you've got all sorts of issues – people don't get back to you, if you turn up at the house they're not there. It makes you feel bad. And then a couple of months down the line you've got all the reviews at the same time. So it's like a never-ending circle of paper". (Esme, YOT Officer)

The introduction or 'roll out' of Asset Plus did not appear to be an entirely smooth or seamless process for all concerned at the research site. As alluded to above, several front-line professionals viewed it as either unnecessary, an 'arse-covering exercise', 'long-winded' and/or a 'repetitive' process, meaning a focus on risk and bureaucracy not only existed but persisted. A small number of practitioners and managers felt that because the new assessment tool had more questions for young people to answer than Asset did, children and young people were potentially being subjected to a more intrusive line of questioning.

Although Asset Plus was meant to enhance self-assessment, professionals feared using the tool risked exacerbating or compounding young people's feelings of disempowerment and worsening the feeling that they were being 'assessed to death' by 'a tool of blame' (Turnbull and Spence, 2011:940) or an 'instrument of symbolic violence' (Schubert, 2014:189). Interestingly, as highlighted previously, young people felt practitioners were often 'too nosy'.

The Asset Plus assessment and interventions framework was supposedly a benevolently constructed measure or tool that had the potential, dependent on practitioner skills and expertise, to elicit the young person's perspective, needs and priorities (Baker, 2014). However, unintentionally or otherwise some children disengaged from the process due to practitioners asking them 'too many questions':

> "suddenly you ask them all these questions, and it's quite, "Whoa, what's going on here?". (William, YOT Officer)

Thus, it is questionable to what extent their voice was integrated into their own assessment. Furthermore, although practitioners completed an initial, somewhat extensive training course and there was an attempt for the new tool to be introduced gradually, these experiences and viewpoints indicate that professionals appear to have had minimal opportunity to participate in ongoing training on using the tool effectively. There appeared not to be a gradual change to practice culture or a smooth shift away from a retrospective deficit-based Asset tool to a so-called strengths-based promotional Asset plus assessment and interventions framework (Case, 2018). This appears to have resulted in some professionals experiencing a mismatch between the offence-focused 'new' youth justice and the habitus required in this new supposedly strengths-oriented field (Friedman, 2016:136).

Some professionals I interviewed had been employed by the service for many years and had acquired a more senior and/or advantaged position in the field and possessed status or symbolic capital. These individuals appeared to be adept at responding to change and had the resources, tacit knowledge or the 'know how' to adapt or alter their habitus to cope during times of uncertainty.

Such individuals appeared skilled at utilising their acquired positive attitude or mentality (capital). In turn, they were capable of managing and overcoming potential risks either to themselves or the organisation. Ultimately, they had developed the ability to negotiate challenges, such as Asset Plus being a restrictive tool, by embracing 'certain ways of

being' (Stahl, 2015:29). Their thinking appeared compatible with the aims of the new system. They were acting in a way that would maximise their own advantage, and in so doing maintain the status quo and protect their privileged field positions and capital wealth.

Such strategies were deployed with the intent to preserve and keep their investment and this meant avoiding rebelling against, not only explicit, but also implicit rules (Aitken, 2018:175). Despite the seemingly constant changes to the field conditions and ongoing funding and resource challenges, these professionals felt like 'fish in water' or manifestly 'at ease'. Their actions appeared almost effortless, and they commended Asset Plus for its intended focus on putting children and their voices more central to the assessment/intervention process and were appreciative of its desistance-oriented strengths-based emphasis. To them 'it had all the appearances of the natural' (Bourdieu, 1998a:40).

These professionals, who had a pivotal role maintaining social order and a sense of cohesion, who were 'caught up in and by the game' (Bourdieu, 1998a:76-7), also referred to the importance placed, within Asset Plus, on the assessment of children's other needs, related to, for instance, speech, language and communication (Robinson, 2014).

These workers were able to improvise in response to a change in the conditions of the field, and heightened expectations placed on them related to how they were to assess risk and need. They essentially appeared relatively content with the new developments in practice, 'maintaining the pre-existing order' (Bourdieu, 1998a:20) by making 'well-

ordered choices aligned with the objective order… [consequently reproducing] this order without either knowing they are doing so or wanting to do so' (Bourdieu, 1998a:26).

The accounts of front-line professionals depicting their experiences, however, were not homogenous – agents inevitably have different points of view on reality. Some were not so adept at conforming (or rather adept at nonconformity, a resistance habitus) to the 'dominant definition' (Bourdieu, 1998a:70) despite its seductive power of reassurance or naturalness. There were battles to 'conserve', just as there were struggles to 'transform' (or revamp) practice cultures and dominant discourses (Bourdieu, 1998a:12 and 72).

Several practitioners who experienced difficulties 'fitting in' with the new arrangements and thus unable to 'position themselves advantageously' (Courtney, 2017:1054), were ambivalent and unable to cope with the demands or expectations placed upon them. Due to feeling like 'fish out of water', some attempted to 'revolt against', and refuse to play the game, resisting what they perceived as abrupt (not smooth or incremental) changes to the field conditions. They declined to participate in a 'doxic submission to the established order' (Bourdieu, 2000:178). They were not prepared to 'put up with objective conditions' (Bourdieu, 2000:217) that had the appearance of being self-evident. They did this through attempting to distance themselves from the new discourse that was markedly risk-averse and 'resist the violence' that was being inflicted on them (Bourdieu, 1998b:22).

One worker gave an impassioned account of how she felt she was being 'man-managed' by her line-manager who was closely 'auditing' her performance (Robinson, et al., 2014:124). One professional, in particular, felt she was 'being pulled' in different directions (Ingram and Abrahams, 2016). She felt her activities with young people, her colleagues and other administrative tasks that were being undertaken, were closely monitored, not only by her superiors but also by fellow colleagues who were able to access her electronic calendar. Through detecting whether she was 'online or offline' they could monitor her 'whereabouts' and notice if she was busy or available. This was making her feel very uneasy and hyper vigilant.

As indicated previously, the habitus of professionals, influenced by what many described as an 'anxiety-providing' restructure and the threat of potential redundancy looming over them, was seemingly a collective fear. One worker, moreover, reportedly felt 'tied to a degrading ("rotten") place', an intolerable situation, intensified by the lack of an adequate financial income (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:185). Ostensibly, she felt she occupied a position in the field that was of a 'subaltern status' (Courtney, 2017:1056), one of low worth or value.

Her situation was exacerbated by having to travel further distances brought on by the re-structure, and an unfortunate situation which ensued which resulted in her being forced to borrow money from family to fund the extra fuel costs incurred. Along with her already unsettled disposition,

this weighed on her 'like a curse' discouraging 'any reasonable hope for the future' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:185).

These professionals engaged in a process of reflexivity, prompted in response to experiencing a sense of 'crisis…[which] disrupted the immediate adjustment of habitus to field' (Bourdieu, 1990a:108). Some professionals were resistant to bureaucratic systems and organisational processes. This was noticeable through their 'recalcitrant dispositions', temptation to 'spoil the game' and attempts to engage in a dogged confrontation with their superiors and at times, fellow colleagues (Bourdieu, 2007:101).

Despite a realisation, to an extent, that the structure was not immutable, they felt unable to instigate (initiate or sustain) transformational changes to their situation and resolve the internal conflict that ensued. Some of them engaged in a process of reproduction that inevitably resulted in them continuing to be wedded to the notion of risk and bureaucracy. Despite some reluctance, and their unsettled dispositions, an alternative was almost inconceivable. This resulted in compliance with the 'game' and the continuation of the non-physical, 'gentle invisible form of violence, [which was] never recognised as such' (Bourdieu, 1977:192), inflicted on the dominated by dominant 'players' in the field (Harding, 2014).

Throughout the interviews, these professionals referred to risk assessment being a core requirement of practice and alluded to its usefulness in terms of assessing children's psycho-social characteristics.

It was also described as an important step to understanding young people's personal circumstances, what interventions may be required to achieve positive change, manage risk, and actions needed to prevent the child from inflicting further harm on society (Robinson, 2014). However, to use the words of one participant, there was an urgency to 'get back to basics'.

They felt this was best achieved by problematising rather than reproducing practices. They suggested an end to the 'never-ending circle of paperwork' and copious amounts of time they dedicated to writing about young people, which involved inputting data and providing ample justification for a whole range of actions taken or work planned/completed. Alternatively, practitioners recommended a focus on 'spending much more time with' often highly damaged children who had limited life chances (Jamieson and Yates, 2009; Robinson, 2014). Essentially, professionals felt that time-intensive relationship building should eclipse time-intensive Asset Plus assessments.

"If it's not on the system, it didn't happen"

> "There is always going to be the tension between face-to-face work with a child and the recording of that face-to-face work". (Grayson, YOT Manager)

> "Actually there's a whole generation of youth justice professionals that have been… "groomed" has an unfortunate connotation, but have been schooled in the, you know… overly managerialist [sic], processed, systems, and are really worried about not having ticked the right box, and getting disciplined for it". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

One manager acknowledged that whilst updating information systems can be time-consuming, it is still a fundamental part of the job. It offers

some protection for the service, in the event of a serious further offence or an incident of self-harm and can prevent children having to 'repeat their stories'.

Nevertheless, this manager alluded to high caseloads being a perennial issue that intensified following reductions in funding. This manager reflected on his commitment to preventing disruption as a result of the re-structure. He stressed the importance consulting with colleagues and acknowledged that it would take time for professionals to adjust and learn the 'new' assessment tool and 'settle in' to the new demands or requirements.

Front-line professionals reflected on the struggles or more precisely, the 'intersecting constraints' (Bourdieu, 1998a:34), and felt that those in more senior positions of authority should improve the working conditions of front-line professionals, address pay inequalities and promote the autonomy and discretion of youth justice professionals. They felt the 'top down' decision making was stifling progress in terms of preventing them from being sufficiently creative and positive with children.

At times, professionals felt 'unable to breath' due to being heavily tasked. They felt unwilling to tolerate what they described as a myriad of unreasonable additional expectations placed upon them and were prepared to utilise a subversive disposition. Such a disposition was influenced by the context and their precarious field position, fuelled by a sense of insecurity in the workplace and the uncertainty it provoked in them. Using a practical sense or 'feel' for how to navigate demands, this

led to them attempting resistance from below (Bourdieu, 1998b; Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015).

They felt senior professionals and managers should be encouraging or promoting their ability to be autonomous, through reducing their high-caseloads and other 'excessive' bureaucratic demands that forces them to overly focus, during supervision with their clients, on the 'negative' aspects of young people's lives. They felt they should be encouraged to dedicate more 'time and space to form' constructive and strengths-based 'relationships with young people' (Ugwudike and Morgan, 2018:6).

The 'space of differences' (Bourdieu, 1998a:12) was most acute in front-line professionals' recollections at how, at one office, where most of my participants were located, they were most frustrated by 'hot desking' (temporary locations) in an 'open plan' area. They felt isolated or separated from managers and senior professionals who were mostly located in a different, more enclosed, and perceivably more privileged office space. Several professionals were either afraid or apprehensive about entering this space. They were timid and fearful of being judged negatively or alienated by a group of managers, who were, on the face of it, authoritative voices or those 'in the know' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:24), who defined the rules and instructed front-line professionals to act accordingly and 'keep to their ordinary place' (Bourdieu, 1990:128).

Conclusion

In the interest of managing risk and protecting the public from further harm, the decision not to invite children to high-risk multi-agency meetings was often considered rational and acceptable. If young people wished, and the organisation approved their request to attend the meetings in person, additional resources would be required, existing provisions or mechanisms adapted.

As will be further discussed in Chapter nine, to rectify the absence of the voice of the child in this process, I felt, was a pressing priority. The Youth Justice Board has not instructed – nor at the time of writing does it seek to instruct - Youth Offending Services to, directly involve children in high-risk meetings and/or discussions regarding the implications of the risk tariff ladder.

Notwithstanding the difficulties with the 'translation of official policy into operational practice' (Goldson and Hughes, 2010:215), the findings and analysis presented in this chapter can serve to inform commissioners who are in the process of devising bespoke policy/practice guidance on the form and function of high-risk multi-agency professional meetings.

This chapter also revealed how several practitioners, managers and young people were frustrated with the feedback process describing it as more tokenistic than meaningful. The attempt to elicit young people's views, was more of an artificial exercise, and appeared at best 'rhetorical and at worst disingenuous' (Beresford, 2016:357).

Several practitioners discussed workload pressures. Professionals explained how, in addition to managing a case load, they were required to undertake office and panel duty responsibilities and assist their colleagues with the organisation and delivery of individual and group work activities. This resulted in practitioners experiencing difficulties initiating bespoke interventions and respecting children's perspectives - especially the viewpoints of those who felt demoralised and/or disempowered - on how they wished to proceed. Professionals resisted pressures from bureaucratic systems, just as their clients or those subject to supervision, battled against measures that they perceived to be seeking to control them (Bourdieu, et al., 1999).

The next chapter explores young people's involvement in a participant-led music project - a vehicle or hook that aimed to facilitate and secure young people's active involvement in processes. More specifically, young people were taught rapping skills, how to sing, play musical instruments and write songs/compose music. It was often young people on intensive court orders, perceived as 'hard to reach' or 'difficult to engage', who attended the music project sessions. The chapter explores how the workers who facilitated the sessions tapped into children's unique skillset, and it evaluates the benefits, limitations and challenges of focusing on children's strengths as opposed to their deficits. The chapter also presents cogent arguments related to young people's enthusiasm to share their experiential knowledge, lived experiences and their passion to assist in the rehabilitation of their peers.

Chapter 7: Children's experiential knowledge and the 'craft' of the youth justice professional: Repositioning young people as assets who can help others

Introduction

This chapter explores whether young people can be 'experts by experience' and use their experiential knowledge to assist their peers to achieve positive change. It also investigates issues associated with the practice of peer mentoring, including the degree of scepticism concerning whether young people being supervised by the Youth Offending Service 'can be effective in steering [their peers] away from crime' (Hylton, 2014:287).

The chapter also presents findings related to a participant-led music project. This project was described as a positive asset-based intervention, an opportunity to facilitate peer mentoring and an approach that could potentially reconcile a lack of user-led engagement and consequent experiences of disempowerment. More specifically, the music project could be described as a 'hook' to secure young people's engagement. It may be a project that is perhaps most appropriate for young people in capital-deficit, and most suitable for those who appeared to have 'no stake' in the youth justice 'game' and were considered difficult to reach on a human level (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015).

Those who appear defiant or disengaged have expertise and strengths. Whilst not denouncing the adult professional voice and perspective, children and young people can be 'experts by experience'. They are potentially capable of promoting non-criminogenic attitudes, providing unique insights and sharing knowledge and experience of being an 'offender' and using or being a recipient of criminal justice services (Peer Power, 2018).

This type of practice is perhaps one creative way of 'reaching' children who are normally considered 'difficult to engage' and can be beneficial in terms of developing children's strengths and building their resilience and ability to project empathic understandings (Whyte, 2009:17). Such peer-led models of practice are somewhat under-developed and continue to evade research agendas (Buck, 2016; Creaney, 2018; See Chapter two).

Children's experiential knowledge: progressing Peer Mentoring in the Youth Justice System

Young people who have 'experiential knowledge' (wisdom or 'know-how' acquired through first-hand or lived experiences of contact with the criminal justice system), were described by several participants as highly resourceful (Harding, 2014), and equipped to help others in need of support. The insights they can provide into the lived experiences of being a 'young offender', can potentially be beneficial to mentees, as illustrated in these typical quotations:

"...unless you've experienced that, you cannot tell them… you cannot relate to them...Unless it's happened to you, or someone that you know, there's no way you can fully understand how they're feeling". (Zain, 17)

"Yeah. I would love to do that. Help young adults, like, my age and that…What road I took. I wouldn't want that for any other people my age. It's not good". (Aaron, 17)

"Someone who's been through it is a lot more experienced. Been through…everything you can probably think of … That's gonna help… a kid who's in a struggle now…That's one thing I've always wanted to do. I've always wanted to work with kids with the same problems as me". (Kelvin, 17)

"I know how it feels, it's horrible. It's just not nice, is it? So like, for someone to help you, that'd be {fair}… I'd rather help someone than just let them deal with it on their own." (Callum 15)

"If you've never done an order, how do you know what it feels like having to do an order? If you've never been in a courtroom, how would you know what it feels like for them? And I appreciate some of the staff go into the jails, and they go into the courts, and stuff like that. But… that's different. You're going as a visitor, you're going as a guest. You're not going as a kid who's being convicted or has to stand up there, do you know what I mean?". (Levi, ex-offender)

"…I think some of the younger ones are harder ones to, sort of, engage, 'cause they're still quite wild I think, quite feral! My lads are, anyway! They're still like, "I don't care! I'm just gonna smoke weed and smash things!" Like... But I think... so having (a Peer Mentor) on board to talk to them, as opposed to me, would help them". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

It has been argued that, those who have 'gone through an experience' (Borkman, 1976:4) and overcome adversity, can be living proof that positive changes can be achieved and replicated (Peer Power, 2018). As Boyce et al., (2009: ix) note, mentees can be 'especially appreciative of receiving help from someone who has walked in their shoes'.

Several participants felt that mentors who have experience of the criminal justice system, may have 'authentic empathy' and are perhaps better able to relate to mentees than professional authority figures.

As Borkman, (1976:3) notes, 'He respects a certain authority in those who have experienced what he has experienced'. Essentially, mentors can put their lived experiences of contact with the justice system to 'good use' (Clinks, 2013:6), and draw 'on their experiences to help others avoid their mistakes…' (Maruna, 2017:9). They can impart knowledge and provide advice and guidance to mentees who are experiencing difficulties, feeling isolated or disempowered and in need practical and emotional assistance (Fletcher and Batty, 2012). What is more, as argued by Wahl (1999:476), supporting others can be 'self-enhancing', and give meaning and purpose to one's life.

Several young people expressed an interest in peer mentoring mainly as they wanted to improve the experience for their peers. They noted how such a role could involve providing young people with a user's perspective (insight) on what to expect. This could help to reduce any worry or anxiety (a familiar experience) regarding the criminal justice process, as these quotations illustrate:

> "… [give them] more information about what's gonna happen, what you'll be doing. Depending on how long your order is… they just might need that little reassurance to make the anxiety go away". (Ben, 16)

> "Cos I could help other people that might not wanna do stuff. And I could tell 'em how other young people are feeling. Cos some people won't speak out. And if they're just gonna get… if they're not gonna talk to no-one and tell 'em that they don't wanna do stuff, and what would be better for 'em, then they're

just not gonna have a good experience. So if I could get my say across, or if someone else could, it'd be better. For the people that are on the orders and that". (George, 17)

"See, I'm a good listener, me, so I'd make sure every point got put across, for that young person."…It's just something to do, isn't it? And help people. 'Cause I know what goes on and that… " I'm like the Godfather 'round mine. It's mad. All the kids knock at my door: "I'm having beef with blah-blah," or, "blah-blah!" I'll be like, "Wait there, I'm gonna get my shoes on," and then go and sort it all out, and then it's fine then". (Sarah, 17)

According to Charlotte (13), a looked-after child who completed a divert intervention, some children may not understand what is required of them or how to navigate the system, confused by technical terminology, professional discourse and language (Winter, 2015). She also noted how some children may be living a chaotic lifestyle, experiencing attachment issues/trauma, feeling a sense of fear/rejection as a consequence of poor life-chances. As a result, children may then disengage in processes, according to Charlotte (13). Peer mentors who have experiential knowledge may be more appropriately placed to open up a dialogue and (re) engage them in the service:

"I think they'll listen to, like, kids their age, that's been through their experience… [than] like say, like our staff. They haven't been through what we've been through have they?". (Charlotte, 13)

Charlotte referred to language being a barrier and how if children are allocated a peer mentor, this could be beneficial in terms of helping them to understand the process more clearly:

"say adults, like, professional, speak more, like… a different language don't they… they use more bigger words?". (Charlotte, 13)

However, although Charlotte did acknowledge that she could get 'fed up' if the child did not want to interact with her, she referred to the importance of digging beneath surface appearances by continuing to work with the child despite any resistance. Essentially, she reflected on how she knows how they feel, as this quotation illustrates:

> "…I've been in care for six years. And I would know how foster people, like, how they feel when they first come in. Cos I've obviously been through what they're going through". (Charlotte, 13)

Similarly, there was an appetite for peer-to-peer work amongst professionals. These participants felt that if children were willing and able to share their experiences with others - showing determination to inflict positive change, prompting their peers to re-evaluate their actions, behaviours and lifestyle choices - they may be best placed to help their peers overcome adversity. Several practitioners would like to see opportunities created for young people to support their peers experiencing difficulties, as these quotations from participants illustrate:

> "Because the young people are certainly gonna listen to somebody who's been through it all". (Anna, YOT Volunteer)

> "Well I think they really appreciate peer mentors, because they get them. And, you know, … it's somebody who's walked in their shoes. Because they can see somebody who's managed to effect some change, maybe. And, you know, scrape a life together for themselves despite the odds. I think. So yeah, I think we should do that much, much, much more". (Hayley, Health Worker)

> "…can show him a different way. Or say, "Well, I know how you feel. I've been through that, and this is what I did, and this is how I ended up here." And, you know, "There were some blips along the way". (Hayley, Health Worker)

"I don't have an issue with people like that working with young people, or adults. I mean, they've made [positive] changes… They have more understanding, maybe empathy, and they have a different perspective…sometimes you have to step back and, sort of, like, say, "Actually, I'm not the best person for this". (William, YOT Officer)

"YOT have helped him, encouraged him to stick at college, you know, get himself on the straight and narrow, and I think he now looks back at his life and what he was like when he was, sort of, 14, 15, and thinks, "God, like, there was so much I could have changed back then." So he's kind of passionate to help others that are that age change, if that makes sense. 'Cause he's been there…Cause for him, if we could get him as a volunteer, or working with the YOT, like, that would be great for him. Life-changing". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

"You don't always have to go through the youth justice system. You don't always have to go in care or whatever, to work with them kids that are using them services." …"But it bloody helps". (Levi, ex-offender)

Practitioners can possess experiential knowledge accrued, for instance, through personal experience of working with clients in the criminal justice system. However, this is largely defined as a subsidiary part of their professional knowledge (Borkman,1976:3). Moreover, although each source of truth - children's experiential knowledge/expertise and practitioner knowledge/expertise - may appear opposing, inevitably tensions exist between the two schools of thought, they are not mutually exclusive (See Borkman, 1976).

It should not be presumed a consequence of focusing on children's experiential knowledge, is processes being undermined or the professional expertise of adults being dismissed 'in favour of young people's truths' (Farthing, 2012:79 and 80).

Rather, as has been suggested elsewhere (see YJB, 2016:5), approaches should be collaborative, involving dialogue, negotiation and compromise, with 'some areas of work in the youth justice system [being] led by an adult while others… guided by the young person'. However, if young people's experiential knowledge is to be truly valued, the authenticity or validity of their accounts/narratives should not be considered less important than other forms of evidence or inferior to professional expertise (Hine, 2010; Winter, 2015).

It could be argued that children and young people should be able to 'tell their story' or input into processes and share insight into their life without being judged negatively or viewed with suspicion (Winter, 2015). This is perhaps especially so if they attempt to challenge the established order or seek to transform the status quo (Winter, 2015).

The 'craft' of the youth justice professional: Building positive and constructive relationships

A medium for change and the basis of 'effective' participation is not necessarily tools or programmes (Mason and Prior, 2008; Stephenson, 2013:82) but rather the existence of a socially constituted trusting, empathic and consistent relationship between children and professionals, as these quotations illustrate:

> "…it's building a relationship with a young person. Because no matter what you try and do, whether it be participation, whether it be just, like, an exercise of knife crime, if you haven't got a relationship with the young person, ... the intervention isn't gonna be meaningful. They're not gonna take anything away from that. So that's what I was trying to

say. You've got... you should have a relationship with the young people, or beginning to build one, and that's when you bring your participation in, like, "What do you think? What are your ideas?" But if you haven't got the relationship to begin with, you can't do that". (Evelyn, YOT Officer)

"Because what you do with them is absolutely irrelevant. It's that conversation that you have with them, and that relationship". (Mason, YOT Support Officer)

Joseph shared positive experiences of supervision. He reflected upon a constructive relationship he had built with one particular worker, who he said had persisted in offering him support and encouragement:

"I'd been in bed. I was watching telly. And I heard a knock on the door. I thought, "Fucking hell man, who the hell is this?" So I've gone downstairs, opened the door, and it's fucking [YOT Worker}. She said, "What?" I said, "I'm in bed man. Why are you knocking here at like… why are you knocking here?" She said, "You've got panel." I said, "… you'll have to rearrange it for another day cos I'm in bed and I'm not getting dressed to get out in the pissing-down rain." She said, "No. You'll get dressed, now. And you'll get in my car. And I'm taking you to panel." And obviously I weren't arguing with her, cos I couldn't really be arsed. So I just thought, "You know what, fuck it." Just got in the car, like, and went. But she's alright, [my YOT worker] She is sound". (Joseph, 15)

Joseph, like several others, felt his workers encouraged him to 'buy into' the decision-making process. In fact, he was thankful that they did not exclude him from the negotiation process. More specifically, Joseph was not complying with the conditions set out in his referral order contract and consequently disengaged from the process. However, his feelings of dissatisfaction were acknowledged, and attempts were made to understand the roots of such discontent, resulting in, for example, his appointments being rescheduled:

"I reckon if it weren't for [my YOT worker], man, fuck, I'd have been kicked off this time ago, me. I missed fucking three, four panel appointments. The whole four-week of 'em. Supposed to go once every month, ain't you, or summat like that. And they had to keep rescheduling mine for four week, cos I weren't going. So, if it weren't for [my YOT worker], man, I'd have been kicked off this by now. So… to [my YOT worker] man, she's done a good job for me, to be honest with you. She has". (Joseph, 15)

Such constructive relationships, where both parties are equal, can help to facilitate engagement and transitions into desistance and positive outcomes. Essential to these relationships are trust and listening skills (Haines and Case, 2015), as these quotations illustrate:

"…if it's put to them that we're working with them. …"At any point, if you've got any issues, you can give me a call, or…" "I think it's important that they can build a relationship with their worker, who they're working with, and that they trust them". (Anna, YOT Volunteer)

"[it's] about listening. It's not about talking sometimes. It's about just sitting in a room, and maybe creating the silence, and... and just listening to what the young person has to say. Because sometimes they don't feel they've been listened to at all". (William, YOT Officer)

Joseph (15) was particularly fond of one of his teachers who he said was an ex-offender having been in trouble with the law in a past life. Interestingly Anthony (17) and Zain (17) spoke passionately about a trusted relationship they had built with one of their workers who had experience of being the recipient of care and criminal justice systems:

"It's like, yeah, we're sound from the start. It's just, like… cos obviously he's been what… I'm going through! …{he's} a [exhales audibly] top fella, swear to God". (Anthony, 17)

"When I first come here, I was sat there, and I was like [adopts a pose], "I'm not doing nothing." … I just sat there. I was like, "I'm not doing nothing." Just sat there. And [the worker] come

up to me and was like, "This is what I've been through." And I listened to him. And I thought, "If you're like that…" Like, it's mad to think that he's got the determination and that to turn round from prison and that". (Zain, 17)

They described their worker – who had been through similar life experiences - as being non-judgemental, demonstrating an ability to empathise and know what it feels like to be in a difficult situation. Anthony (17) said how he had contacted his worker on many occasions in a state of panic and valued receiving emotional and practical assistance. He felt his worker understood his circumstances and was able to guide him through difficult situations. He referred to him as inspirational and was keen to follow in his footsteps in the future, securing a job involving caring for others. Zain (17) had similar positive experiences to Anthony (17) and was inspired by his practitioner:

"I'd love to do his job. He sort of inspired me. Cos I know about his past, he knows about mine. And it's pretty similar, do you know what I mean? Grew up on a bad estate, got into drugs". (Zain, 17)

The relationships between these children and their workers appeared collaborative and client-centred (McNeill, 2006), and they placed great emphasis on lived experiences. Similarly, Charlotte (13) emphasised the importance of trust in child/worker relationships. Reflecting upon her experiences of being a 'looked after' child, she talked about how she would not have been open and honest during meetings had it not been for the bond she developed with her care workers.

Similarly, Jon (14) described how, if he needed to speak with his workers about what was troubling him, he felt he could without them 'telling everyone'. Jon (14) felt that if there was no trust the relationship would be destined to fail – this key component was established early on in his relationship with his workers, upon initial contact to be more precise:

> "I trusted them, cos the first day – well, the first couple of meetings that they came round, they, erm… they… not in a bad way, but they pushed me. So, well, the first time, they said, "Mum, Dad – could you go take the dog for a walk while we sit with Josh, just us, privately?" And I told them everything that happened, more easy. Because my mum wasn't there. They knew to do that". (Jon, 14)

It seemed there was a team around the child approach happening with Jon (14). He felt he had 'really good people' supporting him who were skilled at listening. There appeared to be a 'reciprocal contribution of each party's resources to produce mutually agreed outcomes' (Weaver, 2015:248).

It is important that professionals are 'sensitive, patient, understanding', friendly, reliable and caring (Cheetham et al., 1992:63) towards young people. This this can help to create a dialogue of openness, trust and respect for one another's perspectives (Trevithick, 2003).

Barriers to using young people as peer mentors

Although mentors can potentially help to build resilience and facilitate feelings of self-worth and dignity among mentees, a key issue relates to risk contamination when mentor matching.

This involves young people who are considered 'risky', violent or dangerous providing emotional and practical support to a peer who may be low risk in terms of vulnerability or likelihood of re-offending. This issue was alluded to by Colin, a Youth Offending Team manager:

> "when they're (professions) assessing risk and the riskiness of some of our young people, it's like, "Well why would you want to involve these young people with other young people?" So there might be a bit of risk aversion about involving young people in mentoring other young people". (Colin, YOT Manager)

This worker's attitudes or dispositions (his habitus) indicated concern towards the introduction of this type of practice and how it would operate in a risk oriented or risk-infused system, particularly the danger of a contamination effect. Essentially, this worker, alluded to feeling uncomfortable or unfamiliar with using this practice model and felt it contradicted the purpose of the system, or potentially undermined it by increasing risks. This concern is perhaps understandable when we are reminded of the evidence which suggests that 'association with criminal [or anti-social] peers in the community is a well-established risk factor in subsequent offending' (Whyte, 2009:142).

As Bromley (1993:57) notes, in order to 'break free from a particular [pro-criminal] social identity', young people need to remove themselves 'from the constraints of social circumstances, and the influence of particular people…'. Nevertheless, there can be unintended consequences of 'bringing together young people involved in persistent offending' – in that it can 'make them worse without skilled workers and the appropriate

models of practice to challenge their criminal attitudes and to assist them to change positively' (Whyte, 2009:142). What is more, in the desistance literature, there is an emphasis on helping perpetrators of crime to 'knife off' from one's past, disconnecting from association with pro-criminal or delinquent peers (Robinson, 2016). This is deemed to be influential in stopping them being the perpetrator of further harms inflicted on victims/society (Gobbels, et al., 2015:67).

The existence of a 'blame culture', and an atmosphere of distrust (Nash, 2007:87) can result in professionals being risk avoidant and disinclined to use young people as peer mentors (Weaver, et al., 2019:). They may choose to 'play safe' and not involve them because of the potential security risks they pose (Nash, 2007:87). For example, peer mentors may continue to have connections with pro-criminal or anti-social peers, thus there is the danger mentors' relapse with their habitus guiding them to their previous criminal lifestyles. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that this type of practice has been viewed with scepticism or as a 'risky endeavour' (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018:193) or a perilous journey.

According to one manager, many of the young people on court orders have connections with 'criminal people' in the local area. For instance, Brandon, an ex-offender, explained how he continued to be 'active in the scene', maintaining some sort of relationship to his 'roots' in order to remain a modern/contemporary artist (Friedman, 2016). He performed at events or 'raves', with the police often dispersing such gatherings due to,

inter alia, excessive noise and other health and safety concerns that tended to be reported.

Brandon reflected on an incident, which involved a child on a court order attending one of the scheduled 'raves' where Brandon was performing on stage. Subsequently the child observed Brandon performing and shared this experience with his care workers and the Youth Offending Service. This resulted in the Youth Offending Service re-thinking the appropriateness of Brandon facilitating the music project sessions – his career was potentially, temporarily at least, in jeopardy. Nevertheless, following some negotiation and compromise, an agreement was reached, with the service allowing Brandon to continue in his role helping and supporting young people on court orders, and eventually this situation dissolved into a non-issue.

A further issue related to peer mentoring is the matter of allowing children too much of an opportunity to draw on their own personal histories which may not be of relevance or benefit to mentees. This issue was a particularly pertinent concern for William, a Youth Offending Team Officer:

> "it's also important not to... get embroiled into, "Well, this is what happened to me." That doesn't mean it happened to them…". (William, YOT Officer)

There is the risk that mentors dominate conversations, resulting in mentees feeling frustrated by a lack of opportunity to speak. There is also a risk that mentors romanticise about their involvement in crime.

Nevertheless, some of the children and young people I interviewed were not interested in providing or receiving peer support, hesitant at expressing confidence in their capabilities to be 'effective' role models. Some felt they lacked the skills and abilities to guide their peers on a positive trajectory (English and Bolton, 2016).

Some young people were also apprehensive about associating with people they did not know or potentially had a troubling relationship with. For example, Logan (17), who was on bail and awaiting a court date, was not interested in providing peer support, mainly because he did not want to associate with people who disliked him. Interestingly, regarding the issue of safety, Jim (17), subject to a Youth Rehabilitation Order, experiencing difficulties dealing with grief following the untimely death of his uncle, reflected on a college course he had previously started. However, he was unable to complete it and withdrew because he feared for his safety travelling to and from the educational institution. In turn he began to isolate himself from his friends and family and this had a negative impact on his health and wellbeing:

> Interviewer: "How come you've stopped doing the college course?".
>
> Jim (17): "People after me... So I just {stopped going} and just not gone back. I used to go down and pick up work, and then bring it home and do it. But, just… didn't go again. Just stopped".

Several other young people also feared for their safety when attending appointments with the Youth Offending Service. For example, Aaron - who was subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance and was part

of the leaving care team and had his own accommodation - was planning

to move out of the area where he committed the crime. He was frustrated

with having to constantly keep looking over his shoulder:

> "Like every time I come to [this place] for a YOT appointment,
> I'm always looking over my shoulder and that. It's not nice.
> Well, it's the town what I committed the crime in". (Aaron, 17)

Some children did not want their free time compromised. Others

perceived it, as Hucklesby and Wincup (2014:14) also observed, as an

'additional component with which they [would] have to comply'.

Building networks/contacts

> "I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now – I'd probably, hand
> on heart, I'd probably be sat in jail now. If it wasn't for the fact
> of people opening doors and believing in me". (Levi, ex-
> offender)

As this ex-offender alluded, it is not so much what you know but rather

who you know (see Chapter three). He referred to his workers 'opening

doors' creating new networks, connections and prosperous legitimate

opportunities. Essential to the relationship between him and his worker,

was the importance attached to the accumulation and expenditure of

social capital and more specifically the building of networks/contacts.

Aside from his lack of material wealth, this young person accumulated

levels of capital that were important for him in terms of his route out of

crime and offending. One may argue that this young person, who

transformed his situation for the better – from a life of disadvantage to

one of advantage – was an exception to the rule (Garrett, 2007a).

Nevertheless, one manager encouraged this ex-offender to become a peer mentor. He described him as remarkable, mature, switched on, resilient, calm, and giving of his time.

The manager referred to the potential benefits of peer mentoring roles, namely it not being stymied by a relationship that was partly around enforcing a court order. This worker was keen to promote such opportunities to other children, currently or formally on a court order, who possessed emotional capital or a genuinely caring nature. This can result, according to him, in children being 'role models' who can help their peers to see that the Youth Offending Service was 'not the enemy':

> "[Those} who are coming up through the system, our service users now who might see a role as a – maybe as a mentor, a potentially paid role…involving them in designing the services in a way that, you know, means that they've got a stake in it…[we've] got a really powerful and credible and authentic voice for other young people? Why can't we use them?". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

Similarly, for some participants, the music project was a catalyst or driver for change, cultivating self-belief, helping to shape new positive personal and social identities. It was described by Brandon, a former service user and current youth worker, as a useful means of integrating peer mentoring. This worker frequently shared his own struggles with young people when co-facilitating the sessions:

> "I always open up about my past, then the floodgates open… I'm not there to kind of judge anyone. You know, I can't judge anyone, with my past. You know, my history. Who am I to judge? You know and I can totally identify with their, … feelings of lack of identity, that... these young people have". (Brandon, ex-offender)

Brandon did not consider himself as 'the expert' who 'provided the treatment' but rather a facilitator 'of a process that belonged' to the child (McNeill, 2006a:46). Brandon was a remarkable young man, impassioned and often energetic, who seemed to respect 'humble folk' (Bourdieu 2007:86). Indeed, this was most evident when observing his interactions with his colleagues and children he was supporting. His attitude was that, he would never 'know more about children and their problems than [service users] do themselves' (Smale, et al., 1993:16).

The music project aimed to be participant led, by way of noticing young people's strengths and talents, and subtly encouraging them through the medium of music. Young people were taught rapping skills, how to sing, play musical instruments and write songs/compose music. As I discovered during observations and in-depth interviews with professionals and service users, children particularly valued the opportunity to attend music project sessions and build empathic relationships with the professionals who facilitated the workshops. Children were actively encouraged to enter into negotiation and dialogue with professionals.

Brandon described many of the young people as going through an existential crisis and 'playing up' to mask such emotions. He acknowledged that young people tend not to abstain from engaging in harmful behaviours instantly and was realistic with young people when working with them about it being a complex process with opportunities for lapses/relapses. Indeed, experiencing some form of 'failure' is an important part of the change process, as this quotation illustrates:

> "Change takes a long time, doesn't it? And you've got to be able to get things wrong a lot before you can learn from it and move forward. So there's a bit of that, isn't there? And I think you've got to remain hopeful". (Hayley, Health Worker)

Crucially, Brandon who possessed a somewhat loving disposition, referred to the importance of instilling hope in young people and showing them that, despite the obstacles, individual and structural change is possible. He practised a type of emotion-based hope and inner peace (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018). He aimed to enhance the individual's ability to reflect on their emotional state, with a view to them feeling empowered and resilient in the face of adversity, able to take control of decisions that affected them and their life.

In addition to promoting emotional stability, he was ambitious and hopeful that the young people he supported could instigate positive changes to fulfil their desires, needs and achieve their aspirations. This type of approach is also alluded to in the literature as a method that can 'propel individuals towards goals but can also be used as a coping mechanism in dire situations' (Lopez et al., 2003, cited in Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018:202). However, although the importance of instilling hope in young people features consistently in the desistance literature (See Farrall and Calverley, 2006), it cannot compensate for a lack of adequate opportunity for growth or healthy development/wellbeing. As McNeill and Weaver (2010:4) note, 'hope, expectation, confidence fade quickly on an empty stomach'. Aspirations or subjective hope must be matched with 'possibilities objectively available for them to be achieved' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:127).

Thus, hope must be accompanied by practical forms of support, including access to resources and networks. Brandon described the music project as a 'perfect vehicle to rehabilitate'. He explained how there was an emphasis, not on privileging the identification of their 'cognitive deficits' and ensuing offence-focused interventions to treat or cure them (Graham and McNeill, 2018:441), but rather on the use of therapeutic approaches.

Such techniques centred on promoting young people's positive attitudes and behaviours. According to Anna, a Youth Offending Team Volunteer, young people who attended the music project were seen in a different and much more positive light:

> "I did see that apparently some of the boys that we worked with were known to be aggressive and quite violent, but from my view of meeting them in that environment, I was shocked – I was like, "What? He's not like that." You know, they're just quite chilled, and it was quite surprising to hear what they'd been up to and things". (Anna, YOT Volunteer)

Crucially, contrary to dominant risk thinking, Anna did not view children as 'sources of fear', 'posers of risk to others', a threat to society or objects of concern (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010; Haines and Case, 2015; Whyte, 2009). The ethos was one of 'hope' and 'aspiration'; 'anxiety' and 'fear' (Wood and Hine, 2013:8) were not guiding principles. Children were viewed as assets with copious amounts of potential, not a problem to be dealt with. The approach used was not deficit based or focused on young people's past behaviours, but rather future orientated with practitioners recognising and praising positive attitudes and behaviours, as this quotation illustrates:

> "Rather than looking at what they've done, how they've been with others. ... how they have acted. You know. It's about how they act with me…We've had ... some really cool individuals come through, some... some great successes…".
> (Brandon, ex-offender)

This is important, as Stephenson (2013:82) notes: 'concentrating on weaknesses and faults is less likely to facilitate positive personal change'. As Ugwudike and Morgan (2018:4) have observed, young people can perform 'highly if others expect them to do so'. There was an emphasis on seeing children in a 'different light', and 'offering praise and reward for pro-social expressions and actions' (Trotter, 1993, cited in Chapman and Hough 1998:16).

Appropriate amounts of praise and reward can result in young people's self-esteem increasing and potentially the adoption of more positive pro-social identities. However, a culture of negativity and practices that were 'too defensive', that tended to 'see the worst in people', appeared to remain prominent features in the youth justice field:

> "it's something that pervades the public sector actually, in terms of being very defensive and risk-averse. And overly managerial. And I'm, you know, I'm part of that system and, you know, part of that problem as well. In that, we're doing audits, and when we do an audit it's often deficit-based and we're finding fault with stuff, which, when you put that down to a practitioner on the ground, they then default to a position where they have to put so much detail in and stuff, and so much evidence for stuff, that it detracts from the true value of them making a difference with a young person and spending time with a young person, building trust and rapport". (Jackson, YOT Manager)

The music project differed to the practices described by the manager in that there was a focus on facilitating healing, growth, and identity transformation (Beyond Youth Custody, 2017). There was an emphasis on treating children not as 'part of the problem' but 'part of the solution' (LeBel, et al, 2015:118) – aiding recovery through forging empathic interpersonal relationships.

This reflective and positive focus is promising, especially as 'effective' practice with children in conflict with the law involves working with 'the young person [to shift] their identity away from one that is conducive to offending to one that promotes a crime-free life, social inclusion and wellbeing' (Beyond Youth Custody, 2017:24; also see Haines and Case, 2015).

Creative expression

By way of illustration, two young people I interviewed, who regularly attended the music project, performed a song, they had written and produced together, to delegates at a training event. This was an opportunity for them to practice their newly formed identities as 'performers' or 'rappers' not 'offenders', apply skills they had mastered, and crucially receive praise, status and recognition for their law-abiding achievements and self-identify as non-offenders (Hampson, 2017b:5).

Young people were provided with the space to 'negotiate their own social identities' (Wood, 2010:66). It could be argued 'sociability' was achieved here in that, there were 'a continuous series of exchanges in which

recognition [was] endlessly affirmed', and their emotional capital and statuses as 'performers' or 'rappers' were retained (Bourdieu, 1986:250).

Anthony (17), subject to a Detention and Training Order (DTO), was readjusting to 'life on the outside'. He regularly attended the music project sessions. He reflected upon the positive experience of teaching youth offending team workers how to play musical instruments and write songs/compose music:

> "… basically, what we did, we made YOT… well, we didn't make them, we asked them to write their own raps. So, basically all YOT workers had been in groups, and they had paper … and we'd be walking about, and they'd be writing bars. And then, after that, they went on the microphone and started performing all of them, at once, do you know what I mean? So it was funny…It was alright … it makes you feel good then obviously, cos … I wasn't the one learning, I was the one teaching, do you know what I mean? Like, helping out, it wasn't like someone helping me out, I was helping people out". (Anthony, 17)

This positive experience in an environment that was facilitative and consultative was an 'immense contrast' from the 'violent and abrasive world' of the prison establishment (Bourdieu 2007:91). In addition, Sarah, who, prior to attending the music project was quiet and reserved, now appeared assertive and confident. Sarah had completed a referral order and returned as a volunteer to assist the workers in facilitating the sessions. She reflected on how she enjoyed taking part in the music project sessions, particularly issue-based writing through Rhythmically Applied Poetry (RAP) music, looking at consequences of actions, drug addiction and substance misuse, domestic abuse, and valued the opportunity to set goals/personal targets and achieve growth.

She felt the project, with its incentives, acted in her interests. Sarah thought there should be more opportunity for young people to take part in this type of positive and reflective group work activity – that helps to build children's confidence and self-esteem – as an alternative to worksheets:

> "Well, I mean, like, when I'm, like one-to-one, doing, like, YOT work, like, filling sheets out and all that, I don't like that. But, like, when I'm here, like, writing songs and, like, singing them, I like that". (Sarah, 17)

Participants had the opportunity to be taught a variety of musical skills from band equipment, drums, and guitar or keyboard skills. Participation in the project was credentialed in that many of the young people who attended had their progress recorded, built up a portfolio of work and committed to working towards achieving an accredited Arts Award. This vocational award may have limited 'use value', in that it may be treated as inferior (and not a worthwhile equivalent) to a traditional academic award (English and Bolton, 2016).

Nevertheless, the music project could be described as a 'hook for change' as children were provided with access to a legitimate opportunity to engage in purposeful activity and meaningful interaction (McMahon and Jump, 2017:9). It can be argued this is important as young people 'need opportunities to acquire and sustain lives that will transcend their offending behaviour' (Canton, 2015:43).

Attending the music project allowed young people the opportunity to embrace a non-offender identity. As Maruna (2001) notes, an important aspect of practice is assisting with identity change.

Young people's identities are 'fluid and changeable' (Clinks, 2013:3-4), thus using children as peer mentors can help to facilitate an identity shift and promote a 'good life' - one of purpose and meaning.

However, Lucy (16) who was subject to a referral order, did not enjoy attending the music project, viewing it as 'pointless' and a 'waste of time' as she was not happy to 'just to sit down… while everyone else was doing stuff'. When asked why she had not expressed such dissatisfaction to the Youth Offending Team she did not see the benefit, alluding to there being little alternative options available:

"yeah. Just…I dunno what else there'd be". (Lucy, 16)

Similarly, George (17) who was subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Bail, did not enjoy attending the music project but felt there was not an alternative activity or programme to choose from:

"… but I didn't really wanna come to this music group – that is it. Just don't really like music, to be honest. And they said this is the only thing that they could put me on. So that peed me off a little bit, about that – that's it really". (George, 17)

Thus, it appears the interventions offered to children and young people are most often planned on the basis of what is available and normally offered by the service, not necessarily what the young person needs or wants.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed how young people can help their peers to re-engage with services. It was found that; peer mentors can have similar life experiences to those they endeavour to support and can use their experiential knowledge to assist mentees to achieve positive change. The chapter demonstrated originality through showing how such experiential knowledge, rooted in a young person's experience of using criminal justice services and being an offender/ex-offender, is largely distinct from practitioner experience, which is usually accrued through training and practice (Borkman, 1976; McLaughlin, 2009).

This chapter revealed that young people particularly value building empathic and collaborative relationships with professionals who are ex-offenders and have lived experiences of contact with the criminal justice system. The chapter also introduced issues and challenges associated with peer mentoring and how the existence of a 'blame culture', and an atmosphere of distrust can result in professionals being risk-avoidant and disinclined to use young people as peer mentors.

It is worth noting, the new Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspection framework purports to reward Youth Offending Teams that are innovative, creative, proactive and inclusive, and discourages professionals from being reactive and defensive in a blame culture (Lepper,2018).

This PhD study has added to the existing body of research on children first, positive approaches in youth justice. The findings presented here examined the lived experiences of children and professionals who were involved in a participant-led music project. The chapter has revealed its focus on treating children as assets not problems - a focus on needs not deeds (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010), including how it can be a useful way to integrate a peer mentoring model, and facilitate the process of change, namely: healing, growth and identity transformation (Beyond Youth Custody, 2017). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales appear to promote engagement in such participatory prosocial activities and strengths-based/ capacity building practices (Case, 2018; YJB, 2016). However, the music project was resource intensive, not financially sustainable in the current climate of budgetary restrictions/ scarce resources and, despite its successes and its potential, was subsequently discontinued by the service.

Chapter 8: "Are we all playing an elaborate game?" A Bourdieusian analysis of children's involvement in decision making and assessment in youth justice

Introduction

Applying Bourdieu's 'open' concepts (Bourdieu, 1990) to the field of youth justice can offer new insights into the interplay of agency (micro) and structure (macro). More specifically, the concepts of habitus, capital and field can help to reveal how such complex subjective and objective processes impact on children's involvement in the care they are receiving, and practitioners' abilities to facilitate user participation and shared decision-making (Bourdieu, 1990).

This chapter offers a critique on how the dispositions of those who facilitate/administer and those who receive youth justice supervision, influence attitudes and beliefs and shape their responses. These responses can relate to a 'choice' between passive or substantive compliance in the youth justice field of community sanctions and determine children's level of involvement in the risk-based approach (see Chapters five and six). This discussion chapter brings together the findings of the present study. It critically explores the role external factors play, notably finite resources and time constraints, in conditioning, limiting or encouraging children's involvement in individual supervision sessions and organisational processes and systems.

I acknowledged the primary experiences of young people, formed in the childhood phase, and their secondary habitus developed during adolescence and the impact of such experiences on thought patterns and behaviours (Alanen, et al., 2015; Bourdieu, 1984). Such life experiences result in largely lasting/durable yet, to an extent, fluid and dynamic human characteristics (Bourdieu, 1990).

The dispositions of both professionals and young people were not static or permanent in that agents as thinking beings were considered capable of capitalising on opportunities and engaging, albeit largely unconsciously, in a project of transformation (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). This intention was achieved through a carefully executed PhD research project, comprising 'rigorous analysis of situations and institutions' (Bourdieu, 1998b:23) related to seemingly ordinary or everyday experiences (Robinson, et al., 2014) in the sub-field of youth justice practice. More specifically, there was a key focus on the contested and largely under-researched concept of participation.

The PhD study drew on the theoretical insights of Pierre Bourdieu's 'two-way relationship between objective structures (those of social fields) and incorporated structures (those of the habitus)' (Bourdieu, 1998a:viii). More precisely, I used the interconnected trio of habitus, capital and field, applying these 'technologies' to an area of practice that has, as alluded to above, been severely under researched and undertheorised (Case and Hampson, 2019).

For example, there has been a lack of empirical research undertaken on young people's perceptions or experiences of being involved (or not) in multi-agency 'high risk' management meetings - whether they participate and if so to what extent in such processes and systems (see Chapter six).

I intended to make visible that which was directing human action or behaviour (habitus) including the factors constraining or maintaining it (Bourdieu, 1993). These factors included the context of austerity and seemingly dwindling resources (structure). It was my intent to subject seemingly 'every discourse', especially those 'mechanisms that escaped consciousness' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:26), to criticism and debate.

This PhD was both empirical and theoretical (Bourdieu, 1998a:33; Webb et al., 2002). Suffice to say that scholars are unable to think critically and conceptually except 'in and through theoretically constructed' practical scenarios (Bourdieu, 1992:160). Crucially, this involved capturing the perceptions, thoughts and feelings of youth justice practitioners and young people on court orders.

Alongside this, a comprehensive exploration of the social/structural environment was undertaken. I set out to demonstrate how the interplay of agency/structure shapes attitudes and behaviours in the youth justice field. As noted, I considered the close relationship between objective structures and a person's individual habitus - portrayed historically as binary or largely incompatible positions (Bourdieu, 1990).

In accordance with Bourdieu's 'anti-dualistic' stance, for the purposes of this PhD, young people and professionals were treated not only as human subjects who were grounded by societal structures which were written into the person's body (Bourdieu, 1990:63) but who simultaneously 'breathed life' into its processes, systems, methods or techniques (Burke, 2015:59; Case, 2018; France, 2015). The habitus governed how social agents acted but their behaviours were treated not as completely deliberate nor as entirely accidental or sporadic (Bourdieu, 1990). Thus, I attempted to capture the relation and interplay 'between external constraints which leave a very variable margin for choice, and dispositions which are the product of economic and social processes' (Bourdieu, 1990:50).

The purpose of the study was to extend and critique understandings about the barriers and facilitators to children's participation. It also aimed to expose the surrounding complexities, including dynamic power relations between young people on court orders and criminal justice professionals.

Omitting the child's viewpoint? Children's involvement in the risk-based approach

In accordance with the in-house risk policy, professionals were required to elicit the child's voice regarding how they would like to feed into the process of any risk-review meeting. It was considered 'perfectly legitimate' by several professionals to confront the child regarding their attitudes to offending and, dangerous behaviours in terms of risks they

posed to society. An interesting, albeit surprising finding related to decision making at high-risk multi-agency management meetings taking place in the absence of the child, thus potentially perpetuating the marginalisation of the young person.

Several professionals were keen to strengthen the child's involvement in the risk-based process. Professionals were concerned that either the current stance was in breach of children's human rights and/or expressed frustration at attempting to secure 'buy in' from the child or young person who was not present at the meeting. More specifically, some case managers, who were to oversee the plan of action, felt they were being 'sent into the front line…without the means to really do their job' (Bourdieu, 1998b:3). For example, they experienced resistance from young people when explaining what had been decided at the meeting and what external restrictions, that were non-negotiable, were effectively being imposed. Some professionals recommended that a confidential slot be created, encouraging children to voice their opinions on matters and actively influence or shape the process.

The opening of a potentially child-friendly confidential space could be a more meaningful way to involve the child in the process. It can be a way to capture or elicit a more accurate account of their narratives related to their views and perspectives on how the apparent risk they pose can be managed effectively and harms potentially reduced (Baker, et al., 2011).

However, it is important to caution that, the chair of the high-risk meetings and indeed other professionals present, 'wield ultimate power' (Winter, 2015:191) regarding decision making. They are largely in control of determining the shape and content of the plan of action, or at least they possess the ability to 'make the meeting function to their advantage' (Bourdieu, 1993:88). They may undervalue children's experiential knowledge, resulting in a situation where those under supervision adopt the role of 'silent onlooker' (Winter, 2015:195). In adopting more of a dominated position in the space of difference, children or indeed their supporters or advocates may in fact grapple to obtain and retain certain forms of capital/power (Bourdieu, 1993).

Professionals may operate in a way that they feel is objective in that they simply reiterate to the young person that they are merely reporting the 'facts' (results of assessments) and that their 'knowledge contained therein is scientific' (Winter, 2015:196) 'represented as value-free' (Scraton, 2007:15). However, professionals may foster a knowledge value hierarchy, conscious that children may attempt to 'gain the upper hand' (Swartz, 2002:635).

In conjunction with their dominating position in the space of difference, they may claim their knowledge is the most credible in that it is intelligence-led and therefore a valid and reliable source of information. Children's social or relational 'ways of knowing' are not necessarily rendered invalid but, as alluded to above, seen as 'of less value' when compared to professional expertise and their knowledge acquired through

training and experience (Winter, 2015:197). Nevertheless, as remains the case in relation to user involvement in the Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements process, in relation to young people the issue of the child's voice in the risk-based approach, namely high-risk management meetings, has continued to evade research agendas.

Professionals and managers were perhaps hesitant to make things clear and explicit to young people, in terms of the particulars relating to the high-risk multi-agency meetings. They did not appear to explain clearly to young people why they were not able to physically attend in person, how decisions were reached or whether they had a right of appeal, for instance (Bourdieu, 1998a:96). Professionals could have viewed it as self-evident, and thus 'goes without saying', wedded to the justifications remaining 'tacit or unsead' perhaps due to the risk of the supposed logic being 'destroyed as such' (Bourdieu, 1998a:96).

Some professionals felt the environment was not conducive to having meaningful discussions with young people. This was due to the fear that power inequalities, that would be noticeably evident between children and adults, would constrain a meaningful or inclusive conversation. Many professionals and managers felt young people would feel uncomfortable in such a situation. Some also felt young people would be potentially manipulative or controlling and would engage in a conspiratorial plot to sabotage the process and hinder meaningful conversations, preventing the design and delivery of effective solutions or measures to prevent risk levels from escalating.

Essentially this perspective was a dominant mode of thought and reinforced young people's marginalised or subordinate position (Winter, 2015). In providing such an account, I felt, to an extent, professionals were 'hiding their own self-interests' (English and Bolton, 2016:98; see Chapter nine).

Compliance panels

Whilst there was an illusion of transparency relating to how high-risk panels operate, some professionals commended the compliance panels that had been introduced. These panels were designed to prevent young people from being in breach of their court order requirements and returned to court, especially unnecessarily. Some young people were required to attend compliance meetings, not out of choice, but because they had 'done wrong' by not complying with requirements.

One manager likened the process to a child at primary or secondary school being required to see the headteacher for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour. It could be argued that it was essentially driven by a so-called legitimate concern, at least from the youth offending team's perspective, that they were not 'taking the game seriously' (Bourdieu, 1998a:76) disrespecting the official discourse of compliance imposed by professionals.

One of the key purposes of the compliance meetings was to (re)introduce the ethos that 'playing was worth the effort' (Bourdieu, 1998a:77). For example, if they complied with requirements and 'got through it' to a satisfactory standard, their involvement with the youth offending team,

and its associated requirements to attend meetings and commit to altering their behaviours and thought processes, would end. Crucially, they attempted to impose a belief that this course of action would be beneficial for young people.

The onus was on the child, as the 'offender' or perpetrator, to accept responsibility for their attitudes and behaviours and commit to reengaging in systems or processes, including an element of reparation (repairing the harm they had inflicted on others). There appeared to be less emphasis on the roles socio-economic and structural factors played in determining their behaviours, influencing their circumstances or restricting their life chances (Johns et al., 2017). Professionals felt some children were given a special or privileged opportunity to put forward their point of view on how they felt they were being treated by their worker and the system more generally. Moreover, some professionals felt that young people valued this opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process and be 'listened to'.

By having the opportunity to put their side of the story across, they could avoid any risk of (further) sanctions being imposed on them. Crucially, they could increase the likelihood that, following some negotiation and compromise, more appropriate, young-person centred solutions could be formulated and introduced. However, professionals acknowledged a seemingly reoccurring concern regarding it being a potentially unconformable and intimidating environment for some children.

They were not the 'experts' or 'knowers', but 'mere spectators' of a process that did not belong to them. Some young people were sceptical about the process and whether they would be listened to, despite the rhetoric or claims by those in authority or positions of power that capturing the voice of the child was a key priority for them. They were unsure to what extent their contribution would influence the process or outcome.

Some young people were apprehensive about putting forward their point of view. They were anxious that this could lead to tension and conflict between them and their worker. There was the fear that this could then result in them being 'singled out' for excessive or intrusive treatment, or generally treated unfairly in the future by the service, reducing the likelihood of them being able to successfully complete their court order.

Power relations between children and professionals: Young person's ability to influence processes and systems

Young people on court orders have opportunities to influence and shape the decision-making process, notably individually through supervision meetings, with their Youth Offending Team workers. For instance, young people are able to share their concerns with their worker whether that be related to personal struggles or family matters. Children are also able to share ideas on appropriate forms of support, with a view to treatment being tailored to individual needs and wants.

The vast majority of young people explained how a positive and constructive relationship had developed between them and their workers. They felt they were listened to, in that their 'point of view' or perspective was not dismissed or seen as irrelevant. Several young people were receptive to shaping the decision-making process at the individual level and found their workers to be most supportive and encouraging at facilitating this.

However, some young people were hesitant or ambivalent about being in control of the decision-making process or shaping the content of their supervision/intervention plan (see Chapter five). More specifically, they were most comfortable or receptive to taking orders 'from above', as opposed to directing how they would like to be treated or responded to.

Some young people did not feel they were the 'experts', able to insist or dictate how they were to be treated. They expressed their discomfort at stating what interventions would be most effective from their perspective and would prefer not to be the decision maker, guiding practitioners to work in a specific or particular way. Rather, they felt practitioners, or their supervising officers, were the 'ones in the know' and could use their professional knowledge and so called 'wisdom through experience' to enact positive and constructive change in them (Farthing, 2012). Professionals were perceived, by some young people, to be in a better position to know what interventions would be most effective or appropriate to address their individual needs and circumstances.

However, other young people expressed an interest in being able to contribute more greatly to the decision-making process, and shape, to a larger extent, the care they were receiving. For example, some young people subject to Intensive Supervision and Surveillance, were frustrated at their timetable of activities not being reflective of their individual wants and needs. Yet, although they were receptive to their voices being more central to decision making, they were not optimistic about the prospect of their perspectives being integrated more greatly into the scheduled programme of activities they were required to complete. At times, young people expressed disappointment at how the service tended to overly focus on efforts to achieve their own institutional goals, at the expense of (or over and above) young people's priorities.

Some young people who were subject to referral orders, appreciated the support they received from their supervising officers, often praising them for going above and beyond and believing in them when others doubted their ability to make positive changes to their life. However, many described their panel meetings as an unpleasant experience. More specifically, they felt anxious due to there being, from their perspective, too many adults in the room. Similarly, practitioners felt the panels were somewhat tokenistic with children being 'done to'. The referral order contracts were supposedly a negotiation and compromise between the child and the professional. However, in reality the contents of each contract were frequently pre-written or pre-defined by the report author, prior to the child attending an initial panel meeting.

One child, for instance, was particularly disappointed at having to complete a feedback questionnaire, after he expressed, several times, both verbally and non-verbally (through his body language) that he did not want to complete it and input into the feedback process. He was hesitant in his responses and attempted to avoid providing depth to his comments or suggestions. He reflected on how his 'accent', reflective of his cultural capital deficit and his negative symbolic capital, evident in the 'external signs of his body hexis' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:185), were then ridiculed by the panel member who was somewhat antagonistic.

This resulted in him responding negatively to the situation that had arisen. Consequently, this exchange resulted in the onset of tension and conflict between the young person and the particular panel member that could potentially have been avoided if his right not to participate was acknowledged and respected.

He found the experience a demoralising one. Other young people felt they had been coerced into completing the questionnaires, describing it as a tokenistic form of user involvement not a productive or indeed creative way to capture their individual and collective 'histories, experiences and social positions' (Giroux, 1990:91 cited in Mills, 2008:84).

Interestingly, front-line professionals and managers alike were dissatisfied with what they described as 'consultation overload'. Young people were often bombarded with requests to complete a rather formulaic questionnaire that were then seldom analysed sufficiently.

Responses and suggested improvements did not appear to be acted upon. However, according to the in-house policy on communications and participation, the responses were meant to be analysed and discussed at management and/or practice and performance meetings. The policy recommends key themes and areas for development are communicated through appropriate forums or platforms and 'you said/we did' style reports produced and distributed to front-line professionals.

The questionnaires and surveys were considered blunt instruments that inevitably provided only a 'snapshot' or a viewpoint from a 'moment in time' (Bourdieu, 1990:130). Professionals queried the validity of young people's responses. They felt children were writing or providing the response/s professionals wanted to hear or receptive to hearing, and thus ostensibly not being open and honest about their experiences.

There was resistance on the part of young people and professionals alike, who contested the policy and practice securing user feedback through questionnaires. They queried its relevance and stated purpose, perceiving the form and the entire process of collecting user feedback as somewhat ambiguous and unrewarding. Yet, professionals and young people alike, seemed to collude, *de facto*, in this tokenistic feedback process, somewhat more passively than actively (Bourdieu, 1998a).

This so-called participatory approach intensified young people's and practitioners experiences of disempowerment. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the pockets of resistance that were evident, social agents mostly conformed with this task, influenced by an apparent wish to

operate pragmatically. They abided by the 'official rule'. This was perhaps due to self-interests and a desire to receive the approval of others, especially from those they perceived to be superior. They gave the appearance that they were practising in a way that was in accordance with principles or moral standards. Yet in reality the urgency to complete this task was undergird by a desire to conform to the universal and a subsequent 'taste' for comfort and familiarity, feelings that conformity subsequently provided (Bourdieu, 1998a:142).

Relatedly, young people found attending court to be a disempowering and intimidating experience. Interestingly, one senior professional referred to the youth court as a sort of 'conveyor belt' in that young people, especially those 'cared for' by the local authority, often did not feel they had been given sufficient time to express their viewpoint. One senior professional explained how the courts, in a bid to 'cut costs', had reduced in size overall, meaning magistrates did not have the time and space to sufficiently engage the voice of the child.

Tension and interplay between risk management, public protection and children's participation

Some professionals were frustrated at an overemphasis on risk, or what they internalised and described to me during fieldwork as an obsession with identifying and addressing offending related matters. They felt there was a fixation with constant recording and updating of systems ('if it isn't on the system it didn't happen' was the phrase participants regularly

recited to me). Yet unwittingly, they accepted it as a necessary practice, preserving existing norms and their ability to function (Bourdieu, 1990).

However, they were not technicians forced to comply with rigid requests, nor were they unable to think critically or independently like 'automata regulated like clocks in accordance with laws which they do not understand' or 'puppets controlled by string' (Bourdieu, 1990:9 Bhui, 2001; Baker at al., 2011). Nevertheless, it could be argued professionals were wedded to public protection concerns.

According to some professionals, undertaking formulaic risk assessments and essentially 'getting into line with the official norm' (Bourdieu, 1998a:89) was an effective way to protect the community or society from the infliction of further harm.

Relatedly, the embodied structures and objective structures of some professionals were in alignment (Bourdieu, 1998a:81). Professionals appeared content with the changes to the field conditions, such as new assessment systems or the new Information Technology equipment. Through a slight alteration to their habitus and adjusting to the new expectations and demands, with limited internal tension or conflict, these 'servants of the state' (Bourdieu, 1998a:87) appeared to be like 'fish in water', where 'everything seems obvious and goes without saying' (Bourdieu, 1998a:81). This situation could be described as a 'collective misrecognition' (Bourdieu, 1998a:95) or at least misrecognition amongst a sizeable number of professionals.

Nonetheless, the models or systems were viewed as somewhat incoherent in that they appeared to have opposing features and priorities. There was concern regarding the seemingly never-ending, competing demands and expectations placed upon them by their superiors and external pressures such as restructures (Baker at al., 2011). Nevertheless, some professionals were optimistic about the possibilities of bringing together differing approaches. For instance, they pondered ideas related to merging deficit-based practices with positive and participatory interventions. There was belief that they could introduce child-led practices and assessments in a system that was predominantly and indeed has been historically professionally-led (also see Haines and Case, 2015).

Preserving or transforming the risk-oriented status quo? Operationalising the concept of 'cleft habitus'

The concept of habitus clivé or cleft habitus helped to make some sense of one manager's situation or circumstance. This worker had a divided habitus, one that was 'doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:511). Yet, he deployed strategies in an attempt to juggle his cleft habitus (Nowicka, 2015).

More specifically, this concept assisted me in providing insight into, and revealing this manager's culturally contingent meanings and ambivalent experiences of youth justice policy and practice and how his dispositions

were not unified – a sort of mismatch existed between his habitus of origin and the field he was now practising in (Bourdieu, et al., 1999).

He had previous positive experiences of recruiting, training and providing regular supervision to a young person who had lived experiences of contact with the criminal justice system who he appointed to a peer mentoring role. These positive experiences provided him with hope that this type of practice could be recreated, shaping his future expectations. However, he was experiencing internal division, some resistance from others who deemed some of his ideas 'too risky'.

He felt an emotional struggle to recreate past experiences of recruiting 'young offenders' to peer mentoring roles. This worker struggled to remain loyal to his roots of promoting a participatory-focused system and being child led and voluntary in a context he felt was predominantly adult-led and involuntary (Friedman, 2016).

Whilst being disillusioned at the prospect of giving children a stronger voice in an adult-centric system he embraced risk-oriented systems. He was a 'defender of the universal' (Bourdieu, 1990:31). Furthermore, he attempted to work towards reconciling such tensions and uncomfortable feelings, essentially to correct a habitus that was misaligned or not well matched. Whilst careful not to marginalise the obvious suffering or conflict he experienced, his destabilised habitus could be viewed as a positive and empowering resource.

More specifically, this experience provided him with an opportunity to re-think 'taken-for-granted' practices, and to rethink the interface - and

indeed disjuncture - between risk oriented and desistance focused approaches (Ingram and Abrahams, 2016).

Despite the constraints limiting opportunities, he was attempting to transform, or at least adjust, his habitus, whilst retaining some sort of ethical disposition. Using various coping strategies, not least being optimistic that the concepts of risk and participation operate in parallel, he described them as 'false oppositions' (Bourdieu, 1990:34). Despite reservations, he reflected on these artificial oppositions, and how varied approaches are unhelpfully pitted against one another, depicted as incompatible or mutually exclusive.

He felt such binary thinking – including a gallimaufry of perceptions - was unhelpful. He also felt, if one pursues a pluralistic stance, combining various techniques and strategies, this endeavour should not be labelled a futile exercise or a misnomer. He was cautiously optimistic about participation and risk - two chiasmatic models (see Thomson, et al., 2019) - being put together in a dialectical fashion and was at least partly committed to dissolving divisions between the techniques associated with the models/approaches.

He thought practically and imaginatively about how the issues, barriers and restrictions could be overcome, and how a potentially fruitful third way or co-existence could be forged or creatively applied. He pondered ideas on alternatives to the doxa, and how very different approaches could co-exist 'in a field that is not completely unified' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:45).

More specifically, he felt this involved an effort to hybridize the discrepancies between, or competing agendas of, the adult-centric negative-focus of the risk-based approach - a preoccupation with eliminating potential threats by being overly-cautious and defensive - with the so-called promotional and aspirational ethos of the child-led strengths-based model (Case, 2018; Stephenson, et al., 2007:3-4). Nevertheless, despite the prospects of a homology of participative approaches and risk-oriented practices being critically considered, in a Bourdieusian sense, he was 'caught between two worlds (or opposite poles) and their irreconcilable values' (Bourdieu, 2007:99).

Despite the passage of time, youth justice has continued to be a system that comprises conflict, contradiction and ambiguity (Muncie and Hughes, 2002:1; also see Jamieson and Yates, 2009 and Case, 2018). It appears replete with disagreement or tensions, inconsistent in terms of its rationale or philosophy - in a Bourdieusian sense, seemingly 'never resolved into a harmonious synthesis' (Bourdieu, 2007:107). The system has tended to comprise competing or seemingly 'diametrically opposed' (Bourdieu, 1998a:24) discourses, orthodoxies or central visions.

Some academics (see Case, 2018), however, appear anti-risk and pro-participation. Case (2018) for instance has published a series of outspoken articles over recent years, seeking to overthrow the risk-based orthodoxy (remaining steadfast in support of a 'child first' strategy). He has highly reputed its dominant negative-facing status, exposing its

'appearance of scientific neutrality' (Bourdieu, 1990:83) as underpinned by a selective or biased so-called evidence-based practice.

Haines and Case (2015) have sought to revolutionise relationships between children and professionals (and the unbalanced dynamics of power, and moments of conflict) and associated systems and processes. They argue that such a dominant 'universal paradigm' (Bourdieu, 1990:71) or risk-based model is incompatible and the very antithesis of a strengths-based or child-first focus. They contend that these risk-based systems or processes should be replaced with policies and practices that are child-friendly, promotional and strengths-based (Haines and Case, 2015).

Notwithstanding compelling arguments for system reform, in a Bourdieusian sense, proposed models or ways of practising, that offer 'either one way or the other', are perhaps posing a 'false choice' (Jenkins, 1992:48). It may not be reflective of the 'real world', and the complex, yet ordered, reality of youth justice supervision. Practice undoubtedly oscillates between competing agendas, 'contradictory positions' (Bourdieu, 1990:104) or 'clashing interests' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:4).

This involves a 'multiplicity of coexisting and sometimes directly competing' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:3) approaches. In a Bourdieusian sense, in reality there are efforts from social agents 'to thread a dialectical middle way or third path between' (Jenkins, 1992:51) risk and participation, meaningful engagement and passive compliance, welfare

and justice, child-led practices and adult-led public protection work, and the preservation and transformation of the status quo (see Chapter six).

In accordance with my findings related to practitioners' and children's accounts and lived experiences, and in line with Bourdieu's anti-dualistic stance, social agents used a 'practical sense' or a system of preferences (Bourdieu, 1990:61; France et al., 2012). It was 'intentionality without intention' or what has also been referred to as a 'feel for the game', 'a mastery acquired by experience of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990:61). Social agents, simultaneously opposed, resisted and rebelled against systems and processes and engaged in periodic conflict and consensus, transformation and conservation (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

This resulted in a mixture of adherence/compliance and resistance to child-focused interventions and practitioner-led risk management (Bourdieu, 1990). Professionals experienced ongoing struggles, and more precisely a series of contradictions and tensions (Bourdieu, 1990:41 and 42). There were battles between the powerful and the subjugated, who were each seeking to accrue gains by jockeying for position. This was most evident especially during times of crisis/uncertainty (Bourdieu, 1990:41 and 42).

Some professionals reflected upon the challenges of involving young people in the risk-based approach referring specifically to how time consuming and resource intensive it can be to involve children meaningfully in discussions related to risk and need. Some felt frustrated

at the tensions between different schools of thought (risk versus participation agendas) and most notably at having to focus predominantly on the risks children posed, in terms of potential harm to the public.

Front-line professionals have been 'schooled' in (excessive) risk management, over a significant period of time (post Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to be more precise). Thus, they have been 'moulded by prior structures' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:130), especially concerning neo-positivist risk factor analysis (Case, 2018; Muncie and Goldson, 2006).

The dominance of the universal model (risk model or 'negative-facing' approaches), seemed unable to be changed or its principles replaced. Although professionals understood and indeed, at times, accepted the logic for its existence, some referred to a key issue that underpinned or was driving this risk-based practice model. More specifically, some felt professionals feared negative media coverage and a hostile reaction, resulting in front-line professionals and senior managers having their employment terminated in the event of a serious offence being committed, having been 'held responsible for [the] inefficiency' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:183; also see Robinson, 2011).

Nevertheless, this cautious and pragmatic approach provided a sense of familiarity and reassurance and the 'illusion' that the professional was in control of the process. Yet ironically, young people's thoughts, actions/behaviours can be far from predictable (Case, 2006). Nevertheless, the adult-led model of practice was primarily concerned

with 'restriction, surveillance, monitoring and control' (Kemshall and Wood, 2009:25).

A key issue related to professionals struggling to dedicate sufficient time to discussing the offence or introducing offender-focused activities with children in order to alter their thought processes and disrupt negative behaviour patterns, for example. However, they were committed to creating a comfortable and secure environment, having built a positive and constructive relationship, projecting empathy and warmth, seeking to address complex, multi-faceted issues, and unmet health, educative and social care needs (Bradley, 2009; Peer Power, 2016). However, if any of their cases were reviewed for quality assurance purposes, by their superiors - agents who occupied privileged or advantaged positions in the social space and were endowed in capitals -, they felt questions would be directed at them and their practices questioned (see Chapter six).

In relation to those young people who committed more serious violent/sexual crimes, they felt they could be quizzed on why the work undertaken was not sufficiently offence and offender focused or sufficiently risk-oriented (Goldson, and Hughes, 2010; Haines and Case, 2015). This induced personal feelings of worry and anxiety that cases could 'go wrong' or awry, resulting in potentially catastrophic consequences, with professionals receiving sanctions for not being risk-focused in their interaction/communication with those under supervision.

In accordance with the in-house policy on risk and procedures, a random selection of cases was reviewed, the senior management team conducted annual risk of harm audits and learning reviews were completed when serious incidents occurred to uncover what had happened and to investigate reasons why. Nevertheless, it is relevant to refer to Ugwudike's (2011:251) point here regarding professionals ability to utilise techniques or strategies that assist them in their effort to overcome 'unwieldy policy provisions that are impervious to the demands and contingencies of practice or inconsistent with professional knowledge'.

Contractual arrangements, passive compliance, knowing and 'getting round' the rules: how the system works as a game

Inevitably there will be some children and young people who treat the experience as an inconvenience that they want 'over and done with'. Young people may be intent on playing the youth justice supervision 'game' (Bourdieu, 1990; Wilson and Rees, 2006) and this may result in passive engagement. A lack of meaningful engagement is perhaps understandable when considering that court orders are imposed on children – it is not voluntary; they have a statutory obligation to meet with the service.

Some children felt there was some incentive or reward to being passive and compliant (see Chapter five). They avoided challenging those in authority, were cynical about the prospect of change to their situation and avoided retaliating against unfair treatment. For some, this was due to the

fear that they would be viewed as 'uncooperative', and potentially returned to court for non-compliance, ultimately risking a delay to their order coming to an end (Barry, 2010; Hine, 2010:173).

Several young people who were on court orders, namely referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders, and intensive supervision and surveillance, were apprehensive about being involved in youth justice processes. They disliked having to attend meetings with their workers, which they found an inconvenience. Yet, they participated in what was required of them in that they attended meetings, that were perceived by them as compulsory and non-negotiable and they responded to questions and inputted into the process – they were seemingly complicit with little resistance.

At times, they felt being complicit meant being responsive to professional demands, however unreasonable from their perspective, without negotiation and compromise, without challenging or questioning the rules or expectations, and without querying the nature of the court order requirements. Children felt this offered the greatest chance of success, in terms of completing the order successfully or at least to a satisfactory standard.

Essentially compliance - albeit without consciously using sophisticated tactics or being 'mechanically determined', nor ordered by rules 'explicitly posed as such' (Bourdieu, 1990:76 and 90) - was considered the most sensible route, and from their perspective, the only way their involvement with the youth offending service would end. Interestingly, as Bourdieu (1990:76) observes,

> "social agents [in this context children on court orders] obey the rule when it is more in their interest to obey it than to disobey it".

In truth, youth justice comprises professionals, who are mandated by the state to prevent young people engaging in further criminal activity and involuntary clients, who are required to conform and abide by court order requirements (Bourdieu, et al., 1999; Winter, 2015). Despite 'misleading appearances' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:123) this can and indeed does, as was evident in the present study, result in the presence or construction of 'fake', inauthentic or impersonal social and relational transactions to doing whatever is necessary to 'get through' the order (Buck, 2016).

This can result in both children and their supervising officers, in collusion with managers, being process driven. They appear intent on securing passive compliance at times, seemingly at 'all costs'. It can be,

> "a sort of tacit transaction, tactility guided by the need to minimise costs and risks, to accept a minimal definition of the situation of communication" (Bourdieu, 1990:124).

To a degree, both the 'disadvantaged populations' (i.e. workers and children) engage in a battle to attain an absence of recidivism (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:184). In relation to both children and their supervising officers, the social structures and order of things, seem to have been

> "gradually converted into mental structures and into systems of preferences… through a prolonged and indefinitely repeated experience" (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:126).

Nevertheless, despite not fully understanding what was required on their part other than to comply, they refrained from being resistant or

attempting to rebel against the norms and expectations (see Chapter five). They believed this could potentially result in tension or conflict, and would be a route best avoided, considered by several children as an option that would not be beneficial to them. This was considered especially the case in terms of their goal or stated intention of the order being finished, 'over and done with', ending the chore of attending constant appointments. Such appointments were, they felt, at times pointless, not focused on their individual needs and desires.

They felt there was a rigid focus on issues related to their crimes or so-called offending lifestyles, resulting in an exploration of the reasons for offending, as distinct from their personal, social emotional development. There was less focus, they felt, on matters that were not criminogenic.

Some young people felt that they were inputting slightly into the process but more often sliding through with minimal effort, not meaningfully or actively participating. Nor were they committed to achieving substantial changes, transforming their lives, whether that be in terms of micro or macro level change. They did not perceive the system to be focused on the achievement of their active participation in the governance, design, delivery or evaluation of the service they were receiving.

Children were invested in the game (Bourdieu, 1998a:76) in that they recognised its stakes and were aware of the consequences of non-participation. There was a danger that they could be returned to court and potentially issued with a more intensive court order and perhaps more intrusive demands if they disengaged or refused to participate. They had

no option, ostensibly, but to 'stay in the game and keep playing' (Harding, 2014:267).

However, as noted, they navigated the system by contributing minimally into the supervision process, with a view to getting the order 'over and done with' as quickly and as easily (or painlessly) as possible. In other words, they did what was required - or at least created the impression that they were attempting to do what was mandatory or non-negotiable - a perception that they were of an obliged, yet not fully-consciously rational, state of being (Bourdieu, 1993).

They were attempting to satisfy their case manager that they were complying with court order requirements - the moment it seemed necessary, without, so to the speak, the need to 'ask explicitly what is to be done' (Bourdieu, 1998a:98). Professionals did not 'close their eyes to this reality' (Bourdieu, 1998a:96), yet seemed to be complicit in such process driven thinking both mentally but also by internalising, to a degree, the 'objective structures of social space' (Bourdieu, 1998a:77).

In terms of the *modus operandi* or method of procedure, professionals would often 'bend over backwards' to get them through their court order requirements. From a young person's point of view, it involved being complicit, 'not making a fuss', avoiding irritating or frustrating their case managers or causing controversy by what could be perceived by them as questioning their authority or undermining their judgement (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Inevitably, they seemed to conserve rather than alter or transform such a situation. They were perhaps constrained by the fear that it was seemingly impossible to transform the situation when young people were, so convincingly at times, giving the appearance of conformity perhaps with a view to gain a sense of reward for adhering to the universal (Bourdieu, 1998a:142). They were perhaps unsure how to respond.

Although they acknowledged 'every rule has its loophole' (Bourdieu, 1998a:141), professionals also felt children had the right (both legally and ethically or morally) to choose a level of participation that they felt most conformable with - whether that be through adopting an active or passive stance. They were hesitant that if they requested more active contributions on the part of young people, this could potentially disrupt the 'norm' and be counterproductive, creating more problems for them and those they were supervising, heightening a sense of anxiety in the process.

They felt if children reacted negatively, becoming hyper vigilant in the process, there could be tension and conflict - feelings that could have been avoided had they not insisted on altering how young people perceived or how they treated the interaction and supervision process. It was felt this could result in a situation that was counterproductive, with the child's feelings of disempowerment worsening. This is especially so, if perceived by young people as an authoritarian or 'heavy handed' stance - punitive/controlling as opposed to benevolently supportive or benignly protective - that has been adopted by professionals.

It was almost taken for granted by professionals that young people as 'involuntary clients' would inevitably attempt to 'play the game' – comply with court order requirements but by 'paying lip service', with seemingly minimal effort. Yet, this was not a disinterested act in that although they complied with minimal effort, they had an end goal in sight. More specifically, their involvement in the justice system - and its associated demanding and inconvenient processes - would cease, if they adopted a cooperative stance, a pleasant or receptive disposition. To some young people and indeed to those charged with supervising their court orders an alternative possibility seemed incomprehensible.

It was a situation which resulted in some young people feeling they had mastered the game, despite the rules being somewhat arbitrary, the 'norms' implicit, and 'the classificatory systems never constituted as such' (Bourdieu, 1998a:82). They were complicit in what they felt was required of them on their part, imposed by the system or their supervising officers, both implicitly and explicitly. This process was not considered arbitrary or a 'point of view', but the 'truth', in that, despite being mechanisms of exclusion, they attached legitimate value to it (Bourdieu, 1990:112).

Children and young people grasped 'the future of the game' albeit to varying degrees, and in a practical way, mastered its logic (Bourdieu, 1998a:80). This was especially the case for children who had previous contact with the justice system and 'knew' what it felt like to be subjected to a court order and had acquired lived experiences through being supervised by the Youth Justice Service, and at times, being in contact

with several professionals. They had acquired knowledge of the many different styles and personalities of front-line practitioners in terms of how they approached certain situations and events or responded to certain requests or exchanges. They had previous knowledge of the system or a sense of the history of the game (Bourdieu, 1998a:80), such as strategies they could deploy to avoid being detected for non-compliance, that is techniques to avoid being issued with warning letters. As Harding (2014:277) notes, 'longstanding players know how the game works'.

At times, professionals were disappointed at being encouraged or somewhat coerced, both implicitly and at times explicitly by their superiors, to record cases as 'successfully completed'. This was despite a lack of participation from the child or at least some inconsistency in terms of their levels of engagement. They were discouraged from using the 'partially completed', or demonstration of some improvement, option, arguably engineering a focus away from potentially unwanted scrutiny over their practices.

Senior professionals were also guilty of such process driven thinking in that they discouraged front-line professionals from recording the outcome of the case accurately. This decision was perhaps undergirded by a fear it would be interpreted as a less than favourable result of passive engagement or a lack of substantial participation, potentially triggering external interest and unwanted scrutiny.

Nevertheless, recording cases as successfully completed, was arguably an efficient approach in that a required outcome was achieved: according to the system, the child's involvement in the service had now ended.

Some were 'radically opposed' (Bourdieu, 1998a:78) to this decision on how to record the outcome of the case and detested the way some managers insisted front-line professionals avoid using the partially completed option when a court order had ended. Nevertheless, they were complicit in what was being demanded. Yet, it is important to caution against the view that their actions or decisions on how they were to proceed were overly deterministic, and seldom transformed. Professionals had (limited) opportunity to exercise agency and apply resistance to unfamiliar, distressing or unconformable situations or circumstances.

That said, through their habitus and unique set of dispositions, specific capacities or tendencies, they were inclined to resist the pressures inflicted on them by those who had attained more advantaged positions in the social space (managers, senior managers, and senior professionals). They 'rejected or resisted' (Scraton, 2007:8) conforming or adhering to, what appeared to them to be strict guidance on risk assessment, risk management and offence-focused or offending-related activities and interventions. For example, some professionals decided not to overly focus on risk and avoided concentrating solely or squarely on the young person and their mentality or predisposition to cause harm or inflict pain on fellow human beings (an approach akin to pathologising the child).

They avoided using a sort of reductionist pseudoscience technique (Haines and Case, 2015) underpinned by a concern that young people's behaviour was rational and calculated, with the child 'entirely responsible for [their] own misfortune' (Bourdieu, 1998b:7). Their approach was a shift away from, what appeared to them, to be a persistent emphasis on young person's deficits, faults or their 'deeds'. As discussed in Chapter seven, emphasis was directed towards young people's positive attitudes and behaviours, skills and abilities, at times, they were unaware they had for example in relation to their participation/involvement in the music project.

Repeated changes to the field conditions: Privileging bureaucracy and deprivileging autonomy and consultative styles of practice

Professionals gave accounts of being 'solitary but free' (Bourdieu, 1998b:102). They appeared locked into a precarious role, with the threat of redundancy looming over them. They reported feeling an expectation by those in positions of power/influence, who were granted 'authorized spokesperson' status (Bourdieu, 1990:138), that they would 'put up and shut up' and avoid rejecting the changes to the field conditions. This included, to a degree, an expectation that they would not fight against the newer ways of working.

However, professionals did engage in a struggle for recognition in a context of, what appeared at times, to be thankless tasks. They felt unappreciated by not only the young people they were supporting or attempting to engage, but also their line managers and other authority figures they were in contact with (Bourdieu, 1990).

Some professionals were intent on curtailing or destroying this 'new' practice model. In a Bourdieusian sense, the strategies agents 'chose' to deploy were not decided through conscious calculation, neither were they 'mechanically determined' (Bourdieu, 1990:22). They were not 'merely technical or objective risk evaluators' (Saar-Heiman and Gupta, 2019:13). Rather, agents were influenced by a practical 'feel' or sense 'for that particular game' and how to play it in a way that maximises one's advantage (Bourdieu, 1990:22).

Several professionals experienced repeated changes to the field conditions, such as new information technology systems, new assessment and information tools. Other changes included: several professionals resigning from the organisation and thus securing employment elsewhere, at least partly influenced by feelings of frustration particularly at the decisions they described as being 'thrust upon them' in a 'top-down' authoritarian or managerialist way (English and Bolton, 2016; Ugwudike, 2011).

Consequently, they felt 'done to' as opposed to meaningfully consulted, igniting a sense of insecurity in the workplace amongst professionals, not least provoking a fear that potential unemployment or redundancy was forthcoming. Indeed, as indicated in the findings chapters (see Chapters five, six, and seven), at the time of data collection, the 'dust' - or vortex - of 'battle' or upheaval, following particularly turbulent times, had not settled or entirely dissipated (Bourdieu, 1990:41).

It seemed professionals were attempting to adjust to the field changes and the 'new' status quo, with some showing remarkable resilience and indeed cohesiveness in the face of such uncertainty (Robinson, et al., 2014).

However, some workers experienced a sense of hysteresis, having been 'uprooted and thrown' into, what some described, as a difficult/challenging environment, and a distressing set of unimaginable workload pressures (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:130). It was discovered that management were considering - and in the process of consulting with front-line professionals and young people - a proposal to extend the hours that the service was available to supervise children (i.e. schedule meetings and appointments during evenings and weekends).

Although the idea of this policy was for the service to become more responsive to young people's needs and varied circumstances, if introduced, it could lead to professionals feeling overburdened and potentially 'exacerbate the conflict' and the 'ordinary suffering' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:4) several of them were experiencing.

Some professionals had somewhat of a destabilised habitus. More specifically, they felt demoralised and worthless. They felt such a deficit culture, and various, at times unmanageable, changes to the field conditions, put them at a disadvantage. This course of action was perhaps necessary to ensure the organisation continued to exist and function efficiently and effectively in times of austerity, at least in the interim (Bourdieu, 1998b: 99).

Yet, professionals, both those labelled conservatives, opposed to change, and social agents who were in support of newer innovative ways of practising, appeared to attempt to resolve tensions and conflicts. This was achieved through conformity and submission to the universal – a compromise/concession was deemed plausible (Bourdieu, 1998a, Bourdieu, 1990).

The dominated embraced a mentality that it was better to feel 'generous and altruistic' and appreciative that they remained in employment in the public sector, 'than egoistical' or appearing self-centred (Bourdieu, 1998a: 88 and 89). Such a disposition was shaped significantly by structural factors.

It tends to be those who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged and the victims of 'deep exclusion' (Levitas, et al., 2007:100) who are more inclined to adopt the strategy of subversion and rebel or undermine systems or processes (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). In other words, these individuals are perhaps most likely to oppose the dominant position or narrative issued by those in authority (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). Perhaps it is their first-hand experience of injustice and inequality that undergirds their quest to transform structures, question the 'doxa' or dominant 'taken for granted' ways of seeing the world. Such experiences can essentially ignite their interest in attempting to bring about positive change and fulfil their appetite for a socially just system (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:99).

Nevertheless, the onset of such structural violence and resource-intensive practices for instance, can make it less not more likely that prevailing practices will be meaningful and participatory, or user centred. Such stress and suffering was also experienced by the dominant or the 'elite', who were themselves 'classified' (Bourdieu, 1990:180) by systems and processes and constrained by structures.

For example, some senior professionals and others in more advantageous positions participated or collaborated in the 'game', or at least signalled or gave the impression that they were complicit with the changes or what was being introduced. However, they were sceptical of some of the decisions made, namely: the introduction of Asset Plus. They were unconvinced that Asset Plus increased practitioner autonomy/discretion, nor that it puts the child at the heart of the decision-making process.

Following the re-structure, front line professionals experienced significant geographical constraints, namely workers having to travel further distances to attend meetings with young people and fellow colleagues. What is more, they were required to supervise a bigger cohort or caseload of young people, who more often than not, presented with challenging behaviours and complex needs. Moreover, some front-line professionals expressed frustration and anger, detailing how they were being unfairly treated by senior managers and the system generally. More specifically, they felt it was unfair that their caseloads were increasing.

They disliked that, following the merger, the geographical constraints meant it took them significantly longer to visit a child at her/his home address, travelling vast distances to collect and transport them to meetings. Added to this, new information technology systems, assessment and information tools were introduced.

They felt that they had minimal opportunity to contest these changes prior to them being imposed. According to some, this alerted them to the fact that they realised how their young people felt sometimes, when decisions were 'out of their control' yet imposed nevertheless by those in positions of authority. Several professionals expressed how they could relate to the young people they were supervising on court orders, and their feelings of disempowerment. They could also understand why they disengaged and abstained from involvement in the design, delivery, evaluation of the service they were receiving, or displayed a lack of interest in contributing to the intervention plan in any meaningful way.

Professionals, in some cases, were exhausted at having to 'keep up' with the somewhat vague - although posing as self-evident - demands, be responsive to requests and comply with what was expected of them. For some professionals, their habitus was 'out of sync' or 'not in alignment with the most obvious and basic factors of the doxa' (Bourdieu, 1998a:113). Their habitus, whilst orientating their attitudes and actions, seemed ill-equipped to cope with the unexpected and seemingly 'ever-changing situations' (Bourdieu, 1977:72).

To affirm or deny the voice of the child?

Children and young people in conflict with the law often have unmet health and social care needs, speech language, communication and literacy difficulties (Taylor, 2016). Professionals averred that many young people require assistance to express their voice effectively and adopt active decision-making roles. They felt children were often not personally, socially, and emotionally ready or in position to take control of their own care. Indeed, there can be challenges ensuring children comply with court order requirements when they are presenting with such complex backgrounds. This can have an adverse effect on their ability to comply. Children's chaotic lifestyles can result in them struggling to follow any sort of routine.

Some workers were conscious that young people were being overloaded by professionals and reflected on a 'whole sort of series of steps' that were required prior to young people, who may have additional needs, being ready to engage with the service or begin the search, for example, for education and training opportunities (see Chapter five).

Some professionals felt young people were incapable or lacking maturity and unable – unless provided with assistance – to voice legitimate concerns. This was especially the case, according to some professionals, in relation to those who had experienced poor mental health, had acquired brain/head injuries, had experienced or were experiencing adversity and been diagnosed with learning difficulties or learning disabilities.

It was felt such young people were in need of tailored or bespoke forms of support with a view to them taking control of their life. If a situation was to arise whereby young people were in control of the decision-making process, they would need effective support and consistent guidance and encouragement, from a professional who they trusted and respected and who could project empathy and was capable of encouraging them to reflect on their feelings and emotions.

Are young people capable of making 'real' choices? Engaging in a battle for the 'power of knowledge'

As alluded to above, some professionals felt that if they did not put systems in place or 'do it for them' young people would not participate. Although professionals may be interested in capturing the child's thoughts, feelings and sentiments, they may be underestimating children's abilities, and in the process, hindering rather than enhancing decision making – not properly considering the nature and extent of children's agency (Smith, 2009).

Some professionals felt children's knowledge was an unreliable source, in that they were not credible 'knowers' or capable of engaging in adult-like discussions (Winter, 2015:205). Irrespective of children's apparent inabilities, incompetence, deficits, shortcomings, and their 'no sense of self', professionals can assert and use their own authoritative status, and deploy various techniques or subtle tactics to ensure the child complies. They may ensure the adult voice takes precedence, by reinforcing their

authority, power, and status when in supervision meetings with them (Winter, 2015).

Professionals can query the validity of young people's accounts, deny their capabilities, devalue or undervalue their contributions or experiential knowledge, and view them as subordinate with limited aspirations. In so doing, they may label their own professional expertise as valid and reliable (Winter, 2015). They may deem their own professional judgement to be credible due to it being gained from engaging with theory and practice experiences (Winter, 2015). By giving less emphasis to capturing children's unique experiences and knowledge, it could be argued such a stance does little to strengthen the involvement of the child in the process (Winter, 2015).

Imbued with the authority to undermine children's voices, should they wish to, it could be argued that it is professionals who are determining what is and is not acceptable knowledge – what constitutes 'truth' or is in a person's 'best interests'. They may respond to young people's acts of resistance, as a sign of immaturity, or even treat their attitudes or behaviours as a sign of disrespect or challenge to adult ways of working and the adult-centric implicit logic of the 'game' (Bourdieu, 1990). They may even view any challenge to the status quo or resistance on the part of young people as a threat to their interests, treat such behaviour as an attempt at being 'subversive and conspiratorial', and be conscious to protect the privileged positions they have occupied in the social space (English and Bolton, 2016:72).

The status quo or the dominating discourse often prevail, as the practices of those in authority are rarely questioned due to the belief that progressive change is rarely achieved (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). There is often little change to the status quo due to young people legitimising their precarious or subordinate positions. As a result, existing structures are maintained or remain unchanged. Such existing structures are often biased in support of powerful interests. Put simply, there is a clear-cut division; with children's experiential knowledge continuing to be viewed as inferior to adult's professional experience/expertise. The 'imbalance' is often 'accepted' as 'the way of things' (English and Bolton, 2016:46), with those under supervision often in compliance and agreement, both consciously and unconsciously.

Commonalities of experiences: Repositioning young people as assets who can assist in the rehabilitation and recovery of their peers

Bourdieu's (1998a:6) somewhat underutilised notion of social space is particularly pertinent to a discussion on the existence of self-help/ peer-led models of practice and psychosocial therapeutic groupwork interventions in the form of the music project. Bourdieu (1998a:6) articulated how 'all agents are located in this space in such a way that the closer they are to one another in these two dimensions the more they have in common; and the more remote they are from one another, the less they have in common'.

The two dimensions he refers to are firstly a person's 'overall volume of the different kinds of capital they possess', considered the most crucial, and secondly 'the relative weight of the different kinds of capital' (Bourdieu, 1998a:7). For example, the children and young people in my study - often heavily disadvantaged - experienced commonality amongst their peer group. They had shared experiences of being marginalised or oppressed, collectively experiencing economic and cultural capital deficit. Nevertheless, they were 'united by an affinity of style' or 'categories of perception' (Bourdieu, 1998a:8 and 9) in that they had accumulated emotional capital, an ability to project empathy.

They also possessed other capitals or wealth (power), namely knowledge, skill and ability relating to how to navigate criminal justice processes and systems which appeared to them, initially at least, as alienating and disempowering. They also felt, in relation to the music project, connected, a sense of belonging within the peer group. They had a shared knowledge of how to overcome adversity, an experience and knowledge that was relatable to their peer group. They had unique or distinct yet similar 'social positions', 'dispositions', and 'position-takings' (Bourdieu, 1998a:6).

In seeking to assist children in their move away from crime and offending, some professionals were keen to progress the practice of peer mentoring to correct such a 'poverty of aspiration' (Archer et al., 2012:901). Professionals were mindful not to resort to the tendency of '[preaching] the gospel of self-help' (Bourdieu, 1998b:7). Such minimal

direction/assistance, leaving children to 'fend for themselves' (Goldson and Muncie, 2006:224), may result if professional support or specialised care and guidance is withdrawn. Essentially, there is a danger peer mentoring could be seen as a way to ease resource and funding constraints.

Several professionals felt that such peer-led models of practice were not deficit-facing but rather positive, constructive and participatory, resulting in children feeling enthused and inspired to desist from crime (see Chapter seven). Peer mentors can potentially steer their peers away from a life of crime and criminality by challenging thought patterns, belief systems and in the process influence positive mental attitudes. After all, such individuals are likely to have 'more properties in common' because they are 'close to each other' in terms of the social space or class grouping, occupying 'similar dispositions and interests' (Bourdieu, 1990:127 and 128).

Music mentoring – a space free from judgement and symbolic violence?

The music project was a creative way to engage and empower children - an appropriate space to facilitate and foster the 'accumulation of (material and symbolic) social capital' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:127). More specifically, the project was facilitated by an ex-offender who was also described as modest, humble and skilled at motivating those young people and reducing power inequalities. He did not, unlike other systems,

processes or structured spaces, perpetuate the marginalisation of children and young people (Winter, 2015).

The youth worker's caring and supportive stance and championing of young people's participatory rights was well received by young people who described his approach as friendly and appropriate. He encouraged children and young people who were 'endowed with dispositions or tastes that [were] similar, and thus produced from similar social conditions and conditionings' (Bourdieu, 1990:71), to assist one another in the process of rehabilitation and in the struggle to overcome adversity.

He attempted to empower children and young people who were often described as 'hard to reach' or 'difficult to engage' in activities that were intended to help them accumulate greater capital wealth. The youth worker, who also shared an affinity of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990:71), was able to relate to these young people who were often deprived of capital and living in difficult circumstances. He seemed to 'break with accepted ideas and ordinary discourse' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:123), especially in relation to risk, passive compliance and being 'done to'.

Instead, he encouraged them to share their life experiences and this resulted in them adopting a stance or position that was emotionally available. He was attempting to break down the barrier of him being in a more 'elevated' position in the social space (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:123). This specific worker was passionate about enhancing young people's participation and 'fostering democracy' in the process (Wood, 2009:152).

The project had a focus on developing young people's musical skills, namely vocals, and abilities in relation to writing/composing music, premised on the idea that children had 'skills and knowledge that should be built upon' (Wood, 2009:151). Alongside, it had a therapeutic emphasis. Young people were encouraged to reflect on their struggles, with a view to assisting with healing, growth and identify transformation in relation to their personal, social and emotional development. There was a focus on helping young people to shift their negative or deficit-based identity related to their involvement in crime and offending. They were encouraged to substitute it for one that was more positive related to them as musicians, rappers or peer mentors who had potential to positively influence the life of their mentees.

This positive mentality appeared to differ somewhat to the risk-based approach often embedded in practice in the youth justice field (Haines and Case, 2015). Indeed, as alluded to previously, practitioner-led risk and public protection work appeared to be the dominant discourse. The music project, on the other hand, was child/young person-led. Thus, the activities or interventions were often grounded in the young person's voices or their perspectives. Professionals attempted to create a safe space, where young people could reflect on their traumatic childhoods and other adversities they had or were experiencing in their life. They were supported in phrasing and expressing deeply held views, without judgement or prejudice.

Some youth offending service workers did assist with facilitating the sessions. At times, young people felt pressured into talking about their involvement in crime/offending and the harm caused, as opposed to reflecting on more positive aspects of their life or matters that were non-criminogenic.

Exposing young people to new experiences

Children and young people on court orders, especially those struggling to access or establish legitimate pro-social networks, can benefit from being exposed to 'new experiences' (Bourdieu, 2000; 161) and safe environments, free from judgement (Ingram and Abrahams, 2016).

Notwithstanding that one's habitus is long-lasting or durable, it can be affected by such new experiences, altering the way in this context children and young people either perceive or act in the social world (see Chapter three). Participating in positive, constructive leisure and social pursuits, such as using creative and artistic expression through participation in a music project and/or assisting in the rehabilitation of others through engagement in a peer mentoring project, can result in them correcting their capital deficit (see Chapter seven).

For example, by being provided with opportunities to develop the ability to acquire assets/resources and accumulate different forms of capital, this can contribute to the construction of a more equitable 'playing field' for the individual. Furthermore, it is an opportunity or a route into gaining field position in a competitive social environment. In generating capital that potentially had exchange value, the individuals acquired skills that were

potentially transferrable, expanding training, education or employment prospects in the process. Such opportunities were not ordinarily accessible to them (or at least the perception that they were not, in comparison to their non-offending counterparts).

One ex-offender had formed a trusting relationship with a manager who encouraged and supported him to pursue a career path involving caring for and educating children and young people 'at risk' of either criminal involvement or of achieving poor outcomes. The ex-offender reflected on how his worker emphasized the benefits of using his 'authentic', 'credible' and skilled voice to inspire others 'at risk' of criminal involvement that change, and a new positive direction in life, was achievable. It could be argued that there was an alteration to his habitus. Subsequently, his habitus, was modified, or at least an aspect of it was.

From his own perspective, his disposition altered from a parochial attitude or fatalistic outlook to a more prospective, positive, progressive and promotional one. His habitus was shaped by prolonged, disruptive family circumstances. This resulted in him being placed in the care of the local authority and subsequently experiencing multiple placement moves, adverse educational experiences and poor health outcomes having associated and formed connections with pro-criminal friendship groups.

As alluded to, this young person lacked social capital, and his engagement in problematic behaviours was masking deeper, unresolved issues. He expressed a sense of fatalism and held a hopeless view of

himself and the negative direction his life was taking (Boeck, et al., 2006a and b; Robinson, 2014).

In search of recognition, love, attention and fulfilment, he attempted to acquire status and power, through associating with similarly situated others involved in crime or problematic behaviours. He felt at the time he had 'nothing to lose', and in so doing, generated social, economic capital and a sense of belonging (positive in the short term but negative in the longer term as he discovered when pursuing legitimate employment opportunities). Indeed, as Barry (2006) notes, young people can gain capital through engagement in unlawful activity. In the process, agents can accumulate material wealth, trade/exchange it and obtain some sense of power and influence (also see Harding, 2014).

Nevertheless, having overcome to an extent adversity in his life, Levi engaged in capital expenditure, using his credible voice having 'been there too' (Humphreys 2004:15). He instilled hope and belief in others that recovery, and a change to their past reputations, was a plausible aim for them too (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018). This aided his own recovery process and facilitated the transition from offender to ex-offender/peer mentor. Consequently, he acquired and sustained different forms of capital legitimately, including access to social networks.

As noted, one senior manager utilised this young person's talents. He helped to maximise his potential through enhancing capital (skill set) by way of encouraging him to participate in a peer mentoring project. He was of the view that, as LeBel et al., (2015:109) have similarly noted, Youth

Offending Services 'could take advantage of [young people's] life experiences as well as their geographic, cultural, and functional similarities to help similar persons in need' and 'through reconciling a criminal past', facilitate feelings of a sense of triumph, increasing self-esteem and self-worth in the process (LeBel et al., 2015:116).

This worker advised the young person on the procedure and provided extensive and sustained support with setting up a user-led consultancy service, thus 'decisively orientating his career' (Bourdieu 2007:90). This young person had acquired bonded and static capital. However, he was lacking in access to diverse or 'dynamic' networks (Boeck, 2009:88) until the youth justice worker created such valued opportunities for him to excel and improve his life-chances in the process (Boeck, 2009:88). Furthermore, this young man broadened his horizons, and capitalised 'on [such] contacts and resources in order to move towards a markedly more ambitious vision of the future' (Robinson, 2014:172).

One manager described this young person as a competent individual who had the ability to mentor those on court orders. Such young people who are under supervision may not be complying and may be experiencing personal difficulties. Levi was described as a person who had the capability to project empathy and encourage them to re-engage, attend appointments, and assist in enhancing their self-esteem and support the child to modify their thoughts, feelings and behaviours with a view to sustaining non-offending. This manager also encouraged Levi to assist the youth offending service by co-creating and co-facilitating sessions.

Are young people authorities on their own subjective experience?

Children who have experienced some distress, pain or suffering in their life, but have overcome such adversity and forged a positive path for themselves despite obstacles and unfortunate circumstances, can accrue 'experiential knowledge'. This can be defined as 'know how' or first-hand lived experience of how to navigate life's challenges and system demands (Beresford, 2016; Creaney, 2018; Peer Power, 2018).

Whilst not a 'silver bullet' in terms of being an approach that will solve underlying issues or the problem of young people engaging in crime or harmful behaviours, one could assume, a priori, that this service user knowledge proves more 'effective' than professional expertise. This professional expertise can be accumulated through attending training courses and acquired dispositions generated through experiences of working with and supporting clients. If young people use their experiential and situated knowledge to help others in need, this could influence positive attitudes and behaviours amongst their peer group (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010). It could also help and be beneficial by way of facilitating healing, growth and identity transformation (Beyond Youth Custody, 2017).

Some professionals questioned the credibility or validity of such knowledge and others did not perceive or recognise it as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1990). Thus, it could be argued that there was a 'battle' in existence. The struggle was between those who had appetite to transform the structures by progressing the value of children's

experiential knowledge and those who endeavoured to preserve the status quo, by reiterating the validity of professional expertise (Bourdieu, 1990). Nevertheless, several professionals and young people alike, referred to peer mentors potentially accruing symbolic capital or power granted by the peer group being mentored. This capital was in the form of status or recognition for their law-abiding achievements or their unique ability to project empathy and positively influence the actions of others who were experiencing adversity.

However, equipping young people with this power, can result in those individuals perceiving they have a legitimate right to 'give orders' and 'have orders obeyed' (Bourdieu, 1998a:85). There is a danger that such power can be misused, resulting in mentors either demeaning mentees and/or behaving inappropriately. Essentially, unintentionally or otherwise, they may increase the likelihood of mentees engaging in further criminal activity, and decrease levels of self-esteem and confidence. This is perhaps most acute in relation to those peer mentors who, having been assessed as suitable and received training on what the role entails, begin mentoring their peers despite their true intentions of participating in the activity being concealed. Young people may act in this way in order 'to maximise a certain kind of profit' (Bourdieu, 1998a:86), however ill-conceived this intention might appear. There are further concerns related to this type of practice. It could be argued that peer-led practices do little to tackle socio-economic disparity and redress inequalities in society (English and Bolton, 2016:xi; see Chapter two). Nevertheless, in an effort to create a more socially justice system, it can form an important part of a

package of child-friendly and strengths-based practices (Haines and Case, 2015).

What is more, perhaps due to limited empirical evidence on its effectiveness, some workers were sceptical or hesitant about the benefits of engaging and treating young people as partners in the process and privileging their experiential knowledge. Although there was no evidence to suggest they were intent on forbidding or sabotaging peer mentoring projects from being developed, they were somewhat resistant to sharing power/control with young people. Some were not convinced that the benefits outweighed the risks. Thus, they viewed it as an inferior discourse and essentially questioned the legitimacy of such peer support models.

Some professionals viewed advancement in children's experiential knowledge as a threat to their ability to preserve and even strengthen their professional knowledge as acquired capital (Bourdieu, 1990). A minority thought young people were likely to abuse such roles and be a negative influence on a young person's life by condoning the inappropriate or problematic behaviour of their peers rather than attempting to prevent or reduce the likelihood of it escalating. This concern is perhaps understandable in that peers or friendship groups can alter mindsets and lifestyles 'in both positive and negative ways' (Shaw and Greenhow, 2019:6).

Furthermore, young people may have unresolved traumas and perhaps not be receiving support from professionals to address the underlying

causes of their difficulties which may impact negatively on their ability to be resilient in the face of any further adversity. This could then make it difficult for them to form constructive relationships and support healthy growth amongst their peer group. These challenges cannot be underestimated, yet some of them can potentially be resolved by having a thorough or comprehensive screening, vetting and selection process.

In terms of policy recommendations, if young people are to be recruited to the role, it is essential that they are provided with appropriate guidance and able to access an ongoing adequately resourced package of training and support. Alongside this, professionals should reflect carefully and critically on the process of mentor/mentee matching. Essentially, as Austria and Peterson (2017) note, mentors require effective relationship-based support and guidance. This includes a comprehensive not piecemeal or substandard package of support, that is, crucially: relevant or appropriate and responsive to their individual needs and unique set of circumstances.

Children and young people on court orders, especially those struggling to access or establish legitimate pro-social networks, can benefit from being exposed to new experiences and social relations (Robinson, 2016), and profit from being offered decent routes to acquire or build social capitals. As Bourdieu (2002:29) observed, one's habitus can change direction if subjected to 'new experiences, education and trainings'.

Notwithstanding that one's habitus is long-lasting, it can be affected by such new experiences, altering the way - in this context children and

young people - either perceive or act in the social world. Participating in positive, constructive leisure and social pursuits such as using creative artistic expression through participation in a music project and/or assisting the rehabilitation of others through engagement in a peer mentoring project, can be considered forms of 'rational utopianism' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:33). More specifically, these can be ways to address power inequalities, resulting in young people correcting any capital deficit (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015).

There is a limited body of empirical research that has investigated the impact of using current and former 'offenders' as peer mentors. There is not only a dearth of theoretical/conceptual literature on the practice of peer mentoring, there is also a limited evidence-based on 'effective' models of peer-to-peer support/delivery, in the Youth Justice System in England and Wales. This study has bridged this gap in knowledge. It has rectified some of these omissions, and subsequently added knowledge and original insight into the 'academic landscape' (Harding, 2014:22) related to peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System.

The PhD has shown how, those with a background in crime/offending can overcome adversity or traumatic childhoods. Some young people had acquired emotional capital that had 'use value' resulting in them being able to adopt the role of 'wounded healers' or a professional ex- (LeBel, et al., 2015). They were considered by several research participants to be a unique but underutilised resource. Young people who had experienced the criminal justice system first-hand, could, if they expressed a desire

and demonstrated ability to project empathy, provide effective emotional and practical assistance to their peers and be positive role models.

It was often claimed mentors could inspire their peers and assist them in the change process, demonstrating to them that it is possible to overcome problems and live a meaningful productive life. In an effort to reduce recidivism, promote positive outcomes, and apply their 'emotional capital', they could be 'credible messengers' (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018). They can educate their peers, who may have been considered by professionals or other authority figures as difficult to engage, on the consequences of participating in problematic behaviours. They can be an empowering role model who influences attitudes/behaviours in a positive way, preventing others from taking similar destructive paths of violence and criminality (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018).

Children's and young people's evolving developmental capacities or their habitus is not entirely fixed by socio-political constraints but is in continual development. Thus, it is capable of being adjusted to accommodate a more positive, prospective outlook on their future, facilitating children's abilities to master or freedom to use agency and choose, an alternative mindset.

For some young people, participating in a peer mentoring project can enhance their abilities and talents in problem solving, listening and help to improve their communicative/inter-personal skills. Being a peer mentor and in so doing providing empathic pro-social support to others who are

disadvantaged or marginalised, can also be a way to 'give back' to society and 'make good' or reconcile the harms inflicted on victims (Maruna, 2001). Engaging in such acts can also demonstrate to society that the child or young person was 'worthy of forgiveness' having repaired some of the harm caused (LeBel, et al., 2015). As Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, (2018:201) note, if young people – current or former 'offenders' - engage in projects or schemes of this type, they can build 'pro-social, identity enhancing networks and resources' yet not forget 'their past, but rather use their traumatic experiences as a source of resiliency to make good and reinforce a new identity'.

There has been growing interest in this approach in the adult criminal justice sector (Buck, 2016). Yet despite its potential as an 'effective' or innovative resource that has unique value, children's experiential knowledge has been largely untapped.

At the research site, the organisation experienced difficulties progressing peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System, not least due to resistance from practitioners regarding the efficacy of such practices. Similarly, in the social care and public health fields, as Beresford (2019:3) a leading commentator on citizen and user participation has noted, despite governmental rhetoric, in reality adult service user's experiential knowledge has been persistently marginalised, with professionals, systems and processes continuing to 'devalue them as knowers and producers of knowledge'.

Conclusion

There has been limited empirical research conducted on young people's participation in decision-making in the Youth Justice System, including how or to what extent they are involved individually and strategically in processes that concern them or matters related to the service and how it functions. The thesis has bridged this gap in knowledge by investigating how practitioners and young people experience, construct and define participatory youth justice practice.

It has explored young people's complex personal experiences of being in contact with the justice system alongside capturing their varied trajectories or journeys, and the individual strategies they employed to navigate systems and processes. In accordance with a Bourdieusian stance, I investigated the 'deepest logic' of participatory youth justice practices through embarking 'into the particularity of an empirical reality' (Bourdieu, 1998a:2).

In terms of rigour, this PhD thesis has produced, constructed and presented original, holistic and dynamic understandings of young people's and professionals' subjective experiences of participating in youth justice processes. More specifically, through examining and offering reflections on the 'logic' of participatory youth justice practice, a combination of theoretically rich and empirically rigorous research has been undertaken in an effort to 'strip away' certain things that were 'self-evident' (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015:6).

The habitus of professionals centred, at least in part, on the fear that, a serious further offence may be committed, and human error identified. Professionals could have their employment terminated if they did not update the information and assessment systems both accurately and timely. Such fears, at times, were translated into practice, shaping how they operated, underpinning how they were to proceed. It was a familiar practice 'preventing [them] from seeing everything that [was] concealed' (Bourdieu, 1998a:21). It prevented, at times, professionals from involving children more centrally and meaningfully in the design and delivery of services, as this type of practice was viewed and perhaps unconsciously internalised, on occasion, as 'too risky'.

The complex and multifaceted habitus of practitioners, comprising a person's past experiences and present circumstances, represented their perceptions and beliefs. The professional habitus centred on the fear that children - as 'free-willed' conscious and 'knowing' subjects (Bourdieu, 1998a: viii) - could be controlling, manipulative, deceitful or calculative. This line of thinking, influenced simultaneously by conscious and unconscious thought, shaped the view that, as 'young offenders', they should not be invited to attend multi-agency high-risk management meetings.

Young people who were classified as 'high risk' appeared to be more 'undeserving' than 'deserving' of a say in risk-management meetings (Goldson and Muncie, 2006:241). This was despite the rhetoric of centralising the voice of the child in conflict with the law and Youth Justice

System and the priority to involve them in the design, delivery and evaluation of processes and systems.

It could be argued that they were 'distanced symbolically and institutionally from the inclusionary thrust' (Goldson and Muncie, 2006:213) associated with the more principled and progressive 'children first' movement and the emphasis on privileging or valuing young people's input into the format and content of interventions (Haines and Case, 2015). In other words, the right to choose and influence processes and systems was reserved for those not labelled 'high risk'. As Goldson and Muncie (2006:214) averred, it could be argued that it was 'inclusionary welfarism… displaced by exclusionary punitivism'.

This discussion chapter has shown how habitus can be a useful concept to 'make sense of' and understand professionals and young people's interpretations of the complex policy and practice world of youth justice. More precisely, this related to how they shaped and were shaped by youth justice practice and its processes and systems (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015). It has offered insights into how structural/social conditions and other pertinent concerns shaped choice making in the bureaucratic field of youth justice: how the world of youth justice comprehended them and how they comprehended that world (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015). Thus, the PhD has captured empirically the subjective agency of practitioners and young people, and simultaneously theorised objective structures of the youth justice field.

Chapter 9: A critical and reflexive disposition of a practitioner turned researcher - my 'sketch' at a self-analysis

Introduction

> "… it is solely to the extent that (researcher) can objectify themselves that they are able, even as they remain in the place inexorably assigned to each of us in the social world, to imagine themselves in the place occupied by their objects (who are, at least to a certain degree, an alter ego) and thus to take their point of view, that is, to understand that if they were in their shoes they would doubtless be and think just like them" (Bourdieu, et al., 1999: 626).

Bourdieu himself engaged in an extensive critical self-analysis throughout not only his early studies but also towards the latter part of his career (Bourdieu, 2004: Bourdieu, 2007). For example, he reflected on his sense of malaise: a disconnect (or 'split habitus') between his humble beginnings or low social origin and his remarkable academic success. Although he possessed exceptional academic ability, he experienced challenges 'fitting in' to a 'new' system he felt he did not belong and a point of no return regarding the field he had left behind (Bourdieu, 2007; English and Bolton, 2016). In true Bourdieusian spirit, it is important to self-criticise.

In this section of the thesis, I demonstrate how I practised 'epistemological vigilance', reflecting on my positionality, notably beliefs, prejudices and biases when formulating and subsequently studying the research problem (Bourdieu, et al., 1991: ix). I discuss how I approached the study, critically analysing my experiences of conducting the fieldwork.

Crucially, as Bourdieu (2004:113) notes, 'experience linked to one's social past can and must be mobilised in research'.

Using Bourdieu's conceptual tools which are stimulating and 'good to think with' (Jenkins, 1992:176), I will critically reflect on my different, often competing or varied positions and multiple dispositions. This is my attempt at capturing how my perceptions, thoughts, bias and standpoint (my habitus) influenced my actions and how the field conditions or structural constraints have influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, and directed my practices and responses. As will be discussed, this has involved being resistant alongside showing approval. At times, I repressed some 'truths' or refrained from voicing an opinion, objecting to field conditions for instance.

I did not want to challenge the status quo or orthodoxy, through fear of upsetting the establishment or those in elite positions of authority. Those in more privileged positions were holders of legitimate power or control over dominant models and ways of practising (Bourdieu, 1990). In sum, I reflect on my life experiences 'feel for the game' or 'practical sense' I had acquired (or not) related to how I navigated not only academia but also personal and professional matters.

This attempt at a self-analysis is challenging for many reasons, not least due to, at times, my actions not being 'rational' or consciously directed. They have been influenced subconsciously, through dispositions, interests, preferences and tastes, influenced by my previous experiences

of similar situations or objective structures and other circumstances, affecting how I am to respond or proceed (Bourdieu, 1990:10).

Young people's involvement in the risk-based approach

I felt the issue of young people being excluded from attending multi-agency high risk management meetings was perceived by some professionals as either an insignificant concern or a trivial matter. However, it nevertheless remained largely unnoticed I thought, especially by young people and for this reason, I felt it required attention and wanted to bring the issue into 'visible existence' (Bourdieu, 1990:18). For example, although I felt I unsettled ways of thinking about the process (Goldson and Hughes, 2010), I recall being apologetic to one worker for asking a child, during an interview, what his views were on the high-risk management meeting process. I felt most uneasy about the situation because the young person did not know the purpose, thus nor the 'ins' and 'outs' of the process I was referring to (Dean, 2017).

I was most uncertain about whether this was the 'right thing to have done' in that this young person could have been angry – and rightly so – had he not been informed about such meetings or denied the opportunity to tell his side of the story. I felt I was being somewhat of a nuisance or troublemaker by attempting to open-up discussion on why it seemed young people were being 'disqualified from offering authoritative insight' (Dean, 2017:143).

What intensified my anxiety with the situation, was that one worker who case managed one young person I interviewed felt it was 'inconceivable'

(Bourdieu, 2014:171) that young people in general physically attend multi-agency management meetings.

He did not seem to be pronouncing this view in haste. I also felt somewhat privileged that he felt comfortable enough to share or declare his position on the matter with me. However, I took issue with his perspective. This was due to the fear that this view could potentially further disadvantage those often marginalised. I felt this point of view could fuel the misconception that these so-called 'dangerous criminals' (Allen, 2007:1) have forgone their right to a meaningful voice in the process.

Nevertheless, his view was the dominant one, and it seemed to be driving the policy. Relatedly, I also felt excluding young people from the meeting was the most convenient or practical option for the service, considering, at times, the urgency to act upon concerns. They may feel a necessity to 'do something' in response to the level of risk and a degree of uncertainty.

Some professionals were sceptical about the process of inviting children and their supporters to such meetings. This could delay the process and be problematic if the service is working to a tight deadline and in accordance with national standards. However, aside from the matter that judgements on levels of risk, are not cast-iron certainties (they are constructions), the crux of the matter for case managers was engaging young people in a plan of action that was, to a greater or lesser degree, devised without their input.

Interestingly, Hart and Thompson's (2009:13) as part of a scoping project for the National Children's Bureau on young people's involvement in the planning and delivery of youth justice services, observed how young people in conflict with the law 'may be further disempowered if their own perceptions do not accord with the scores assigned to them by the YOT assessor'.

Nevertheless, although initially the issue did not fully register on my radar, I proceeded to feel this was a credible line of inquiry. There has been very little research on this area of practice and the 'logic' of such a meeting in my view was somewhat ambivalent and not consistently (in policy nor in practice) made clear and transparent to young people. I felt some professionals did not feel children should be made aware of the process or invited to attend the formal meetings with professionals. However, I felt I was rejecting, largely unconsciously, what I perceived as vague justification provided by some workers for why young people should not be invited to the meetings. For example, that all young people may be manipulative or controlling I did not feel was a suitable reason to override a child's right to participate and contest the professional discourse or (potentially inaccurate) judgments formed regarding their conduct or behaviour.

This reinforced my perception that staff were afraid or ambivalent about relinquishing power and control and readdressing power imbalances between them and young people. In this context, this view was driven I think by the fear that if they do invite children to the meetings, there was a

risk the public or 'victim' protection agenda was compromised, especially in terms of harm reduction or minimisation of risk (Robinson, et al., 2014; Wood and Kemshall, 2008).

However, I was at a bit of a crossroads, in that I was also unsure whether young people should be invited to attend the meetings. If I suggested that they should, this could be considered a controversial claim. For instance, the meetings were adult-led and could potentially be daunting and scary for young people. Young people may be confused by the obscure language used by professionals, driven by the dominant discourse related to risk, safeguarding and public protection work.

As noted, despite increasing research attention on capturing the voices of those under supervision, there was the added challenge of this being a niche and under-researched area. Thus, there was little (if any) literature or evidence on young people's involvement in the 'high risk' based approach. Nevertheless, there was an absence of a degree of consensus related to children's involvement in this process.

I felt I was prevented or censored from 'saying certain things' (Bourdieu, at al., 1999:609). This was most acute in relation to the practice of questioning young people on their views about the 'high risk' management meetings. This was due to the fear that children and young people may not be aware of such a process, potentially leading to upset on their part and potential onset of anger directed at their case manager, should they discover that the service is excluding them from a process about them.

'Resigned passivity' and a token level of engagement? Playing the 'game' and being docile - 'giving the system what it requires'

A particularly interesting finding related to an apparent pledge from both professionals and young people to 'play the game' (see Chapter eight). Many professionals who shared their stories and reflections with me, seemed over-worked. Some reported feeling exhausted by the demands or what they described as 'high expectations' placed upon them. They seemed frustrated by young people not attending appointments despite on several occasions there being numerous attempts made to secure some level of participation (see Chapter six).

Young people tended to want their meetings over and done with and their involvement in the YOT to end and thus would adopt a passive stance. They seemed to be refraining from adopting rebellious dispositions (See Chapters five and eight). Instead they would supply the 'right answers' or present a 'well-rehearsed story' to professionals in an effort to give the appearance that they were engaged or 'on track' with their change plan and court order requirements (Robinson, 2015). I felt some young people were not prepared to share their true perspective if they were dissatisfied with how they were being treated. This was due to either their perception that they lacked the ability to be assertive, or due to being fearful of the consequences (i.e. they would be seen as a 'troublemaker', potentially returned to court for non-compliance if they were to rebel).

Some young people, appearing self-assured, exhibited submissive tendencies to the established order (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu remarked

in a 2001 documentary, *Sociology is a Martial Art*, that those who 'fight terror can look themselves like terrorists'. Thus, children may be 'put off' by adopting a rebellious stance and more attracted to, and feel more 'at ease' with, being in line with the status quo (Bourdieu, 1990). Interestingly, one young person who was, in my view, viewed as the recalcitrant type, (an uncooperative attitude or disposition) was resistant to, what he perceived to be, unnecessary and intrusive demands (see Chapter five).

The YOT appeared most unhappy with this chosen course of action when he decided not to participate in a reparative activity. However, I could not help but think that a disturbing and traumatic episode he experienced as a child (he disclosed at interview that when he was younger his best friend committed suicide) continued to have a profound impact on his outlook on life. There remained some unresolved, deep pain and suffering. I also felt he had every reason to be 'a bit irate' yet perhaps this was a reflection of my habitus, in that I do tend to admire individuals who fight for justice. This was in contrast to other young people who tended to acquiesce or assent tacitly, a strategy pursued in an effort to 'get through their court order' swiftly or with few complications.

I felt professionals were aware of young people wanting their order 'over and done with', and were of the view that, despite good intentions, at best they would often achieve passive or minimal compliance with court order requirements. Some professionals were concerned that they were also participating or encouraging involvement in this type of 'game playing'.

They felt guilty of not digging beneath surface appearances, colluding in these inauthentic or 'fake' transactions. I felt professionals were 'getting round the rules of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990:78) or operating within the rules by, at times, engaging in sort of 'fake' or inauthentic transactions. They were also recording the case incorrectly or misleadingly, when it ended, as successfully as opposed to partially completed.

Academic pressures

I could relate to this issue having worked in Higher Education for the past few years, experiencing difficulties negotiating the demands of the role, namely pressures to improve retention or achieve minimum pass mark requirements. At times, albeit somewhat uncomfortably, uncharacteristically, I have compromised on my principles somewhat. I have contributed to the construction of inauthentic transactions between myself and some students, predominantly in an effort to 'get them through' their studies. This has been possible due to belief that participating in the 'game' of academia is worth the effort (illusio).

I can relate to the experience of being 'doubly dominated' and sensed the feeling of being controlled (Bourdieu, et al., 1999; Dean, 2017) by students who perceived education as a transaction, a consumer demanding 'value for money' and 'satisfaction' (Yarrow, 2019). Thus, to a degree, there is a 'false consensus' or 'hidden collusion' in operation (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:189 and 112).

I also felt controlled by some senior managers who introduced or facilitated the implementation of contradictory policies and demanded 'hard' outcomes and were keen to retain students, at all costs, in order to generate financial income. This was perhaps driven by the need to survive in the competitive environment, especially at the time of writing and the concerns related to dwindling student applications. However, such pressures to meet 'hard' outcomes, I feel are also self-imposed, not exclusively the result of organisational demands and expectations (Dean, 2017). Moreover, I continue to struggle navigating and balancing teaching and other important commitments. For instance, securing external research funds, coordinating or participating in knowledge-exchange projects, the pressure to publish articles in high impact journals that are REF-eligible, alongside managing administrative tasks and juggling other workload pressures.

I could also understand why some youth justice professionals were receptive to young people presenting in docile states, and acting in a conservative manner. For instance, although I encourage students to be critical thinkers in an effort to disrupt the status quo and bring about change, this is generally in relation to the subject matter. I expect them to present in a docile state or be of a malleable personality type, especially when it concerns them providing feedback on the course or their University experience.

I encourage them to participate in the University 'game', serve the status quo concerning systems and operations and appear 'ready to conform'. I

implicitly suggest students behave appropriately when communicating or interacting with tutors and subtly encourage them to provide positive feedback on their experiences, which does not negatively affect the University's position in league tables. I do not encourage them to be disruptive, contest marks or query the validity of University assessments. Thus, in this sense, I do not facilitate 'open conflict' when interacting with students (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:189 and 112). I am of the view that students tend to avoid adopting a resistance stance due to perceiving this course of action to be of minimal benefit to them and potentially detrimental to attainment and their career development.

Previously, I felt enormously overburdened when working at a further education institution. I also felt I was being 'held back' from progressing with my research and other enterprise-type projects. Although I had accrued capital, the power I acquired was not of the 'right' type to utilise in the higher education field. More specifically, although I had contacts and connections with industry experts, I had not published articles in high impact journals nor secured funding or been involved with research projects.

Is 'dissent prohibited'? An elaborate 'game' of inauthentic transactions

Nevertheless, some professionals were afraid that if they 'discredited this truth' or reality about 'game' playing (Liebling, 2001:480) it would be to the detriment of both themselves and the young people they serve. If they exposed a system whereby young people were engaging in a sort of

'elaborate game', this could upset the norm and result in young people becoming non-compliant. However, I had mixed views on this, in that although I felt it was somewhat of a pressing concern, progress or participation in processes and the achievement of positive outcomes, differs depending on the young people and their individual needs and interests (Robinson, et al., 2014). For example, although the so-called risks may not have reduced and attendance at meetings or levels of engagement may remain sporadic, the young person may still be making progress. They may be meeting personal goals and agreed outcomes, appropriately achieving small and perhaps some very small steps (Robinson, et al., 2014:132). What counts as 'effective' participation understandably varies, it is a debate that is by no means settled.

Several young people were not interested in actively influencing the contents or format of their 'change plan' and did not want to be involved in governance matters. I felt professionals had an ethical and moral responsibility to respect young people's right to express a type of 'informed dissent' (Morrow and Richards, 1996:95). What is more, I felt professionals had a responsibility to encourage children's agency and should not override the child's perspective, without 'good reason'. Crucially, I felt there should be commitment to negotiation and finding a degree of 'common ground'.

Several young people I interviewed reflected upon their level of involvement and described some work being collaboratively designed and agreed with them, with young people praising their supervising officers for

being responsive to their needs and wishes, for example, in relation to changing their appointment times. As young people reported, good qualities of their workers included: approachability, patience and understanding. Being committed and offering practical assistance whether that be in regard to employment, education, training, health or housing matters, were also considered to be critical ingredients. Young people also valued workers who created safe spaces for them to offload concerns and reflect on problems or difficulties they have or are encountering. I felt professionals saw relationship building as their 'main tool' (Robinson, et al., 2014:136). Workers, at times, went above and beyond to build trusting/caring relationships with young people and to share power/control over decision-making processes with them.

Nevertheless, although I do not necessarily condone passive compliance or 'fake' interaction between actors, to an extent I cannot fault professionals for their part in facilitating inauthentic transactions. The system demands that young people comply regardless of whether they choose to be involved or not. In addition, professionals have a responsibility as part 'law enforcers', to ensure compliance with court order requirements is achieved and that there is an absence of recidivism. Alongside this, professionals were grappling with resource and workload pressures. Throughout the data collection phase, professionals described the further restructure as being 'anxiety provoking' resulting in a feeling of tension and conflict, disrupting 'the immediate adjustment of habitus to field' (Bourdieu, 1990:108; see Chapter eight).

With that said, despite the hardship many had endured, they remained remarkably resilient. I could relate to feelings of uncertainty and the stress and anxiety this can cause. During the data collection phase of the PhD, I resigned from a company where I worked full-time due to the precarious nature of the job role and ever-changing field conditions. For example, I experienced: multiple restructures and changes to my contract and terms of employment, resulting in increased workload pressures and further uncertainty and anxiety brought on by my colleagues leaving the profession.

Although I was not wholly resistant to change, this resulted in a want, on my part, to 'revolt against the establishment' and against their dominant yet disjointed discourse refusing to grant neo-liberal processes, systems and corporate language 'legitimate existence' (Bourdieu, 1990:143). However, despite these attempts, and despite it being intolerable to work there, regrettably I remained loyal to the processes and systems and conserved rather than transformed power relations (arrangements allowed for little dissent). This was more out of fear for being disciplined and losing my employment than any devotion to my employer or commitment or particular enthusiasm to satisfy organisational needs. I often felt I had a 'chance of success…' if I adhered to what was expected, and did not challenge the status quo (Bourdieu, 1990:32).

Nevertheless, in relation to front-line professionals, several did reflect on their positive experiences of supervision with their line managers. Taylor et al., (2018:198) refer to the importance of providing practitioners with

'space to reflect on the impact of the work on themselves and their interactions with the young people and with colleagues…'. As was the case in a study by Robinson et al., (2014:134) on 'quality' in the probation context, professionals appreciate the opportunity to reflect on their case load. They also value having the space to share their views and opinions on young people's progress, any other difficulties they encounter or fears they have in relation to their own developmental needs.

However, professionals did experience pressure 'from above' in terms of ensuring reports were written to a high standard, assessments were reviewed, records were kept updated and contacts logged in a timely fashion. They also felt, at times, senior managers had a tendency to home in on 'what went wrong' as opposed to 'what's gone right' with the children and young people who were under their supervision. Some professionals were also confused as to why there was not a tighter focus on the work they do or techniques/interventions they deliver with children and young people nor why the positive and constructive relationships they had formed with their clients were 'rarely subject to audit or measurement by managers' (Robinson, et al., 2014:135 also see Hampson, 2017b).

On a couple of occasions, I accompanied professionals on home visits, only to find that young people attempted to escape to avoid meeting with their supervising officer (one ran over the back fence while the worker was ringing the doorbell) and during a separate visit one child was verbally abusive to a worker, demanding that she sends him back to

court. On another occasion, I observed a worker trying desperately to engage a child. Despite attempts on the part of the worker to engage and motivate him, the young person inputted minimally into the meeting, providing surface level answers to questions.

It is important not to separate this young person from the social context. More specifically, it is worth noting here, in relation to this young person, there was tension and conflict between him and his mother, and this adversely affected his level of participation in that his mother was in the room during some of the meeting. I found the situation quite difficult and somewhat distressing and felt it was no surprise some workers became disillusioned with so many young people appearing to resist and fight against the system. Thus professionals, I felt, were 'not free to be responsive' to fulfil young people's wants and desires (Becker, 1967:246).

However, this experience did not detract from me feeling 'sympathy with the underdogs' (Becker, 1967:246), that is in this context young people who felt they were treated unfairly by the system. Simultaneously, I was concerned that professionals were 'over worked' due to fighting on two fronts. They were navigating excessive bureaucracy inflicted on them by their superiors; and working through the - at times unimaginable - task of empowering the disempowered (that is young people who were vulnerable and frequently traumatised). Thus, I was also sympathetic to the 'lives, stories, pains motives and understandings' of front-line practitioners (Liebling, 2001:476).

Culture of risk versus the voice of the child

Although I have not been a 'merciless critic' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:43) of risk assessment and risk management in youth justice, I have never really been a defender so to speak of risk-based practices and certainly not been in support of punitive practices. I do not think that risk practices should be abandoned. To suggest so could be divisive and impractical. Nevertheless, I have felt such approaches tend to be overwhelmingly adult-led and imposed on children. Despite somewhat benevolent intentions or driven by a need to protect the public from harm, these practices result in the voice of the children being at worst rendered invalid and at best marginalised, with opportunities for them to influence processes unequally distributed.

Nevertheless, the academic/scholarship of some youth justice and youth criminologists (Hains and Case, 2015, Goldson and Muncie, 2015; Rogowski, 2013; Smith, 2014a) has influenced my views. I find their compelling alternative visions and models of youth justice fascinating. These alternatives relate to: a positive model of youth justice, a youth justice with integrity, and championing of participatory and rights-based practice. I have found their relentless and stinging critiques (Bourdieu, 2007) of the 'new' youth justice, notably their rebuttal to claims 'risk factor research' is evidence-based, appealing.

However, from applying Bourdieu's open or provisional concepts (Bourdieu, 1990) to the field of youth justice, I have come to realise that practice is simultaneously messy and ordered: persistently and

'profoundly varied' (Goldson and Muncie, 2015:252). There is often a myriad combination of approaches in existence at any one time, including opposing or differing opinions, and so-called rigid dichotomies on what is most effective or not when working with children and young people (Haines and Case, 2015). However, in my view, many young people continue to be docile, giving the system 'what it requires', and in the process unquestioning of authority (Bourdieu, 2001; Dean, 2017). Although I was somewhat truculent in my teenage years, it frustrates me that I am too often the latter.

However, throughout this PhD, I have tried in vain to 'break free from some of the shackles' (Dean, 2017:11), assisted by Bourdieu and his 'toolbox', my supervision team and most often pro-union colleagues in my workplace. I have aspired to critically challenge 'prevailing modes of thought' or the accepted orthodoxy (Beer, 2014:23) however uncomfortable and despite my cleft habitus, fear of failure and a sense that I am not fully competent (imposter syndrome).

In accordance with Bourdieu (1990:73) 'I am suspicious of big dualist operations' namely: risk *or* participation, welfare *or* justice. From my observations of practice and in-depth interviews with professionals and young people, it seemed there was a 'heterogeneous array' of practices (O'Malley, 2008:453) and, in a Bourdieusian sense, oscillating 'between [at least] two apparently incompatible points of view… and perspectives' (Bourdieu, 1990:124). These related to; adult centric risk-focused and child-led participatory interventions and activities. What I revealed was a

combination of supposedly opposing practices being inextricably entwined. Moreover, I felt for some young people, especially those who had committed serious violent/sexual offences, there needed to be mechanisms in place to monitor their behaviours, and practices that were centred, at least partly, on being risk-focused and adult-led.

I also understood why practice in youth justice had become so technical and computer-based (Robinson, et al., 2014), not least to prevent unwanted scrutiny from 'auditors' of performance (such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) and ostensibly to remain in employment. I felt a personal closeness and could relate to staff who described the workload situation as unmanageable.

They listed copious amounts of administrative tasks they were required to undertake that made it difficult to spend time with children and young people, especially with those who had complex/challenging needs and required intensive specialist support. Indeed, the increase in paperwork was a key motivating factor influencing my decision to leave the field of youth justice practice and instead enter the teaching profession.

I could also relate to some professionals who felt they were constantly battling to secure 'buy in' from young people, especially those who had a 'marked taste for disputation' (Bourdieu, 2007:89) and who they felt did not want to be involved with the service or contribute to shaping the contents or format of their intervention plans. I empathised with staff who felt the field of youth justice was a 'site of struggle' and who had difficult

and challenging relationships with management and at times, engaged in a battle over influence and power (Bourdieu, 2004; Robinson, et al., 2014). I also empathised with workers who felt 'ill-at-ease' with the changes to the field conditions, uncertain about how to navigate the demands of the new system or how to effectively participate in the 'game'. At times, the new status quo generated increased anxiety amongst workers, including the onset (and exacerbating already existent) tension and conflict with their colleagues and superiors (Robinson, et al., 2014).

More specifically, the 'roll out' of the new assessment tool resulted in professionals spending much more time in front of a computer screen, making it increasingly difficult for them to invest time and effort into forming trusting relationships with those under supervision. This relational aspect of their work, considered by almost all professionals to be key to effective practice, was almost seen 'as a luxury that they could rarely afford because of other ('bureaucratic') demands on their time' (Robinson, et al., 2014:130).

In relation to Asset Plus, there was much optimism regarding its potential to revolutionise how children were to be worked 'with' not 'on' (Haines and Case, 2015). It was viewed as an attempt to modernise an 'outdated' and flawed instrument (Lebaron and Bonnet, 2014:127). However, I was of the view that this project of transformation or experimentation - a key ingredient of the so-called paradigmatic shift - was an expensive failure.

The considerable financial investment into developing the tool was ironic given the cut backs to the service and supposedly scarce resources.

It was, in my view, a 'big disappointment' again ironic given that it was meant to be a positive, strengths-based tool that assisted professionals to devise more comprehensive assessments that better elicited the voice of the child (English and Bolton, 2016:97). Despite the rhetoric, I felt Asset had been creatively recycled or reconditioned into Asset Plus, it facilitated a fresh vision but did not overhaul their practice – at best it was, in a Bourdieusian sense, a conservative transformation (Bourdieu, 2007). I felt it did little to facilitate the demise of the dominant risk-oriented ethos operating in the field. Crucially, in my view, the system remained practitioner-led. Traditional systems and processes driven by adult-centric ideals, were preserved.

Many professionals described the organisational restructure as 'anxiety provoking'. Their distress was sparked by upheaval and a seemingly catalogue of changes, notably the introduction of new information technology systems and an expectation that they would 'do more' with less resources. Front-line professionals felt they had minimal opportunities to consult with their superiors prior to the implementation of these newer ways of working. Some professionals reflected upon how, throughout the merger, their views were not prioritised. They then reported how they could relate to how those under supervision may feel when their voices or concerns are rendered invalid.

Young people as assets not problems

Due to being out of practice so to speak for many years, the youth justice environment was one I was unfamiliar with – there was not necessarily an 'affinity of habitus'. However, I was studying a topic I cared deeply and passionately about and was committed to 'making a difference' and 'bringing to light' (Bourdieu, 1990:72) matters that were of central importance to the workforce and those in receipt of the service. My intention was to produce findings, grounded in the 'view from below' (Scraton, 2007:10). It aimed to ensure the voices of the most marginalised and disadvantaged young people (Wood and Hine, 2013; Yates, 2010) were listened to and represented (Scraton, 2007). It has focused on capturing accounts of the lived experiences of 'front line' professionals, with a view to informing future working practices in the youth justice field.

The PhD study also had a focus on identifying 'best practices' in the field with those subject to statutory court orders. This is important, as academics can be accused of providing too much criticism. Concerns have been levelled at them for being overly focused on what is wrong with practice, conducting critical as opposed to appreciative forms of inquiry, and in the process dismissing or downplaying areas of 'good practice' and what is strong in an organisation (Haines and Case, 2015). I felt it was important to not only expose potentially 'unconformable truths' but flag up or shed light on practices I observed that seemed to be beneficial or 'socially just' and appropriate to social agents, from the

perspective of those facilitating and those on the receiving end of service delivery.

This was achieved through observing organisational practices and eliciting the views of those under supervision by way of concentrating 'on strengths, accomplishments, best practices and peak moments' (Liebling, 2004:132 and 133). More specifically, the difference in emphasis between individual one-to-one sessions between young people and their workers (often risk-focused) and the young people's participation in the music project (often positive and strengths-based) was remarkable.

The music project was facilitated by a former 'offender' and I am of the view that this was the 'critical success factor' (Wood, 2009:152), in that he had a 'common connection' with participants, and thus a remarkable ability to encourage young people to 'open up' and engage in sensitive conversation (Robinson, 2015). I was very sympathetic to the ex-offender and built a close relationship with him.

He had a bundle of energy, that was contagious, treating all young people equally, with compassion and solidarity. Thus, I felt at times, there was a risk I was over-emphasising the benefits of the project due to my close connection (relatable feelings and experiences) with this worker who I admired and respected greatly for not only overcoming his own troubles but for being so consistent and welcoming in his approach with young people. This specific worker was also well-liked, as was the youth justice professional who facilitated the sessions, by the young people, particularly due to a consistent focus on providing pastoral support and

offering a sense of belief that positive change to their lifestyles was possible. This worker promoted a particular ideal – not commonly accepted in the field or in the interest of the dominant who are risk averse - namely that young people can be successful, if provided with extensive emotional and practical assistance from a trained professional, in steering their peers on a more positive path.

I did not suspend my beliefs or perspectives when interacting with research participants. I shared details about my personal life and about my place of work with the individuals who facilitated the sessions, and felt by projecting empathy, this helped to form a relationship that would result in the workers and young people being open and honest with me about their views, perspectives and experiences of participating in the game.

I felt this standpoint was particularly appropriate in an attempt to shift the perception that I was 'a figure of suspicion' to an individual who could be trusted and was, to an extent, 'on their side' (Dean, 2017:113). It was also an approach that was compatible with Oakley's (1981:41) perspective that researchers should be willing 'to invest [their] own personal identity in the relationship', an approach that will assist in the production of rich, as opposed to surface-level, data.

As alluded to above, I also shared with my research participants, my experiences of working at a University and offered some of them guidance on educative and career pathways. I also talked, at times at length, about being a father of two young children, in an effort to reduce the power inequalities, my obvious elevated or the relatively privileged

social position I occupied in the social space, that could have been significant barrier to meaningful and honest conversation with children and young people (Dean, 2017:73). I am not normally quiet and reserved or considered an unsociable person. I am quite talkative and enjoy meeting new people. Understanding this, I felt I had the communicative and interpersonal skills to make participants feel comfortable, able and willing to share their personal and professional viewpoints on topics, and essentially to 'keep the conversation natural and informal' not awkward or 'fake' and inauthentic (Dean, 2017:77).

Throughout the music project sessions, I often 'played it by ear' (Carmel, 2011:553) monitoring situations 'on the spot' (Bourdieu, at al., 1999:608) in terms of when and where I interviewed young people and professionals. In accordance with an 'ethic of care', only when I had established a relationship with the individual, they understood the purpose of my study and what was expected of them, would I invite them to be interviewed. In relation to young people specifically, I was keen not to disrupt their routine of learning how to play musical instruments.

I felt the music project was an opportunity for young people to enhance their skills and abilities, a real opportunity for children to transform their lives from negativity to one of positivity and hope. From speaking with young people, at times, they engaged in struggles to acquire assets and resources (social capital). Often, their networks/connections were acquired from associations with pro-criminal peers and thus not valued or

treated as legitimate capital or a 'valued resource' by professionals or other authority figures (Robinson, et al., 2014).

I spent several months observing music project sessions and conducting interviews with children and staff. It is worth noting at times, I felt unconformable when the workers would raise their voices and demand that young people followed orders or a system. However, notwithstanding this concern, several young people reported feeling relaxed and comfortable learning how to sing and play musical instruments. The music project appeared to be a 'hook' for young people not only in terms of enhancing their music skills but also as a way to explore and understand 'self' (McLeon, 2008:262; also see Scraton, 2007:7). Indeed, one worker in particular promoted a type of emotional-based practice, which seemed to me to be the antithesis of contemporary practices which have been described as technocratic and somewhat emotionless, detached and more computer-based than person centred (see Chapter six).

Relatedly, a key finding of the research was young people's enthusiasm to share their experiential knowledge. They were keen to tell their stories, share memories and lived experiences, including what has assisted them in their transition away from crime and what has been detrimental, from their perspective, to their progress, including their capacity to cope in difficult circumstances (Robinson, 2015). Some were passionate about the prospect of assisting in the rehabilitation of their peers and in a way reclaiming some sort of power. However, despite youth justice taking a

distinctively participatory and 'child first' turn (Case, 2018; Youth Justice Board, 2019), to my surprise this was an under-researched area, there seemed to be little research evidence on the potential benefits, limitations and challenges of using 'young offenders' as peer mentors. Much of the existing research related to 'adult offenders' or focused on young people as mentees as opposed to advocates or mentors supporting similarly situated others (Buck, 2016). Due to this lack of an established evidence-base, I feel it will take time to nurture and develop this vision of 'young offenders' as peer mentors or in ambassador-type roles.

Nevertheless, their backgrounds and biographies, meant they potentially had the personal qualities, resilience and ability to project empathy and adopt such roles, having overcome adversity themselves, and be able to relate to their peers, in a way a professional is perhaps unable to (Robinson, et al., 2014).

In terms of user feedback, I was doubtful that professionals would secure young people's honest views in a feedback questionnaire. Front-line professionals often viewed the process as tokenistic. Young people and their supervising officers seemed to be of the view that this was a rather blunt tool that needed to be significantly 'sharpened up', refined and strengthened.

Some professionals appeared 'merciless critics' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:43) of risk-based approaches. Others expressed concern at how some children were persistently 'done to' and subject to relatively painful experiences following admission into the system, and

throughout the processes of arrest to conviction. However, one manager believed he found 'new eyes' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:251) a metanoia, for perennial problems, and as English and Bolton, (2016:19) observed, 'with new eyes comes the development of new solutions'.

These new solutions related to peer mentoring and the creation of ambassador type-roles for young people. He dubbed it a 'grow your own approach'. However, he was aware of the unique challenges making this a mindset, especially in a context of dwindling resources and resistance from professionals who perceived young people remaining with the YOT after their order had ended as a negative, namely the issue of them retaining an offender identity.

In relation to young people's participation in the music project, some felt their positive experiences were due to the efforts and commitment of front line professionals. This was especially the case in relation to one ex-offender, who encouraged young people to evaluate their past experiences and tried in vain to reduce any perceived power differentials (Robinson, 2015). He appeared to 'go the extra mile' by showing them that he genuinely cared about the young people and wanted to help and support them. Indeed, it seemed 'as the backbone or foundation of good quality supervision' was establishment of such positive and constructive child/worker partnerships, built on trust and respect for one another's perspective (Robinson, et al., 2014:129).

In relation to the music project, I observed workers being caring and committed. They seemed focused on creating opportunities and providing

the space, in 'good faith' it seemed, for them to engage in positive and constructive activities and 'better themselves' in the process. It was also an ideal space to interview young people, in that I had built a relationship with them over several months, earning respect, building rapport and trust in the process. I felt this method of data collection was suitable, especially as a facilitative tool, to explore 'experiences, practices, values and attitudes in depth and to establish meanings' (Devine, 2002:207) and 'generate data' that was authentic and insightful (Silverman, 1993:91).

However, as Dean (2017:53) has warned, in social scientific research, this process can result in the perspectives and meanings of social agents being invented or constructed as opposed to uncovered by the so-called detached or objective researcher operating in laboratory-type conditions (Bourdieu, 1993) in a 'sanitised, controlled environment' (Scraton, 2007:11).

I interviewed young people and professionals, without (most of the time!) interference from their supervising officers. This contrasts sharply with many other interviews I conducted, where the workers insisted on remaining present during the interview. This potentially prevented young people, I felt, from being truly honest and open about their life and lived experiences of being subject to a court order. Although, I must add, to my surprise, on two occasions young people said they would have not allowed me to interview them had their workers not been present during the interviews. This was mainly because they would have been too suspicious of why I wanted to speak with them.

At one point, I felt professionals were not informing young people about my study nor encouraging them to take part. However, I was patient and persistent in an effort to secure their participation. I met with a manager who reassured me that professionals did want to invite children but that they were most probably preoccupied with the bread and butter of day-to-day tasks, namely meetings with young people, completing assessments and updating systems.

'Whose story to trust?' Children's experiential knowledge versus professional expertise - a false dichotomy?

> "'Everyone knows" that responsible professionals know more about things…are more respectable and their words ought to be taken more seriously than those of the deviants and criminals with whom they deal. By refusing to accept the hierarchy of credibility, we express disrespect for the entire established order." (Becker, 1967:242)

Some professionals discussed how some young people present in vulnerable and emotional states. They talked about young people feeling angry and distressed, rooted in experiences of adversity and trauma (Liddle et al., 2016). Professionals felt, because of this, those under supervision experiencing such 'existential crises' were ill-equipped to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process (see Chapter five). They made some valid points about young people potentially not knowing, due to circumstances, age and a perceived immaturity, what was in their best interests.

Although I did not offer a stern rebuke, I attempted to 'cast doubt' on this 'official line' (Becker, 1967:243). I felt this was appropriate and realistic,

not least due to children, who tend to populate the Youth Justice System, experiencing grotesque levels of inequality (Jamieson and Yates, 2009; Taylor, 2016; Yates, 2010). However, I also felt such professionals were being overly protective, dismissing, doubting or even woefully misunderstanding young people's potential ability to provide credible insight into 'how the world treats them' (Becker, 1967:242). I felt it was an inflexible stance, overlooking children's potential, silencing and excluding their voice and downplaying their ability to express agency (Robinson, 2015).

They appeared to be devaluing, or treating as problematic, children's experiential knowledge. They were prioritising and legitimising professional expertise in the process, almost overpowering them with their so-called and self-declared 'wisdom through experience' (Farthing, 2012). Thus, they were not always acknowledging fully that the child, who is after all 'typically unheard' (Liebling, 2001:473) in society, had the ability to decide how they would prefer to proceed.

Thus, it could be argued, notwithstanding variations of expertise, a 'hierarchy of knowledge' (Harding, 1991:15) could be detected. The experiential knowledge of those who occupy subordinate (powerless) positions (i.e. young people) given less credibility than professionals who were the 'guardians of doxa' (Dean, 2017:26) deemed to possess 'know how' and have acquired a 'command of language' (Grenfell, 2014e:254) and occupied a superordinate (powerful) and respectable position in the field of play or social space (Becker, 1967; Bourdieu, 1990).

Some children and young people, I felt, reinforced such a hierarchy of knowledge and credibility (Becker, 1967:241), accepting of the way things were defined and 'imposed' by those 'in charge'. They felt it was inappropriate for them to pass comment on what the Youth Offending Service do and alluded to how they would experience at least some discomfort - due to feelings they do not possess a rich vocabulary - should they be provided with an authoritative role in decision making.

It was, arguably, the presence of symbolic capital and the perception that 'professionals know best' which helped to sustain this hierarchy of knowledge, which subsequently became 'natural and legitimate over time' (Dean, 2017:24).

Interestingly, young people internalised this hierarchy by appearing to be respectful to the social order, and compliant *vis-a-vis* practitioner requests. I felt some young people were 'contributing to their own domination' (Bourdieu, 1996:4) in that they would not 'speak out' if they felt they were being mistreated. This was due to the fear that they would be dismissed as 'knowers' and viewed as a trouble causer (Bourdieu, et al., 1999). There was concern, on the part of young people, that the YOT could inflict the right hand of the state - as was highlighted in *Sociology is a Martial Art* (2001) 'the hand that punishes' - resulting in their case being referred to a non-compliance meeting or they would be required to attend court re-appearances for failing to engage and fulfil the requirements of the court order.

However, the 'left hand' of the state, was exercised regularly through practitioners committed to forming positive and constructive relationships, building trust and encouraging young people to work towards achieving their potential. Professionals remained resilient, especially when young people were on occasion verbally and sometimes physically aggressive towards them. They were mostly interested in not only providing emotional support and reopening, at times, 'raw wounds' (i.e. adverse childhood experiences) but also providing practical assistance in the form of education and training.

I thought this was most remarkable in that they arguably had a small margin of freedom, due to excessive bureaucracy and the dominant risk oriented ideal constraining their practices. They were also operating in a context of a dismantled social welfare system, in other words a withering away of the state (Bourdieu, 1998b). This was disconcerting to me, and to a degree, non-sensical in that the 'causes' of youth crime are often related to structural inequalities and the effects of so-called toxic environments or persistent disinvestment in social/welfare provision, due to fiscal pressures (Case, 2018; Jamieson and Yates, 2009).

Juggling the insider/outsider status and towards empathic perspective taking

> "Attempting to situate oneself in the place the interviewees occupy in the social space in order to understand them… offering the respondent an absolutely exceptional situation for communication, freed from the usual constraints…that weigh on most everyday interchanges, and opening up alternatives which prompt or authorise the articulation of worries, needs or wishes… (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:613, 614).

When interviewing young people and engaging in 'small-talk' or 'chit-chat' (Bamberg, 2004:368), I felt at 'social ease' not 'socially superior' (Bourdieu et al., 1999:612) and this was perhaps due to 'plain speaking'. What is more, throughout my adolescence, I often associated with 'pro-criminal peers' (a label I detest). Thus, when interviewing young people, I felt I had some connection, could relate to their stories to an extent and crucially could empathise with them. I felt like a 'fish in water' when speaking with them.

I experienced some difficulties being somewhat of an insider, namely being less challenging when interviewing some professionals whom I had built up a friendly long-term relationship with. I felt reluctance, on occasion, to share my criticisms with front-line professionals and senior managers. I was also mindful that some professionals were aware and had read articles I had written on why children needed a stronger voice in the Youth Justice System, and thus who perhaps thought my motivations to conduct the study were politically motivated, thus potentially jeopardizing the credibility of my results.

However, I have tried in vain not to put forward a 'one sided' argument. I have countered suggestions that I have an unhealthy preoccupation with young people being in wholly decision-making positions, resulting in them making and enforcing 'laws' for youth justice professionals to follow (Becker, 1967:241). Yet, I felt, at times, some professionals may have incorrectly perceived this as my argument and perhaps felt this was an ulterior motive of mine. However, in my view children's participation is not

an unequivocal good. I have been at pains not to elide the potential pitfalls and challenges with participatory practices, not least workload and resource pressures which can impede creativity and imagination. Nevertheless, in true Bourdieusian spirit, the intention throughout has been to say 'what was hardest for my audience to swallow' (Bourdieu, 2008:50, cited in English and Bolton, 2016: xii).

When interviewing some professionals who occupied more privileged or dominant positions in the social space, at times, I felt some discomfort and more like a fish out of water (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). I most certainly felt I had more in common with the governed than the governors (Dean, 2017). Nevertheless, throughout all the interviews, in accordance with a Bourdieusian stance, I constantly committed to self-analysis and empathic perspective taking, not being judgemental and instead seeing the world through the eyes of the social agents I was interviewing, I aspired to 'a non-violent form of communication' if you like (Grenfell, 2014b:118).

I feel privileged lecturing students and engaging in scholarship and empirical research, and thus I feel I have some authority to comment on the topic of children in the Criminal Justice System. I feel most obliged to support campaigns to reverse the cuts to local services and 'speak out' against unfair treatment of both children and front-line professionals. I have tried to acknowledge within my analysis that multi-agency Youth Offending Services are chronically underfunded, and how this lack of financial investment and precarious field conditions can intensify resource

and workload pressures. More specifically, I acknowledged that due to practitioners on the front-line feeling over-stretched, this has hindered progress in relation to children's participation and how the cuts to local services contributed to the music project being considered unsustainable. Thus, in sum, I have endeavoured to '[locate] moments, events and responses within their structural determinants' (Scraton, 2007:14).

Limitations and challenges

As discussed in Chapter four, this was a qualitative PhD study, deemed most appropriate in relation to 'unearthing' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:41) the practical workings of a youth offending service and its (participatory) systems and processes. I deployed a 'non-violent' type of communication (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:189) when interviewing and observing, endeavouring to commit to an ethic of care and the principle of empathic perspective taking throughout fieldwork (Bourdieu, at el., 2002:608). In so doing, when 'entering into the life of others' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:205), I was conscious to avoid using a 'soft' or 'gentle' type of power, subjecting research participants to unjustifiable/immoral yet perceivably acceptable processes of symbolic violence, 'that could affect responses' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:608; Bourdieu, 2007).

My ethical stance, concerning care/compassion, was achieved, at least in part, by 'close familiarity' and a commitment to building and maintaining trusting relationships with research participants, where 'active and methodical listening' was at the heart of interaction and dialogue

(Bourdieu, et al., 1999:609 and 610). Crucially, I felt I had built a rapport with participants which meant that the questions I posed were not then viewed as 'threatening or aggressive' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:611). Trust was enhanced through objectifying myself, sharing my own viewpoints and perspectives and providing an account of my own struggles.

However, in accordance with Bourdieu's mixed-methods stance and his commitment to seriously questioning the 'logic' of separatism, dispelling myths at the centre of the 'paradigm wars', alongside conducting interviews and participant observations, I could have undertaken some statistical analyses (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). More specifically I could have utilised a quantitative method and administered a questionnaire or survey and interpreted the findings through utilising what Bourdieu labelled Geometric Data Analysis or Multiple Correspondence Analysis (Bourdieu, 2007; Grenfell and Lebaron, 2014:3) to assist in exposing the 'structural relations' of social agents. Thus, in terms of future research, it may be useful to deploy a quantitative method of data collection.

Researchers could conduct some 'descriptive statistical analysis' of questionnaire type survey data (Grenfell, 2014b:117) for instance, in order to highlight and measure levels of cultural, social and economic capital of both front-line practitioners and children under supervision, alongside quantifying qualities and circumstances of social agents (Bourdieu, 2004; Bourdieu, 2007).

However, as Grenfell and Lebaron (2014) make clear, researchers can, and indeed have, conducted Bourdieusian analyses using exclusively non-statistical/non-numerical, qualitative methods of data collection, and in the process produced valid, reliable, original, credible and trustworthy results (Robinson, 2015). My data collection methods were appropriate for the 'phenomena under study' (Dean, 2017:34) and, as discussed throughout, I endeavoured to engage in critical reflexivity, produce rich data analysed carefully and rigorously and present 'believable', accurate accounts, crafting a credible, authentic and trustworthy story (McAdams, 1996:309; Robinson, 2015).

Pessimistic Conclusion?

> "…the weapons of reflexive critique which every thinker must bear against himself or herself in order to have any chance of being rational" (Bourdieu, 1990:33).

In this chapter, I have shared my perspectives on the research process and attempted to meticulously unpack my 'socialised subjectivity' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:126) and set of dispositions, preferences, freedoms and constraints that were to an extent stable influenced yet by no means fixed or a 'destiny'. As a subjective social agent (Dean, 2017: xi), a Bourdieusian scholar, and critical criminologist, I felt it was vital that I at least attempted to objectify myself to guard against potential discrepancies or flaws in the study. As alluded to in the chapter, this is crucial not least due to it being impossible to remain detached, 'neutral' or passive when undertaking social research (Jones, 2013:141).

I was keen to be transparent and not 'repress my views' (Jones, 2013:151). I felt it was essential I scrutinized my 'inconsistencies' and 'contradictions' including 'moments of trouble and tension' (Robinson, 2015:5). I felt this critically reflexive stance, enabled or resulted in a sense that I was emotionally attuned to young people and practitioner's moments of trouble and tension.

Indeed, it is argued that, inevitably the social scientific researcher's thoughts, feelings and personal viewpoints will influence the direction of the study, impact upon the 'imperfect' or 'partial' knowledge that is generated, and affect other aspects of the research process, including the study's concluding arguments (Finley, 2002:207; Scraton, 2007).

I hope this chapter has countered arguments that being reflexive 'induces narcissistic navel-gazing' (Dean, 2017:3; also see Bourdieu, 2004) essentially by presenting the viewpoint that reflecting on one's positionality and 'obvious bias' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:39) enhances the credibility of the results. This then allows the reader the opportunity to understand my characteristics, the basis of the steps or actions taken in the research process including how, for example, the arguments have been formed, composed or constructed (Bourdieu, 2004; Dean, 2017).

I was committed to an 'ethic of care', throughout data collection, and made a concerted effort not to oppress, harm or be seen to be exploiting my research participants. However, I am nervous about my concluding arguments in terms of how they may be received by my participants,

particularly senior managers who may not appreciate and in turn resist or fight against my portrayal of how front-line professionals and those they supervise experience practice. Although I am hesitant releasing the results related to their perspectives on how they feel they are treated by the system, I am confident that I cannot be accused of being 'one-sided' (Becker, 1967:240).

My 'analytical interpretations', inclusive of both professional and young people's accounts and lived experiences, 'are plausible, reasonable and trustworthy' (Reissman, 2008:191). However, due to feeling, throughout the research process, more of an insider than outsider, I have grappled with the fear that my depictions of practice, presented in my findings and analysis section and reinforced in my discussion chapter, could jeopardise the constructive relationships I have built with senior professionals. I have worked hard to gain the trust and respect (Robinson, 2015) of those 'in charge' over a substantial period of time, and would prefer not to publish results that could be taken out of context, and have potential to 'prove damaging to them' (Becker, 1967:239) in any way, shape or form. Although I was empathic, 'sensitive and diplomatic' (Liebling, 2001:475) throughout data collection, when proceeding to analyse and interpret the findings, I attempted to create some distance.

To an extent there were conflicts of interests in that I had existing relationships with several front-line professionals and an understanding of how the organisation operated, prior to entering the field. This could, intentionally or otherwise, have 'lead to over-familiarity' and at least a

degree of unconscious bias. I could have not accurately analysed the 'issues at stake', refraining from passing judgement on structures or adequately scrutinising the status quo/official discourse (Bourdieu, 2004; Scraton, 2007). I could have lapsed into a 'lack of questioning of norms and practices' due to being 'too close to the participants' (Jones, 2013:25; Dean, 2017:116).

I have been reassured by the realisation that I have at least a degree (to be more precise a small margin) of academic freedom or independence and 'relative autonomy' (Mahar, et al., 1990:16) in terms of taking a critical stance. Having laid bare how systems, processes and strategies are perceived and received by social agents (see Chapters, five, six, seven and eight) I am confident that senior professionals, some of whom I regard as close friends, will be responsive to at least some of my recommendations and criticisms. I am hopeful that, as a result, my suggestions for potential areas for development result in 'change' and improvements to practice for both the governors and the governed. What is more, as a critical academic, I have a responsibility to 'disclose' and 'disseminate' my discoveries, however 'troubling' or disconcerting these accounts of practice appear (Scraton, 2007:14-15).

This thesis has exposed the extent to which agents feel 'free' or 'trapped', experience a sense of powerlessness or inevitability. I hope that this thesis assists the dominated to 'make sense' of their domination and subsequently aspire towards and practically achieve change to the status quo and their precarious positions. After all, as Bourdieu remarked in the

documentary *Sociology is a Martial Art* (2001) symbolic inequality and 'structures of domination can be turned around'.

Although I am in support of a children first young-person led strategy, as a bulwark against deficit-based practice, practitioners continue to operate in a risk-oriented environment and in a 'climate of fear' and seemingly constant 'suspicion' (Dean, 2017:134; Goffman, 2014:8). This is especially so in regard to young people who are convicted of committing violent offences, classified as vulnerable or a risk to society. On the ground, understandably this has resulted in a combined focus on 'what is wrong' and 'what is strong'. To replace 'welfare' with 'justice' or 'agency' with 'structure' or substitute 'participation' for 'risk', I think, in a Bourdieusian sense is, a 'false dichotomy', illogical and non-sensical.

Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to deconstruct my positionality and obvious bias. I remain a fierce critic of excessive managerialism and am biased against offender-focussed systems and processes where the child's point of view or perspective, at times, is considered irrelevant or side-lined. This is especially so in regard to constructions of 'risk' levels, which may seem unfair to young people. Nevertheless, I have become to see the participation/risk or adult led/young person-led relationship 'as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy', and also a journey as opposed to a destination (Dean, 2017:137 and 144) influenced or shaped by structural factors and a 'practical sense' of the situation. With that said, there exists an imbalance, in that risk or 'riskiness' (Phoenix, 2009) – not necessarily undergird by an actuarial logic (Gray, 2013:526) or 'risk factors as

predictors of future outcomes' (Kemshall, 2009:154) - is very much in pole position.

However, its grip appears to have weakened following sustained critique, and there is evidence of a partial shift to a positive youth justice, which implicitly at least, endorses child first principles (Case, 2018; Creaney and Smith, 2014). There appears to be a firmer understanding regarding the complexity of 'factors and their overlapping, and interacting, nature' (Yates, 2012:11), yet 'riskiness' appears to be the driving force behind decision making, in terms of how systems or processes operate and or certain strategies endure.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Introduction

> "The force of the preconstructed resides in the fact that, being inscribed both in things and in minds, it presents itself under the cloak of the self-evident which goes unnoticed because it is by definition taken for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:241).

Despite somewhat of a 'Bourdieusian moment' in the discipline of criminology (Shammas and Sandberg, 2016:196), Bourdieu's thinking tools have been applied sparsely to youth justice practice and specifically rarely to data relating to service user participation in the Youth Justice System. This original and distinctive PhD has focused on unmasking the 'underlying logic' (Harding, 2014:15) of participatory youth justice practice. It has utilised Bourdieu's conceptual framework as an 'interpretive lens' (Harding, 2014:15) to observe/analyse the role young people play in their supervision experience, including scrutinising their involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of youth justice services.

The purpose was to investigate how the notion of participation, a contested and dynamic concept, was constructed by children on court orders and professionals in the sphere of youth justice supervision and governance arrangements. I have used non-intrusive/non-aggressive forms of communication and employed empathic perspective taking techniques when doing the fieldwork (see Chapter four and nine; Bourdieu et al., 1999; Grenfell, 2014b:118). This strategy to 'achieve maximum openness' was appropriate, especially, when 'revisiting deeply

sensitive issues' (Scraton, 2007: 15-16) with both professionals and children under supervision.

Utilising ideas from *the weight of the world: social suffering in contemporary society* (Bourdieu et al., 1999), the PhD provided a platform to those who are 'not usually heard' in neo-liberal society (Pinto, 2000:98) to exercise personal agency or socialised subjectivity and express feelings/emotions in spaces, to an extent, free from symbolic violence or types of hardship (Bourdieu, 1993; Ingram and Abrahams, 2016; Jenkins, 1992; Kemshall, 2009:154).

In addition to exploring how children and professionals perceived the concept, I endeavoured to capture their experiences of participating in criminal justice supervision, exposing the 'pre-given' and critiquing 'pre-constructed' orthodoxies operating in the field under investigation (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:252; also see Grenfell, 2014c:215). There was a strong emphasis on uncovering children's level of involvement in decision making processes and risk-oriented systems.

As outlined in Chapters one and three, I utilised the concept of habitus as a heuristic or practical devise, to explore children's involvement in the design and development of services (Costa, 2015; Davies, 2015). Habitus is embodied history influencing actions or shaping attitudes (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For example, it affects how a child on a court order thinks and feels and has an impact on their life chances and behaviours.

Although it directs, to a greater or lesser degree, how practitioners in the youth justice context behave in certain situations, it is also susceptible to

change or adaptation, depending on the circumstances. The concept of habitus has helped to provide insight into the 'logic' of youth justice practice and supervision, and challenge established 'truths' and 'official discourse' (Scraton, 2007:5) relating to how the justice system operates and is experienced by both those on the provider and receiver ends of supervision.

This chapter summarises the key themes of the PhD. It then proceeds to discuss and present recommendations for youth justice policy and practice. The chapter also highlights and offers critique on the 'gaps' that were exposed and presents shortcomings *vis-a-vis* contemporary policy and practice developments.

Children's participation in the risk-based approach

This thesis has presented evidence related to both inclusive and exclusive aspects of practice that either initiated and in turn facilitated, or foreclosed and essentially prohibited, children's participation (Goldson and Muncie, 2006; Robinson, 2016). It was discovered that the premier strategy was one of adult-centric systems, underpinned by typically risk-led processes.

This was strikingly at variance with more positive and participatory forms of engagement and interaction (Case and Haines, 2009). This has at least partly been caused my managerialist bureaucracy, restricting professional expertise (Armitage et al., 2016; Eadie and Canton, 2002). However, there is room for optimism following the introduction of the

Youth Justice Board's 'child first' philosophy (Case and Hampson, 2019; YJB, 2019). It is an agenda that has brought children's rights and entitlements to the fore. It appears devoted to facilitating 'a positive turn', potentially spawning activities that are emotionally supportive, focused on actively recognising and levelling praise at law-abiding mindsets/behaviours (Beyond Youth Custody, 2017; Byrne and Brooks, 2015; Peer Power, 2016; Robinson, 2016).

It appears geared towards strengthening children's ability to exercise agency and remain resilient following experiences of adversity or upheaval that can be detrimental to healthy growth and development (Beyond Youth Custody, 2017; Byrne and Brooks, 2015; Haines and Case, 2015; Haines and Drakeford, 1998; Robinson, 2016).

However, despite the increasing popularity or 'modern fetish' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:86) of a somewhat unprecedented 'children first' discourse and in particular its decisive influence on contemporary policy (YJB, 2019), the opportunities provided to young people to have a say and influence practice could continue to be strikingly unequal at the practice level. As was uncovered in chapter six, this was most evident in relation to public protection work with those considered 'high risk' of causing serious harm to members of the public or themselves, who were, at least in part, 'a ready candidate for exclusion and coercion' (O'Malley, 2008:459). Essentially, in Bourdieusian terms, the 'hidden dimension of power relations' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:9-10) was detected.

As alluded to in Chapter eight, the process to not invite children to attend and subsequently discuss their case in person with professionals at high-risk panels that were scheduled to take place, appeared akin to the way Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements operate (Robinson, 2011). However, prior to national guidance on offender participation and representation (Ministry of Justice, 2007, 2012), those under supervision in certain areas of the country, were invited to attend and present to professionals at part of a Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements meeting (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2006b). This procedure, dependent on certain criterion being fulfilled, was premised on the belief that those under supervision could provide valuable input, personal insight into their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours and contribute to potentially pivotal issues that concerned them (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2006b).

Reportedly, this approach was well received by the majority of professionals in Hampshire for instance and commended by inspectors for increasing transparency and accountability through giving people under supervision the opportunity to respond directly to professionals about the concerns raised (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2006b). The high-profile case of Anthony Rice, however, who committed further serious violent and sexual crimes, including murder, whilst being supervised by the probation service, and the subsequent organisational failings that were uncovered by the Independent Review (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2006a; Winstone, 2016), were seized upon by

politicians and sections of the print media. This case contributed to ending opportunities to those under supervision being given an opportunity to attend part of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements meetings (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2006b; Winstone, 2016).

In relation to this PhD study, despite it being a potentially valuable opportunity for young people to influence decision making, there was similar concern raised by professionals who were preoccupied with the likelihood or imminence of harm being inflicted by young people on members of society. Some professionals felt the process often comprised an 'ongoing dialogue' and the forging of 'close relationships' with children (Saar-Heiman and Gupta, 2019:5).

However, there was concern that, by not inviting them to the meeting, this decision violated young people's human rights and that practitioners were being awarded *Carte Blanche* to impose limits on young people's lifestyle choices, and on occasion, instigate, 'explicitly retributive/punitive elements' (Goldson and Hughes, 2010:212). Many could not see an alternative to the doxa, in that some felt it impractical or unmanageable to invite them to the meetings.

Others described those under supervision as being potentially manipulative and insubordinate. However, some workers felt it was unfortunate that young people were not present at the meetings, unable to contest levels of risk, confront those 'in charge' to provide justification

for their rationale, or contribute to plans being devised to manage their allegedly harmful behaviours, including influencing the actions that would subsequently stem from the meeting. Professionals cautioned against inviting them to part of a potentially emotionally fraught or hostile high-risk meeting.

Some workers casted young people as controlling, as potentially intent on causing disruption to systems or as ostensibly being determined to 'dupe' or deceive front line professionals one way or another (Leigh et al., 2019:2). This adult perspective is perhaps understandable when we consider that certain 'powerful interests' can seek to 'defend their corner' (Scraton, 2007:17). Moreover, there is a real concern that, if young people are present at the meetings, they could be 'cajoled and dismissed' by those who are 'wielding immediate discretionary power' (Scraton, 2007:5).

Front line practitioners were also anxious of the consequences of some young people - if they considered them threatening or a danger to society - inflicting further harm on victims and a tragedy occurring whilst being supervised by the service. Due to this fear they were more inclined to execute restrictive as opposed to enabling strategies. Some managers and professionals dreaded the possibility of being inspected by regulatory bodies such as the Inspectorate of Probation and judged negatively. They were, at times, afraid to deviate from the risk-oriented script provided. This led to heightened anxiety, self-monitoring/policing of their practice and prioritisation of risk-reduction strategies. Due to being adult-led, such

techniques, implicitly or explicitly, devalued young people's agency or choice in the process.

As I uncovered (see Chapters six and eight), these adult-led risk focused practices appeared to continue with the power imbalance being sustained and the voice of the child, in this context, relegated to the margins. However, there is room for optimism following the publication of an evaluation of the sector-led peer assessments in youth justice (Baker and Magil, 2019).

Differing somewhat to the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspections that can be viewed with 'fear' and 'loathing', the sector-led peer assessment process has been dubbed a non-shaming approach (Baker and Magil, 2019). These types of assessments appear to be strengths-based and informally formal, avoiding the 'panic mode', Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspections can trigger (Baker and Magil, 2019). The approach could be likened to a form of appreciative inquiry model in that the emphasis is on identifying and maximising 'best practices' and providing constructive feedback, as opposed to finding fault or attributing blame (Baker and Magil, 2019).

Such peer assessments can be beneficial for youth offending services who are experiencing difficulties with certain practices, not least grappling with the issues I have uncovered, namely: 'fake' inauthentic transactions between young people and case managers, and a lack of children's genuine involvement in risk oriented systems and processes. However, at

the time of writing, the sector-led peer assessments have not replaced the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspections. This is perhaps disappointing in that it has meant some workers have used the peer assessments to focus on 'inspection-type issues' (Baker and Magil, 2019:3).

This perception of their use appears to contradict the key purpose of the assessments, potentially hindering a meaningful and constructive outcome. What is more, the perspectives and (lived) experiences of children, in the sector-led peer review process – especially in terms of governance/organisational matters but also in relation to the development of guidance documentation/materials - have been omitted. This revelation is thus an area that warrants scrutiny by researchers in the future.

As noted in Chapters two and eight, there is a further reason to be optimistic about the future of youth justice, namely the introduction of new national standards, with 'child first' as the guiding principle (Case and Hampson, 2019; YJB, 2019). However, the child first approach appears to run counter to the conventional risk and deficit-led focus. The persistence with which the central conviction that the identification and management of risk is applicable to and appropriate with the central aim of preventing offending and reoffending, should be a cause for concern (Case and Haines, 2009; Case, 2018).

As was highlighted in Chapter six, high-risk individuals are most in danger of having their voices overruled by adult professionals, who seek to

maintain not relinquish control. Certain young people were denied opportunities to influence systems and processes by those in positions of power. Professionals, at times, felt obliged to instigate restrictive measures to monitor and control young people's activities and essentially manage risk. It was argued that this situation or supervision world they inhabit, might then result in children experiencing, knowingly or otherwise, an acute sense of injustice following their pernicious treatment. Yet, as was noted in Chapter five, they may feel an attempt to voice an opinion is of little worth or value.

Despite 'children first' agendas accelerating in recent times, to allow 'high risk' young people to determine programmes of intervention or direct other aspects of practice, was to an extent, unthinkable. It was viewed as the very antithesis to the risk-oriented assessments and adult-led case management styles of supervision, not only from the perspective of some professionals but also children or the relatively powerless themselves. Thus, in relation to this cohort or population of high risk young people, the prospect of an authentic 'participatory democracy' (Lane, 2000:197) may appear incomprehensible.

I detected a bifurcated approach and an element of discordance in operation, in that restrictive measures and tokenistic practices were seemingly reserved for young people considered 'high risk' of causing harm to themselves or others. Indeed, the 'high risk' term functioned as a 'powerful signifier', to a greater or less degree, that socialised front line professionals into 'adopting particular stances' (Leigh, et al., 2019:15).

Although risk levels or categories are an indication of the probability of risk of harm to or from the child, the arbitrary nature of these judgements, were at times misrecognised by front-line professionals (Bourdieu, 1990). For instance, professionals, whilst not free willed or acting in an entirely objective manner, responded or reacted to situations using a practical sense – executing a craft, art or skill (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu, et al., 1991: ix). They devised a response that 'felt' right to them and the situation to negotiate 'everyday struggles' that presented themselves (Vuorisalo and Alanen, 2015:79). Their categories of thought were non-rational and non-calculative, in that their own cognitive/mental structures had been shaped by previous life experiences resulting in an unquestioning of certain ways of being or thinking (Bourdieu, 1990; Garnier, 2015).

The interface between participatory rhetoric and risk oriented practices

During fieldwork, it was discovered that a raft of changes, some profound, had been introduced at the service. For example, there were new assessment and information systems, designed to overcome formulaic and increasingly bureaucratic processes. The service was engaging in a restructuring project and refocusing or recrafting its system priorities. As discussed extensively in Chapters six and eight, front-line practitioners experienced, to a greater or lesser degree, some discomfort, pain or suffering, leading to the emergence of a cleft or split habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Some professionals experienced a 'divided or torn habitus'

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127) as a result of having to navigate competing organisational priorities, increasingly recurrent moments of crisis brought on by workload and resource pressures.

These feelings were exacerbated by the constant grappling with new processes and systems which, at times, hindered or constrained their abilities, amplifying 'suffering and stress' (Bourdieu, 1998b: 98) and aggravating 'conflict' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:4). The precarious positions some of them occupied contributed to feelings of insecurity, exacerbated by line managers who were intent on monitoring performance in accordance with restrictive institutional requirements (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1992). Some professionals feared their practice would be excessively audited, inspecting whether there was evidence of formulaic offender-focused or risk-led types of practice delivery.

Whilst there was an interplay, there was also a division or dichotomy between risk and participation. Caring and controlling agendas, adult-led and child-led approaches appeared to clash. An unhealthy preoccupation with risk not only competed with but also, at times, took precedence over children's own viewpoints and perspectives on matters related to them, their life and circumstances. A focal concern related to children's subordinate positions in the youth justice field and especially their status as 'offenders'. This label meant their voices were subordinated to the adult viewpoint, meaning their ability to exercise agency was restricted and contingent dependent not least on their supposed risk level or category assigned during the assessment stage (Knight, 2015).

Nevertheless, despite such 'powerful forces' (Knight, 2015:102) in operation, and children's behaviours being at times heavily surveilled, young people had a certain level of independence and an ability to express or enact agency/choice. This was most acute in relation to supervision meetings between young people and their workers. For instance, young people were able to share their concerns with their worker and ostensibly shape the contents or format of interventions and activities.

Relationship-based practice: Recognition, reciprocity and a continuity of support

This thesis has flagged up the importance of a consistent, non-controlling and trusting adult/child relationship, underpinned by notions of tolerance of 'slip ups', children's ability to thrive, an emphasis on listening with care and compassion and mutual respect 'recognition and reciprocity' (Leigh, et al., 2019:8; Wood, 2010). It exposed its pivotal role in bolstering children's participation, reducing passive compliance or the presence of 'fake' or inauthentic transactional arrangements from forming.

In relation to the latter, I detected a system of 'false consensus' or 'hidden collusion' in operation in stark contrast to an approach that encourages 'open conflict' in supervision arrangements and interactions between young people and their workers (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:189 and 112). However, this issue may be uncomfortable and difficult to reconcile. It may require a shift in mentality away from process driven thinking,

namely inauthentic transactions where both children and professionals are complicit in forging a 'forced, artificial' (Bourdieu, at al., 1999:619) interaction. What is more, the fear that professionals may become 'over-optimistic' and 'too trusting' in their interactions with children and young people, can hinder the progress of a relationship-based practice (Leigh, et al., 2019:5).

Rather than rigidly and uncritically conforming to system demands (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), an approach that is relationship focused and conducive to meaningful participation, can help to facilitate substantial changes or transformations. A relationship of this type is also potentially more receptive to critiquing the status quo. However, regarding the latter, young people may perceive 'resistance' or anti-participation as 'alienating' and unsavoury, a position most uncomforting, and forms of 'submission to be liberating' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 24). This discovery potentially exacerbates the issue of young people being passive.

As highlighted in Chapter five, young people may feel trapped and thus embark, out of necessity, on the construction of 'fake' or inauthentic relationships with those in authority. What is more, as explored in Chapter eight, professionals may prefer young people presenting with a 'ready to conform' mindset who are of a malleable personality type rather than incipient troublemakers intent on rebellion (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Moreover, children and young people may only comply with requirements or adhere to certain organisational requests if they are

consciously alert to the benefits in doing so. After all, young people may choose a particular course of action however reluctantly, and 'obey a rule only insofar as their interest in following it outweighs their interest in overlooking it' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:115).

Arguably, professionals should be democratic in their approach when inducting children into the system. They should avoid using autocratic styles of delivery. Case managers, keen to overcome the issue of young people being passive when interacting with them, could work towards maintaining or actively constructing a trusting relationship. If professionals are interested and committed to destroying unevenly distributed power differentials and sign up to a practice of 'active and methodical listening' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:609), this can be one potential way to avoid the emergence of a 'fake' or transactional arrangement (Brooker, 2015). This commitment to a relational practice, on the part of the workers, can potentially be a powerful way to build children's emotional health and facilitate positive social development.

One pertinent challenge relates to front-line professionals being tasked with a dual competing function. Alongside an enabling and caring role, they are required, where appropriate, to enforce and control (Hart and Thompson, 2009). As a result, at times, as officers of the court, the latter overrules the former with young people being instructed to comply with specific tasks with the threat of further breach action in the event of non-compliance or unacceptable levels of performance during assessment, planning, intervention and supervision.

Playing the 'game', being docile and submissive

"Players come and go but the game stays the same" (Harding, 2014:277).

Despite feeling dissatisfied some children were resistant to actively question the status quo. If they were not being responded to fairly by professionals, some young people would avoid contesting the appropriateness of their treatment, and in fact adhere to the less palatable conditions. Thus, they were arguably more likely to conform to the dominant discourse in an effort to avoid being treated with disdain by the service or be on the receiving end of penalties. The thesis has exposed how some young people felt comfortable with the rules of the game and felt like 'fish in water', inhibiting 'a [certain] confidence' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127). These young people tended to internalise the social structures, sensing what was required of them, resulting in them striving to participate with minimal effort.

However, although there is considerable progress to be made in this regard, this argument cannot be applied to all children who participated in the study. Young people can 'resist the constraints placed upon them' (Knight, 2015:102). Indeed, some children who acted out a rebellious disposition, felt ill-at-ease and a 'fish out of water' (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127).

Some of those under supervision were withholding their true perspective, refraining from genuine involvement, with the intention of accruing

legitimate capital or power that was valued in the field by their supervising officers. Some children were explicit in reporting how they had a vested interest in their involvement in the service ending as painlessly as was practically possible. At times, young people were keen to engineer moves that would be of benefit to them and their case. Crucially, this is not to argue that all children were intent on deceiving or duping their supervising officers, nor to claim were they being 'blackmailed into cooperating' (Leigh, et al., 2019:8).

Nevertheless, the chances of them 'getting their court order over and done with' were potentially improved when they deployed a practical sense or feel for the game, and essentially acted in a way that become 'second nature' or a 'way of being' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:18). Crucially, they sensed – recognised or acknowledged - the 'tempo or rhythms' (Maton, 2014:52) and behaved in this way, 'without consciously obeying rules explicitly posed as such' (Bourdieu, 1990, 76). Indeed, as noted, if they remain alert or attentive to situations or requests from their case managers as and when they arise, they can profit from this course of action, and avoid sanctions for non-compliance (Bourdieu, 1990).

Some children felt that by modifying, a challenge given some of their rigid dispositions, how they would normally approach situations or potentially inventing a certain 'way of being' and essentially refraining from being uncooperative, this course of action was 'worth the candle' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98). They gave the impression or appearance that they were complying and acting in a docile state, prepared to be complicit with

demands or norms, however unreasonable, restrictive or regressive (Hine, 2010).

Essentially, due to not feeling they had the licence to dictate how they wished to be treated or how the service functioned, some were 'conservative' and 'cautious' rather than 'subversive', avoiding disruption to the systems, the doxa or upsetting the establishment (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:99). They felt adopting a disruptive disposition would be 'akin to becoming an outlaw' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:241). In order to increase the probability of a smooth transition out of the justice system, they acted in accordance with what they perceived to be the unwritten rules or 'specific logics' of the game being played (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97), albeit 'without the benefit of hindsight and calculative reason' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:21). More specifically, they forged a 'soft consensus' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:178) with their case workers. They aimed to avoid creating tension or conflict and refrained from being disobedient or engaging in the battle over retaining a level of power and control (Mayall, 2015).

By adopting this specific stance, young people may feel this helps to ensure their court order is logged as being completed successfully by their case manager, preventing a return to court for non or partial compliance (Hine, 2010). This issue is perhaps particularly noticeable in relation to children who feel less competent, inexperienced, inert and reluctant to 'speak the truth' (Bourdieu, 1990:1818). Some felt they lacked the skills and confidence to articulate a viewpoint due to possessing a

less than rich vocabulary. They described how their situated and experiential knowledge was devalued, and their accounts mistrusted. If provided with a space at the negotiation table with adults who occupy relatively powerful positions, some reported they would feel most uncomfortable, especially in terms of phrasing and expressing their viewpoint. They would seek routes out of such dilemmas or adopt a 'ready to conform' mindset in an effort to avoid hassle (Mayall, 2015).

Disputing the status quo

Some young people felt that if they disputed the status quo (or illusio) too frequently and unsettled those in power or chose to adopt a confrontational style of interaction with their case managers, this could be viewed as uncivil or discourteous. The situation could exacerbate resulting in them being viewed as 'difficult individuals'. For instance, they may be shamed and returned to court as a consequence of non-compliance (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) potentially with the net result of an extension to their court order. This potentially annuls any prospect of rebellion on the part of young people (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), in that if they are non-compliant and returned to court, there will be minimal prospect of their involvement with the Youth Offending Team ending in the near future.

Nevertheless, some children and young people in capital deficit, engaged in a struggle to accrue a sense or level of power and influence. They attempted to chafe or react against unfair systems and processes, ostensibly refusing to conform. This was especially the case if they felt

they had their expertise devalued or their 'creative intelligence' undervalued (Mayall, 2015:25-26).

It is important not to belittle young people's attempts at resistance or treat their acts of critical questioning as immature and a form of incompetence. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:196 and 198) note, there may be 'quite sincere' and profound reasoning 'in their re-volts', a host of personal issues/concerns driving their choices to 'go against the established order', not least their acute sense of injustice, which provokes their 'awakening of consciousness'. With that said, children may be hesitant voicing an opinion fearing their point of view is inferior to professional expertise, resulting in their concerns being dismissed or overshadowed.

As alluded to, they may lack the confidence in terms of ability to express how they truly feel, in an articulated way, in a manner that garners respect from those occupying seemingly greater symbolic and material power and influence. Thus, as some young people did, they may repress their authentic thoughts and feelings.

This discovery is perhaps unsurprising given their unequal 'access to legitimate language' and discourse, especially due to their age, status, and in this context 'offender' label (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:146). Children who experience such inequality, may frequently feel 'done to' and the victim of symbolic or 'soft' violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:167). Yet, they may hold the view that if they question intensely or confront figures of authority and express their emotions, they could be

told they are contravening expectations regarding appropriate behaviour. For example, if children deploy forms of resistance, professionals may allege they are in breach of their court order requirements due to behaving inappropriately.

Young people could feel that fighting against the system is the very antithesis of the purpose of being on a court order and how the youth offending service and case managers in particular function. My thesis both empirically and theoretically supports the arguments that some young people felt prohibited from offering comment on or dictating how professionals conducted themselves and how the service carried out its statutory operations. More specifically, they did not attempt to occupy a decision maker role, as this could be viewed as incompatible or in direct contravention with the stated intention of them repairing the harm. Indeed, this stance may also conflict with an emphasis on the child correcting or 'fixing' their own faulty thought processes, and ostensibly being confronted by those in power to address their individualised criminogenic risk factors (Kemshall, 2009).

'Recognition of authenticity' - Progressing Peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System

Chapter seven explored the potential benefits of the practice of peer mentoring. Peer mentoring was described as an approach that involves a mentor who has shared experiences or backgrounds, giving advice and support to a mentee who is experiencing personal, social and/or emotional difficulties (Buck, 2016).

It was found that young people who possess 'altruistic motives' can potentially be 'effective' in re-engaging the disengaged or disempowered (Moilanen, et al., 2015:170). Some young people displayed a desire and/or possessed the qualities – either driven by altruism, the need to act compassionately, or undergird by self-interest - to assist and help those most in need (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010). However, there was worthy scepticism that surrounded the potentially beneficial effects of this type of practice.

There is the risk of potential saboteurs or those seeking to discredit a model of practice that requires, to an extent, professionals to relinquish some of their power/control (See Chapters one, two and seven). Some may voice discontent and chide this type of practice for its potentially pathologising and 'offender focus' and limited scope for the exploration of children's strengths and positive attributes (Case, 2018). Thus, critics may disavow any claim relating to 'effectiveness', and encourage proponents of such peer led models, to guard against valorising such

types of practices, at least in an unquestioning manner. Some may level criticism at the approach for facilitating a deficit-facing form of interaction between young mentors and mentees.

Mentors may be developmentally immature, both socially and biologically, and not have the capabilities to facilitate growth/transition and offer emotional and practical assistance to their peers who are experiencing mental health problems and/or other behavioural difficulties (O'Connor and Waddell, 2015). They may have their own unresolved trauma, and this may adversely affect their ability to form constructive relationships with both their peers and professionals.

If there are insufficient supervision arrangements in place and a lack of monitoring, peer mentors may model deviant behaviour, giving rise to a contagion effect. Such negative peer influences can potentially result in poor outcomes (O'Connor and Waddell, 2015). A further issue relates to the potentially high turnover of peer mentors. This can impact adversely on mentees who may feel rejected and self-blame in the event of a relationship terminating (Buck, et al., 2017; Fletcher and Batty, 2012). As Fletcher and Batty (2012:5) note 'high rates of peer turnover may compromise service delivery'. Furthermore, professionals may be risk avoidant and disinclined to capitalise on this perceivably unorthodox practice, resulting in professionals not using young people as peer mentors (Fletcher and Batty, 2012).

Professionals may choose to 'play safe' and not involve them because of the potential security risks they pose (Nash, 2007:87). For example, peer mentors may continue to have connections with pro-criminal or anti-social peers. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that this type of practice has been viewed with scepticism or as a 'risky endeavour' (Lopez-Humphreys and Teater, 2018:193).

Nevertheless, utilising young people's 'first-hand knowledge' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:231) in this way, was thought of as an 'optimistic antidote' (Wolfreys, 2000:13) to deficit-led practices experienced as disengaging and disempowering. It was considered a potentially innovative way to (re)engage the so-called hard to reach, and equip individuals – both the mentor and mentee - with opportunities to acquire non-monetary types of capital/currency (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010). Peer mentors may have first-hand experience of how problems can be overcome (Boyce, et al., 2009). They may have experiential knowledge, described as 'truth based on personal experience with a phenomenon' (Borkman, 1976:445) and be able to relate to mentees in similar circumstances, situations or with those experiencing a comparable phenomenon.

There remains a remarkable lack of empirical research on the practice of peer mentoring in the Youth Justice System. Despite this apparent lacuna, there are tentative signs that it may be liberating for children to engage in this type of practice, and that peer mentors can be 'effective' in

steering their peers away from engagement in further crime (Peer Power, 2018).

Mentors who are current or former 'offenders' - especially those who have had intensive involvement in the justice system - who have overcome adversity, for instance emotional distress pain and suffering, can be perceived by mentees as positive role models and a source of hope. Buck (2016:190) referred specifically to the genuinely caring nature of peer mentoring, characterising its potential as an antidote or a persuasive alternative to the 'disconnected', 'unhearing' and 'technocratic' criminal justice process. It can potentially help to reverse children's negative experiences of contact with the criminal justice system.

Young people in the Youth Justice System are often socially and economically marginalised with differential access to capital(s), and limited financial resources and access to social networks (Taylor, 2016). Participating in a peer mentoring project can be an opportunity for young people to accumulate and retain capital wealth. It may potentially help to empower young people who appear to have no stake in the youth justice 'game' and seem to be participating in the construction of inauthentic transactions between them and their case managers (Bourdieu and Chartier, 2015).

Peer mentoring should not be focused on children's weaknesses, faults or failures, wherein children are depicted as 'helpless or hopeless victims of circumstance' (Scraton, 2007:10). It should be geared towards

developing strengths and enhancing resilience, drawing 'out the talent, the capacity and the resources that people may have and creating a space where good things may happen' (Gilligan, 2006:41). It is a potentially innovative approach to reconcile a lack of user-led engagement and consequent experiences of disempowerment (Creaney and Smith, 2014). This type of practice, premised on the idea that young people can be 'partners in shaping their own futures', underpinned by an emphasis on 'making a reciprocal contribution' (Drakeford and Gregory, 2010:152 and 154), could help to facilitate a 'principled youth justice' or a 'youth justice with integrity' (Goldson and Hughes, 2010:223). In the process, this type of activity could be useful in addressing skills/resource deficits, including any 'fatalistic and 'hopeless outlook in life' (Boeck, et al., 2006b:8).

This thesis affirms that if children's experiential knowledge is valued, it can result in strengthening the legitimacy or credibility of the system. However, peer mentoring appears a niche and under-researched area, that lacks an evidence-base and continues to evade research agendas. There is no blueprint available on this type of peer-led practice in youth justice. This potentially prohibits front line professionals from enacting peer mentoring, and unlocking its potential. Nevertheless, it is hoped the findings in this thesis serve to inform commissioners who are in the process of devising such bespoke practice guidance.

Concluding remarks

> "Those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage but they must always contend with the resistance, the claims, the contention, "political" or otherwise, of the dominated" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:102).

Despite efforts to modernise the system and improve quality, standards and outcomes, for an inordinately long period of time, in policy and practice circles progressing children's participation in the Youth Justice System appears not to have been a key imperative (Case and Hampson, 2019; Smith, 2014b). There have been partial efforts to overcome this neglect. This is evident through the gradual shift to align practice more closely with participatory oriented models and a consequent focus on children's strengths as opposed to their so-called bundle of risks (Case, 2018; Ugwudike, 2011; YJB, 2019).

I have submitted risk assessment practices to extensive detailed critique and analysis, homing in on the distinctive, dynamic, contingent (Case et al., 2017) concept of children's participation. A core intention throughout the thesis has been to reflect upon dominant risk-oriented practices, and the potentially negative effects of professional judgements, in a Bourdieusian sense, critiquing 'forms of [risk] classification' (Bourdieu, 2000:175).

There has been limited empirical research conducted on young people's participation in decision-making in the Youth Justice System. This includes how or to what extent they are involved individually and

strategically in processes that concern them or matters related to the service and how it functions (Case and Hampson, 2019). This thesis has generated 'new' knowledge on topics that have tended to escape analytical/academic scrutiny. I have operationalised Bourdieusian 'thinking tools' to uncover how social agents construct and experience participatory practices.

I discovered that opportunities to shape decision making and influence processes were ostensibly and disproportionately reserved for the non-high risk, especially the ready to conform or those with seemingly malleable personality types (see Chapters 5, 6 and 8).

I have also exposed prospects for more diverse pathways that facilitate meaningful involvement. For example, some professionals castigated high-risk management processes for not allowing children an opportunity to attend part of a meeting that concerned/affected them. Several professionals suggested a confidential slot be introduced to remedy the voices of children being neglected. However, this proposal 'arouses resistances' (Bourdieu, 1993:23), especially among those 'whose interest it services' (namely, relatively powerful professionals who organise and manage such processes) to 'design out' opportunities for young people to attend these types of risk-based meetings (Bourdieu, 1993:26).

There were concerns that this offer to young people could be problematic to operationalise in practice. It may not be feasible, not least due to the obvious power inequalities between children and adult professionals. The

meetings may not be child-friendly, child-appropriate, positive and strengths-based (Haines and Case, 2015) where 'young people are to be listened to, engaged and encouraged to participate' (Wood, 2010:51), but instead be preoccupied with whether or not 'negative restrictions and prohibitions' should be added to the contents of existing orders (Case, 2018:249).

There was also the perception that as 'offenders' who presented risks to society, they were 'undeserving' (Jamieson and Yates, 2009:79) of such opportunities and that these individuals may seek to undermine processes through devious stratagems or by way of acting out a calculative and disruptive disposition.

In relation to children and young people who appear to be participating with minimal effort and playing the 'game' (see Chapter five), it is appropriate to highlight that young people can experience difficulties fulfilling 'the professional's desired' preferences (Leigh, et al., 2019:14). Whether children choose to comply or disengage through withholding their genuine perspective or supressing their honest feelings, young people's attitudes and dispositions continue to be in danger of being 'treated with caution or suspicion' (Leigh, et al., 2019:14). Arguably, this is especially the case if assigned the potentially stigmatising 'high risk' label, considered to be a deceiving person, and thought to be presenting as a danger to society.

In addition to lamenting forms of risk-focused approaches, exposing implicit notions and examining 'taken for granted' (Deer, 2014:201) ways of practising, the promising aspects of peer mentoring have been lauded (see Chapters seven and eight). Such approaches present as a bulwark to - or to counteract the - exclusionary features/components of risk-oriented practices. It can potentially mitigate against the effects of individualised/pathologising neo-liberal discourses, and a 'preoccupation with security' (Saar-Heiman and Gupta, 2019:1).

I have critically explored this practice and reviewed the potential benefits, demerits and challenges of youth justice professionals allocating 'greater credence to the expertise and experiences' of children and young people with convictions (Graham and McNeill's, 2018:434). I have demonstrated how this form of practice can be liberating and enlightening for those involved and is a model that has potential to help facilitate positive outcomes concerning those on the giving and receiving ends of the relationship.

Those under youth justice supervision, experiencing multiple forms of capital deficit and inequality, often lack access to connections or adequate systems of support. They may feel somewhat dispossessed - 'abandoned' or 'forgotten' by society - involved in a system they perceive as uncaring, exacerbated by an era of 'rampant neo-liberalism' (Bourdieu, et al., 1999:183) and an austerity programme that continues to adversely affect the life chances of the most in need (Beresford, 2016; Rogowski, 2018).

I found that young people can be receptive to peer mentoring, due to the approach not overlooking but instead giving primacy to their situated, experiential knowledge and expertise. The central argument is that peer mentoring does not devalue but rather permits the promotion of children's ability to provide insight and perspective.

I have provided insight into why individuals may not contest the status quo despite suffering hardship, and seemingly accept oppressive or unequal situations and circumstances. This has included evincing operations that denounce the credibility of their accounts, which reinforce the dominant narrative that persists relatively unabated. It has also explored how social agents navigate multiple types of 'ordinary suffering' (Bourdieu, at el., 1999:4; see also Garrett, 2018), and cope when they are 'silenced or subordinated' by techniques, systems and processes that aim to detect then reduce risk and dangerousness (O'Malley, 2008:457).

There remains the prospect that improvements can be made, disaffection overcome and the voices of the dominated awarded legitimate status (Mahar, et al., 1990:13). Crucially, this involves recognising the struggles and contradictions - deciphering homologies or a shared habitus (Kerr and Robinson, 2009:83) - that exist between social agents, and commitment to breaking the impasse or chasm between children's experiential knowledge and professional expertise. It also involves exposing the tension and interplay between risk-oriented and participatory-facing practices in youth justice.

The negative excesses of risk-conscious and adult-oriented systems including demanding and prescriptive workload pressures - exacerbated by fiscal constraints - which can stymie progressive practice, can not only be deciphered or untangled but corrected and purposively reshaped/ refocused (Grenfell, 2014d).

Although perceived - by some at least - as formidable tasks given the continued focus on managing risk and partial reluctance to douse/extinguish or discredit the legitimacy of deficit-facing interventions (Case and Hampson, 2019), following provocation or disruption by those not content with 'the way of things', transformations can be achieved. There can be positive changes to the status quo not least following processes of realisation of context and circumstance, by both the dominant and the oppressed, concerning the symbolic violence/suffering being inflicted upon the relatively voiceless (Bourdieu, et al., 1999).

This original and distinctive PhD study has exposed 'areas of tension' (Balarabe Kura, 2012:2), and in a Bourdieusian sense highlighted the plight of the youth justice workforce and those under supervision (Bourdieu, 2007; Jenkins, 1992). It has provided analytical insight into how social agents 'make sense' of, grasp or comprehend their experiences of social reality, specifically in the bureaucratic/administrative field of youth justice supervision, and constraints on expressions of agency (Allen, 2007; Webb, 2002:86) or choice/freedoms (Wood, 2009:145). It has not only exposed gaps in understanding but made important theoretical and empirical contributions to the field of youth

justice. I have unearthed how the 'game' is 'played out' by both the governors (relatively privileged or rich in capital) and the governed (relatively deprivileged or in capital deficit) (Courtney, 2017; Webb, 2002:86).

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Appendices

Appendix A Practitioners Participant Information Sheet

Title of the research study: Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision

This study aims to explore the role of participation in youth justice. It is the intention of the study to assess how young people can and/or do contribute, in any meaningful and participatory way, to their programme of intervention and to examine whether there are differing benefits, depending where you are on the ladder of participation in youth justice.

You have been invited to participate in the research as you currently work within a Youth Offending Service and have experience of working with young people who offend.

The research is being conducted as part of my PhD degree and will be used to complete my thesis. The research will be supervised by staff members from Liverpool John Moores University, School of Humanities and Social Science.

What will the research involve?

If you choose to participate in the research you will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in the study. Your main role in the research will involve taking part in an interview and/or observation. Here your views and experiences of working with young people on community sentences will be explored. I plan to observe contacts with young people who have offended in supervision sessions, pre-sentence report interviews, and assessment review sessions. I plan also to accompany you on home visits.

It is expected that each interview/observation will last between 30-90 minutes and will be audio recorded subject to the participants consent.

All interview responses/observations provided will be coded in a manner that anonymises yourself as a participant in the research and the Youth Offending Service; this will involve changing any details that identifies you as a participant and the inclusion of pseudonyms which will be used to replace your own name.

I will convene seminars with young people and practitioners to share new knowledge, in particular examples of 'effective' participation practice and areas for development. Care will be taken to ensure no one is identifiable.

Risks and Benefits

There are no risks with regard to you taking part in this research other than those encountered in your day to day life. The perceived benefits from taking part in this research are that you will be contributing to a knowledge base which has been relatively neglected. By participating you will also have the opportunity to have your voice heard in relation to important matters relating to the participation of young people.

Confidentiality and participation in the research

All the information provided during the interviews will be stored safely and only I (the researcher) and my supervisory team will have access to this information.

The data provided by any participant in this study will only be used for the sole purposes of the research and be destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

In order to ensure your identity remains anonymous you have the choice to give yourself a pseudonym, if you choose not to give yourself a pseudonym you will be allocated one. If you reveal information about an individual in the interview it is important that you give this person a different name to protect their anonymity. I will ask you to do this.

Your identity will remain anonymous and confidential if you choose to participate in the research however if in any circumstances you mention any professional breach of conduct then confidentiality will not be maintained.

Withdrawal from the research

If you agree to participate in this research and at any time decide against this decision and wish to withdraw you are free to do so and any information provided will be destroyed.

Questions about your participation in the research

If you have any questions regarding participation in this research you can contact the researcher directly via the email address below.
 Researcher- Sean Creaney
E-mail address- S.Creaney@2014.ljmu.ac.uk

Should you wish to contact the Liverpool John Moores University about the research or the researcher then please contact the academic supervisor of the research via the e-mail address below:
E-mail address- J.Jamieson@ljmu.ac.uk

Should you decide to take part in the research a final copy of the thesis will be available to all participants who wish to receive a copy.
Thank you for your time and interest in this research and I sincerely hope you will agree to be involved. With kind regards Sean Creaney

Appendix B Young People's Participant Information Sheet

Information sheet about <u>Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision</u>

My name Sean Creaney and I am a research student. I am inviting you to take part in a research study about the how much of a say you have over what happens to you at the YOS. If there are any questions that you would like to ask, please get in touch with me on <u>S.Creaney@2014.ljmu.ac.uk</u>

What is the research study about?

The aim of the study is to explore your experiences of participating in YOS intervention. As part of the study, I will be speaking to young people, as well as YOS officers and other YOS staff.

Do I have to take part?

No. This study is not part of your order. You should only take part in the research if you want to. You are free to stop taking part at any time and without giving a reason. If you decide not to take part, this will not affect you in any way.

What does taking part involve?

I want to sit in on some of your supervision meetings with your YOS officer; I want to ask you some questions about your experience of participating in supervision, at the beginning, middle and at the end of your order. The main thing you will have to do is answer questions in an interview and/or be observed taking part in activities/interviews/meetings. I plan to observe supervision sessions, pre-sentence report interviews, and assessment review sessions.

If you do agree to take part, I would like to keep your contact details so that I can follow-up on how you're getting on in the future. If you choose not to do this, you can still take part in the study.

If you decide to take part in this research you will be asked to sign a consent sheet that says you agree to take part and that you understand what it's about and what it's for.

You will have the opportunity, as part of this research study, to write a reflective diary to share your thoughts, feelings and experiences. It will be

offered on a voluntary basis. Also on a voluntary basis will be the opportunity to take part in informal project planning sessions. As part of these sessions you will have the opportunity to shape the design of the study.

I will convene seminars with you and practitioners to share new knowledge, in particular examples of 'effective' participation practice and areas for development.

What will happen with my information?

Whatever you tell me, or anything I learn, will be confidential, so I won't pass on anything to the YOS or anyone else, except if you tell me that you are going to harm yourself or someone else or tell me something about an offence. When I write my report about the research study, I won't use your name or any other information that could identify you.

If you agree, I would like to audio record our interviews/observations. Only I will listen to the recording and it will be deleted at the end of the study.

Risks and Benefits

There are no risks to you taking part in this research however a good reason for taking part in this research is because it will give you the chance to tell your story and have your voice heard about your thoughts on important issues.

<u>Your information will be password protected and stored securely in a locked cabinet</u>

Problems and questions

You may find that when you answer questions about your experiences it may be upsetting for you or you may have feelings that you want to talk about. If this does happen you can ring the Child line on 0800 1111 at any time of the day or night and they will give you free confidential advice and support on anything that is bothering you. I can also signpost you to appropriate counselling services.

Also if you have any more questions about the work you can contact me (Sean) on S.Creaney@2014.ljmu.ac.uk and I will answer these questions for you.

If you want to ask Liverpool John Moores University any questions about the research then you can contact my supervisors Dr Joe Yates J.yates@ljmu.ac.uk or Dr Janet Jamieson on J.Jamieson@ljmu.ac.uk

Thank you for your time and interest and I hope that you will agree to be involved in this study.

Appendix C Parental/carer participant information sheets

<u>Title of the research study</u>: Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision

This study aims to explore the role of participation in youth justice. It is the intention of the study to assess how young people can and/or do contribute, in any meaningful and participatory way, to their programme of intervention.

Your child has been invited to participate in the research.

The research is being conducted as part of my PhD degree and will be used to complete my thesis. The research will be supervised by staff members from Liverpool John Moores University, School of Humanities and Social Science.

What will the research involve?

Your child will have the opportunity to be interviewed and/or be observed in order to explore how much of a say they have over what happens to them. I plan to observe supervision sessions, pre-sentence report interviews, and assessment review sessions. The observations will only take place with me the researcher, in the presence of other youth justice practitioners.

Participation in the research is voluntary. If your child decides during the observation or interview that they no longer want to take part in the research that is fine. He/she can withdraw their consent to take part at any time, and any data that has already been collected will not be included in the research.

If your child chooses to participate in the research you and your child will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing for your child to participate in the study.
There is no limited time to complete the interview and/or observation, however, it is expected that each will last between 30-90 minutes and will be audio recorded subject to consent.

All interview responses/observations provided will be coded in a manner that anonymises your child as a participant in the research; this will involve changing any details that identifies your child as a participant and

the inclusion of pseudonyms which will be used to replace your child's own name.

I will convene seminars with young people and practitioners to share new knowledge, in particular examples of 'effective' participation practice and areas for development.

Risks and Benefits

Discussing the problems associated with youth offending may prove a sensitive topic for some participants, and so your child may find taking part in the interview and/or observation upsetting. If this was to happen the researcher, subject to your consent, take steps to ensure that your child accesses appropriate support.

Should any issues relating to child protection be raised during the interview/observation the researcher is obliged to act in liaison with the relevant professionals.

The benefit of participating in this research is that your child will have the opportunity to express views and experiences relating to participation. Here also, your child will have the opportunity to have their voice heard in relation to important matters relating to the participation of young people. Taking part or refusing to take part will not impact in any way on young people's involvement with the YOS.

Confidentiality and participation in the research

All the information provided during the interviews will be stored safely and only I (the researcher) and my supervisory team will have access to this information.

The data provided by any participant in this study will only be used for the sole purposes of the research and be destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) on completion.

Withdrawal from the research

If you agree for your child to take part in this research and at any time decide against this decision and wish to withdraw consent you are free to do so and any information provided will be destroyed.

Questions about your participation in the research

If you have any questions regarding participation in this research you can contact the researcher directly via the email address below.
 Researcher- Sean Creaney
E-mail address- S.Creaney@2014.ljmu.ac.uk

Should you wish to contact the Liverpool John Moores University about the research or the researcher then please contact the academic supervisor of the research via the e-mail address below:
E-mail address- J.Yates@ljmu.ac.uk

Thank you for your time and interest in this research and I sincerely hope you will agree for your child to be involved. With kind regards , Sean Creaney

Appendix D Gatekeeper information sheet

Researcher – Sean Creaney

Title of the research: Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision

My research is focused on the role of participation in youth justice and aims to investigate how participatory practice is. I would like to be able to conduct interviews and observations with professionals and young people. I would very much like to attend one of your team meetings to provide you all with the details of the research. More specifically, I will be able to explain in detail what the research is about and what it aims to explore and investigate. Here I will provide all practitioners with a participant information sheet. During the meeting I am also hoping to talk with professionals about young people taking part in the study.

What will the research involve?

Practitioners and young people who choose participate in the research will be asked to sign an informed consent form agreeing to their participation in the research. Their main role in the research will involve taking part in an interview/observation. I will be asking questions relating to practitioners views and experiences of working with young people on community sentences and seeking young people's views and experiences on how participatory practice is.
There is no limited time to complete the interviews/observations however it is expected to last between one and two hours and will be recorded via a Dictaphone.

All interview/observation responses provided will be coded in a manner that anonymises participants in the research and the Youth Offending Service; this will involve changing any details that identifies them as a participant and the inclusion of pseudonyms which will be used to replace their own name.

Risks and Benefits

There are no perceived risks with regards to participants taking part in this research other than those encountered in their day to day life. The perceived benefits from taking part are that the findings will contribute to the knowledge base which has been neglected due to a lack of research

that focuses on the use of participation. By participating service users and practitioners will also have the opportunity to have your voice heard.

Confidentiality and participation in the research

All the information provided during the interviews will be stored safely and only I (the researcher) and my supervisory team will have access to this information.
The data provided by any participant in this study will only be used for the sole purposes of the research and be destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

In order to ensure that participants' identity remains anonymous they will have the choice to give themselves a pseudonym, if they choose not to give themselves a pseudonym they will be allocated one. If participants reveal information about an individual in the interview, that person will be given a different name to protect their anonymity. Participants identity will remain anonymous and confidential if they choose to participate in the research however if in any circumstances they mention any professional breach of conduct then confidentiality will not be maintained. I am aware of my responsibilities to conduct ethical research in line with ethical guidelines issued professional associations that is the Code of Practice and Ethical Framework of the British Society of Criminology (2006). With reference to child protection policies and procedures anything disclosed that raises harm will have to be reported to my supervisory team and/or safeguarding officer. This will include, malpractice, risk to self/to others. I will familiarise myself with policies and procedures within the setting and thus any breach of these will then be acted upon.

With regards to young people as participants they will be advised that the researcher has an obligation by law to report any disclosures of harm or risks of harm however, this will be discussed with the young person prior to any actions being undertaken.

Withdrawal from the research
If practitioners and service users agree to participate in this research and at any time decide against this decision and wish to withdraw they are free to do so and any information provided will be destroyed.

Questions about your participation in the research
If you have any questions regarding participation in this research you can contact the researcher directly via the email address below.
 Researcher- Sean Creaney
E-mail address- S.Creaney@2014.ljmu.ac.uk

Should you wish to contact the Liverpool John Moores University about the research or the researcher then please contact the academic supervisor of the research via the e-mail address below:
E-mail address- J.yates@ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix E Young persons consent form

Title of Project: Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision

Researcher: Sean Creaney, School of Humanities and Social Science, Liverpool John Moores University

My name is _____ _____ and I am going to answer questions in an interview/observation about participation and engagement.

I know that my answers to the questions will be recorded and talked about in a report but my name will not be used so people don't know it is me who answered the questions.

I know that if I say anything that makes Sean the researcher think me or another person might be hurt they will have to tell someone else about this and they will talk to me about what they will do if this happens.

I know that I can stop at any time I want to and that I can ask the researcher any questions I have.

Child young person to circle all they agree with:

Have you read (or had read to you) information about this project?
 Yes/No
Has somebody else explained this project to you?
 Yes/No
Do you understand what this project is about?
 Yes/No
Have you asked all the questions you want?
 Yes/No
Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?
 Yes/No
Do you understand it's OK to stop taking part at any time?
 Yes/No
Are you happy to take part?
 Yes/No
If any answers are 'no' or you **don't** want to take part, don't sign your name!

If you **do** want to take part, you can write your name below

Your name _____

Date   _____

The researcher who explained this project to you needs to sign too.

Print Name _____
Sign   _____
Date   _____

Appendix F Consent form for practitioners

Title of Project: Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision

Researcher: Sean Creaney, School of Humanities and Social Science, Liverpool John Moores University

I _____ _____ have agreed to take part in this research study that aims to investigate the role of participation in youth justice. I am aware that by participating in this research I will be required to take part in an interview/observation designed to inform the completion of a PhD thesis for Liverpool John Moores University.
I understand that my identity will be anonymised through the use of pseudonyms and that the information I share with the researcher will remain confidential unless I disclose a breach of my professional codes of conduct.
I am aware that my participation in this research is voluntary and if at any time I chose to withdraw my participation in this research I am free to do so.

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the
above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions
and have had these answered satisfactorily

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

- I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential – subject to exceptions

- I agree to take part in the above study

- I understand that the interview/observation will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed

• I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised. ☐

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Name of Person taking consent Date   Signature

Appendix G Consent form for parents/carers

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Title of Project: Practitioner's and children's experiences of the design and delivery of participatory supervision

Researcher: Sean Creaney, School of Humanities and Social Science, Liverpool John Moores University

I _____ _____ have agreed for my child to take part in this research study that aims to investigate the role of participation in youth justice. I am aware that by allowing my child to participate in this research he/she will have the opportunity to be interviewed and/or observed. I understand the findings will inform the completion of a PhD thesis for Liverpool John Moores University.

I understand that my child's identity will be anonymised through the use of pseudonyms and I understand that the information my child shares with the researcher will remain confidential. However, if something is said during the interview/observation that makes the researcher think your child or another person is in danger or trouble this information will not be kept private or secret and another adult will have to be told but if it does happen it will be discussed with you and your child. I am aware that my child's participation in this research is voluntary and if at any time I chose to withdraw my participation in this research I am free to do so.

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the
above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions
and have had these answered satisfactorily

- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

- I understand that any personal information collected on/with my child during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential

- I agree for my child to take part in the above study

- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed

- I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future
publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

Name of Parent/carer   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Name of Person taking consent Date   Signature

Appendix H <u>Gatekeeper consent form</u>

Sean Creaney is a PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University. He has proposed a project for his PhD research investigating the role of participation in youth justice. I am aware that his project involves recruiting participants who are both practitioners and service users from this organisation and conducting interviews and participant observations with participants based upon their experiences of participation. The researcher may be accessing case records for comparison purposes and furthermore plans to observe supervision sessions, pre-sentence report interviews, and assessment review sessions. Sean will be offering young people the opportunity to write a reflective diary. I am also aware that Sean will convene seminars with young people and practitioners to share new knowledge, in particular examples of 'effective' participation practice and areas for development.

I understand that there is no intention to name any participants in this research.

I understand that all information collected from individuals will be done with duly informed consent from the participating individuals and that potential participants can refuse participation with no negative consequences for said individuals.

I support the conduct of this research in this organization

Yours Faithfully

(Signature)…..

First Name:
Last Name:
Name of Organisation:

Appendix I Interview questions for young people

The themes that emerge from the participant observation will inform the questions that are asked during the interviews. With that said I anticipate that the following areas will be covered:

What do you do in supervision sessions with your YOT worker?

Do you get to have a say in what you do? In your experience of being involved in the YJS who do you think is most in control of decision making?

Do you enjoy the sessions? Do you learn anything? Can you give some examples?

What does 'participation' mean to you? (Prompts what does 'joining in' mean?)

What are the positive and negatives of being involved in decision making?

What are your experiences of participation? ('Taking part')

How involved are you in the decisions that are made about you? (What work do you do with your worker?)

How involved would you like to be in devising packages of support?

Do you think that you should have a choice over what happens to you? If so why and how?

(At this point I will explain Hart's (1992) ladder of participation) Where would you place yourself on the ladder? Why? Where would you want to be on the ladder? What would cause you to move up and/or down the ladder?

Can you tell me about the relationships you have with your Youth Offending Team workers? How do you feel about these relationships?

How do you feel about other people making decisions for you? (Do you feel included?)

Do you feel your opinions are 'valued'? (If yes or no how does that make you feel? Are your needs wishes being addressed?)

What is a 'helpful' relationship between you and your supervising officer? (What is useful for you?)

What are the 'characteristics' of a 'good' relationship? (How do you think you should be treated?)

What do you think would stop you from offending again? Is there something missing from your current care package?

Appendix J Interview questions for practitioners

The themes that emerge from the participant observations will inform the questions that are to be asked during the interviews. With that said I anticipate that the following areas will be covered:

In supervision sessions what type of work do you do with young people and why? Can you provide some examples?

What does 'participation' mean to you?

What are the benefits, challenges and limitations of participation?

What are your experiences of participation?

How involved do you think young people should be in the decisions that are made about them?

How involved are young people in devising packages of support? Is there a participation strategy?

Should young people have a choice over what happens to them?

Do you feel young people's needs are still being met if there is a lack of participation from young people when developing their package of support?

(At this point I will explain Hart's (1992) ladder of participation) Where would you place children on the ladder? Why? Where do you think young people want to be on the ladder? What, do you think, would cause young people to move up and/or down the ladder?

What is a 'helpful' relationship between you and the young people you are supervising? (What is useful for you?)

What are the 'characteristics' of a 'good' relationship? (How do you think young people should be treated?)

Appendix K Email to senior manager at Youth Offending Service

Dear █▌

As you know I have recently began work on my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University. My research is focused on the role of participation in youth justice and aims to investigate how participatory practice is. I would like to be able to conduct interviews and observations with professionals and young people. I would very much like to attend one of your team meetings to provide you all with the details of the research. More specifically, I will be able to explain in detail what the research is about and what it aims to explore and investigate. Here I will provide all practitioners with a participant information sheet. During the meeting I am also hoping to talk with professionals about young people taking part in the study.

I would very much like to meet with you at your convenience to answer any questions you may have.

I hope that you are well and look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards
Sean Creaney