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SPECIAL ISSUE

This issue of JAYS is the second of two issues guest-edited by Joel Robert McGregor and Xanthé Mallett of the University of Newcastle, Australia.

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Academic Editor, CAYR Academic Director

Rob White
Professor, School of Social Sciences
University of Tasmania, Hobart

Editors

Sheila Allison
Sue Headley

Editorial Coordinator

Kate Gross

Graphic Designer

Nick Gross

Editorial Production

Sue Headley

CAYR Executive Director

Herb Seewang
University Associate, University of Tasmania

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Postal address:

Centre for Applied Youth Research Inc.
PO Box 5011 UTAS LPO
Sandy Bay Tasmania Australia 7005
Email: jays@cayr.info
Web: <http://cayr.info/jays/>

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Notes for contributors

The *Journal of Applied Youth Studies* publishes research-based and/or practice-informed analysis of young people and youth work, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region. It is a peer-reviewed, quarterly journal that aims to present youth issues and research relevant to the 12 to 30 years age group in a way that is accessible and reader-friendly, but which retains scholarly integrity. The *Journal of Applied Youth Studies* uses a peer-review system for academic papers. The consulting editors group is listed on the CAYR website and is augmented as necessary.

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Editorial

Today we celebrate the end of an era. Some four years ago a small group of us – Sheila Allison, Sue Headley, Herb Seewang, Marta Guerra and I – decided to respond to the federal government de-funding of *Youth Studies Australia* (YSA) by taking matters into our own hands. We formed a not-for-profit organisation, the Centre for Applied Youth Research (CAYR), as a platform to publish what would become the *Journal of Applied Youth Studies* (JAYS).

The impetus for this engagement was our strong belief that an applied journal in youth studies was an absolute necessity – not only for Australia, but for our region generally. YSA had been published continuously for some 34 years. We wanted to plug the gap left by its demise. We simultaneously wanted to reinforce certain key values and principles that had underpinned the work of both the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies and *Youth Studies Australia*. Accordingly, our first editorial stated that:

The Journal of Applied Youth Studies is dedicated to description and analysis that will provide theoretically informed interpretation of youth issues, youth work and community development. Our vision is to publish articles across the practice–research–policy continuum and to be interdisciplinary in orientation. While our initial focus is on the Australasia, Pacific and South East Asia regions, our aim is to be truly international in scope, contributions and coverage. However, we see ‘international’ very much from the perspective of ‘Southern Theory’ – that is, a viewpoint that privileges the voices, interests, needs and insights of the vulnerable, the marginal and those living and working ‘on the periphery’ wherever they might geographically be located.

JAYS will include research-based and/or practice-informed analysis of young people and youth work, and present youth issues and research in an accessible and reader-friendly fashion while retaining scholarly integrity. This is our mission and our promise.

Our team is motivated by a passion to uphold and extend the basic human rights of children and young people, wherever they live, and always from the vantage of social and ecological justice. We are similarly concerned with acknowledging the situational pressures and limits on practitioners as they engage with young people and to providing a forum for discussion of key issues pertinent to their

work. We hope to demonstrate our commitment to young people and those who work with young people by ensuring that 'context' is front and centre in explanations of youth-relevant phenomena and youth work-related interventions. This, too, is our mission and our promise.

Since this time, we have published two volumes, comprising nine issues of *JAYS*. This has been a labour of love, and certainly labour it was. During this time, the solicitation of articles, editing, copyediting, layout and design, accounts, and correspondence have been handled largely on a volunteer basis. Moreover, to help garner material as well as finance the publication, we have organised an international symposium and a workshop on working with refugee children and young people, undertaken consultancy research for the Asia Institute Tasmania, and donated considerable time and money into the *JAYS* project.

Over time, Marta left to pursue other work, and Kate Gross joined the team. We tried to entice others to engage in CAYR and *JAYS* activities, but with little effect. It was “our show” whether we liked it or not. The Asia Institute Tasmania came on board as co-publisher of the journal, along with CAYR, an arrangement that gave us a shared office, meeting space and administrative support. Nonetheless, our efforts to produce the journal and expand its reach were circumscribed by our lack of resources and additional personnel. The team was getting fatigued.

In recent times, we have approached several publishers with the proposal that they take over the running of the journal. At the time of writing this editorial, we are in negotiations with a prestigious institution and research centre about handing things over to them. It is our hope that *JAYS* will be able to continue into the future. One way in which this can occur is with present materials being made available to all, in perpetuity.

Therefore, on behalf of all of us currently at *JAYS* I am pleased to say that our parting gift is to re-publish all four issues of volume 1, and all five issues of volume 2, as “open access” articles and content. We are proud of what we have achieved and how we have worked together as a collective over the past few years. This is our legacy and we hope that everyone who accesses *JAYS* from here on in benefits from the articles and commentaries that we produced during our time at the helm. Farewell and take care.

Rob White
Academic Editor

Untangling the strands of the youth justice policy process

Insights from 30 years of youth justice research and policy advocacy in NSW

Elaine Fishwick

The development of youth justice policy and the role of youth research need to be understood in the context of a complex and dynamic policy landscape. Drawing on the author's years of experience in the non-government sector, research with policy stakeholders and insights from the policy literature, this article examines the 'real world' tangle of the policy process where, it is argued, research evidence is only one factor among many influencing youth justice policy decisions. The article provides a critical examination of the dynamics of the policy process and the day-to-day challenges where strands of competing discourses are shaped by structure and agency, order and serendipity, the rational and the emotional. The discussion is illustrated with examples from the work of the Youth Justice Coalition, an advocacy network based in New South Wales.

Key words: youth justice, policy development, research, media influence

This year, 2018, marks the 30th anniversary of the formation of the NSW Youth Justice Coalition (YJC, see <http://www.yjc.org.au>), an inter-agency advocacy group based in New South Wales. Since 1988 the aim of the group has been to advocate for systemic reform in the areas of youth justice law, policy and practice, based on the principles of human rights and social justice. This advocacy is informed by the needs and experiences of young people and children as service users, coupled with the insights and expertise of practitioners in the YJC policy network.¹ Over the years, the YJC has developed extensive policy, advocacy and research skills and for most of that time has been

¹ The author has been a member of the YJC since 1988.

acknowledged as a strategic player in the NSW policy process. However, YJC's capacity to impact on the policy process has waxed and waned depending on, first, the readiness of the government of the day to engage in deliberative decision-making consultation and to receive advocacy input and, second, the resources available to the YJC to engage in advocacy and research.

The following discussion incorporates reflections on the policy advocacy strategies and initiatives undertaken by the YJC over the years in the context of changing patterns of policy governance and the shifting political and legislative landscape. Coalitions like the YJC have had to adapt their range of policy and research strategies in order to respond effectively to change. The YJC has enhanced its policy analytical capacity by: conducting research informed by practice; engaging in vertical and horizontal coordination and networking between organisations; and by its ability to communicate policy-related changes to interested parties and stakeholders (see Howlett 2009, cited in Goodwin & Phillips 2015b, p.249). However, this article also points out that research and evidence knowledge is itself contested and subject to both political and bureaucratic influence. Consequently, what is seen to be valued as legitimate research is context-specific. Analytical capacity requires the ability to adapt to these changing research requirements (Ransley 2011). Ultimately, the article argues that no matter how persuasive and conclusive youth justice research and evidence might be, they very rarely provide a stand-alone, direct causal impetus for policy change. This is due to the fact that the policy process is complex, and multi-layered research and evidence play a small part among many other factors shaping policy outcomes (Cairney 2018; Fishwick 2016, 2017; Kingdon 2003). In order to increase the likelihood of research and evidence having an impact on policy development, researchers need to develop a solid understanding of the policy process and hone their advocacy skills.

The article begins by providing a brief overview of policy and the complexity of the policy process. It then examines the shifting policy, advocacy and research landscape in Australia over the past 30 years before moving on to a reflection on the work of the YJC during that time. The article draws on policy literature and a major empirical study of youth justice policy decision-making in NSW (Fishwick 2016) to provide insights into the complex world of policy advocacy.

1. Understanding policy

Decisions made in the public sector are the result of efforts to balance competing societal interests, resolve power conflicts, and appease groups with widely divergent values, not the end-point of a linear, rational, instrumental exercise. Research

evidence is just one influence on a complicated decision-making process, and not necessarily the most important one, either (Newman 2017).

As stated earlier, in order for researchers to optimise the possibility of having an impact on the policy decision-making process, researchers need to become more familiar with the complexity of the policy process. An initial step is to understand how policy itself is a nebulous concept. The term is used to cover a range of practices, processes and outcomes (see Colebatch 2002; Hill 2013; Kingdon 2003). Policy can include reforms to laws, policies and practices; change in the portfolios of ministers; the allocation and withdrawal of staffing and funding resources; doing nothing in response to an issue (maintaining the status quo); deciding who are the priority clients by conducting a needs assessment or the hours of opening of a service. There are also situations where policy statements by politicians or powerful stakeholders, like the police, may symbolise a standpoint, establishing or testing out policy positions or reinforcing political capital and moral authority; these statements may not be backed by any intention to act (Newburn & Sparks 2004). Bacchi (2009) argues, too, that policy discourse is also constitutive of the problem it seeks to address. In *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Bacchi argues that dominant discourses in policy fields frame how problems are seen and dealt with, making it difficult for alternative policy views and options to gain purchase. In other words, dominant discourses marginalise or exclude other explanations and knowledges. For example, in youth justice and criminal justice there have been changes to the ways that knowledge and practices relating to the problematisation of crime and “crime solutions” are articulated. Such changes result in a drift from the dominant discourses of welfare and children’s rights to those of punitive sentencing or individual criminogenic risk assessment and management (Muncie 2009). It becomes difficult to talk of rehabilitation and social welfare programs as the basis for the delivery of youth justice services in a criminogenic “risk” policy environment.

Using insights from the work of John Kingdon (2003), we can also see how the dynamic multi-faceted nature of the policy decision-making process adds complexity to any advocacy project. Kingdon (2003) identifies how there are many shifting policy elements and streams, where setting policy agendas, the development of policy options and decision-making are uncoupled. They flow alongside each other and only occasionally intersect. In this understanding of policy, different policy players are responsible for each of these spheres. For example, politicians are generally responsible for policy agenda setting and public servants for the development of policy options (Kingdon 2003). Other policy literature also reveals that decision-making is not necessarily a linear or

vertical process where those in authority, such as ministers, decide on issues, which are then implemented by public servants and practitioners. Policy decisions also occur horizontally across departments, agencies and interest groups (Colebatch 2002; Kingdon 2003). Policy ideas can also flow upwards (Colebatch 2002; Lipsky 1980) by providing feedback up the policy chain.

Incremental policy work takes place away from the public gaze in the day-to-day operations of government, the public service and other related policy organisations. This involves the discussion and finalising of policy options, allocating finances and resources and the routine administration of programs and procedures. Participants in this kind of policy work are operating within what is termed by Cairney (2018) as the “bounded rationality” of that particular agency or policy community. Here there are “rules” of the policy game that are understood by organisational players and which set the parameters of how policy issues are framed and discussed. These rules evolve from institutional histories and are reinforced through organisational cultures, day-to-day practices, established policy and procedures and management structures of an organisation. So, for example, the ways the police problematise youth crime and discuss and develop policy and practice options, and use research and evidence within their organisation will be distinct from those of a youth work agency. There are also other set institutional routines, deadlines, protocols and policy events that shape the policy process within and between organisations (Considine 2005). Planned policy events include elections, legislative reviews, discussion of delegated legislation, audits, budget procedures, cabinet meetings and more. Community-based advocates and researchers need to be familiar with the overall discursive approaches of organisations, their rules and routines, as well as key policy events. This familiarity will assist them to maximise their opportunities to influence the policy process and optimise the impact of the research and evidence by targeting the information appropriately (Duffy 2003).

There are one-off and serendipitous events, however, that can disrupt or punctuate the policy equilibrium and lead to rapid or unanticipated change. For example, the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York (Lynch, McGarrity & Williams 2010), the Redfern and Cronulla riots and one-punch attacks in Kings Cross, NSW, have shifted the youth justice policy landscape. Sections of the media can be noisy policy players on these occasions and play a key role in escalating moral panics about crime, leading to demands for specific policy responses by governments (Cohen 2002; Jennings et al. 2017). If there is a key policy event like an election approaching, both government and opposition members will tap into newsworthy and often sensational media stories about crime and

young people to make short-term political gains (Hogg & Brown 1998; Muncie 2009). However, it can be easy to overstate the influence of the media in the setting of long-term policy agendas (Kingdon 2003). The media are only as influential as governments allow them to be (Fishwick 2016). From its early days, the YJC realised the potential of the media as a conduit for influencing policy development, and, along with other community organisations, the YJC has developed effective media strategies to communicate the findings of research reports and to establish itself as an authoritative source on key policy issues.

There are also smaller serendipitous influences on the policy decision-making process – like a word in the ear to a minister at a party – that can have both short- and long-term ripple effects on policy development (Fishwick 2016). Kingdon (2003) uses the analogy of a policy window opening unexpectedly to explain how policy advocates have to be ready with sets of policy options in order to seize the opportunities that these kinds of events present. He argues that advocates need to be part of the push to open the policy window as well as being ready to climb through the policy window once it is open.

In this brief overview of the dynamics of policy and the policy process it can be seen how the range of policy players, the layers of decision-making, create a complex environment for policy players. They need to be familiar with the dynamics of the policy process and the organisations involved in their policy field.

2. Changes in the policy and advocacy landscape

The capacity of community organisations to have an input into the policy process is also shaped by broader patterns of policy governance, administration and funding (Goodwin & Phillips 2015b). This section provides a very brief overview of the trends in public administration that have altered the advocacy landscape over the past 30 years.

In the 1970s and 1980s, emerging rights and issues-based social, environmental and community movements began to call for a greater say in government decision-making; in effect, they demanded “the democratisation” of state institutions (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a, p.100). Governments introduced policy mechanisms that opened up public administration to input from the community sector, including “a raft of new government advisory bodies, commissions of inquiry and consultative committees in a range of areas of social need” (Goodwin 2006, cited in Goodwin & Phillips 2015b, p.247). From the 1980s onwards, the NSW government, like those around Australia, engaged in a period of deliberative, consultative decision-making in many aspects of the policy process, including youth justice (Fishwick 2016, 2017; see also Goodwin 2006). Community

organisations and advocacy networks like the YJC began to develop their policy capacity and take advantage of these policy opportunities for their advocacy work. The success of the YJC's *Kids In Justice Report* during this time is evidence of this willingness to engage with public and community input (Fishwick 2016).

Since the 1970s and 1980s, however, there has been a shift away from democratic, deliberative decision-making procedures towards a more technocratic, removed process where there are fewer opportunities for civil society to be included in decision-making and an increasing reluctance by governments to engage in deliberative decision-making processes (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a, 2015b).

These changes are partly due to the adoption of new public managerialism, economic rationalism, marketisation and public choice theory as the rationales for the delivery of public services (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a). Government-provided and government-funded services were put out to competitive tender, and, for the not-for-profit sector, this has led to a movement “from grants and project funding to output-based funding” where “new financing models involved new data collection requirements, new standards of professionalisation and new organisational structures” (Goodwin & Phillips 2015, p.10). The kinds of principles and objectives that underpinned many not-for-profit organisations (including their research and advocacy work), such as community and client empowerment, democratisation, justice, self-determination and strengthening rights, were hard to measure in output terms and were not valued by funders (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a). According to Goodwin and Phillips, as a result of this shift to efficiency, effectiveness and output funding, the community sector began to lose some of its legitimacy (2015a). Governments, especially conservative governments, began to criticise small community-based services and environmental organisations for representing and promoting special interest groups, and for being too “political”; consequently, many of them faced significant funding cuts as governments looked to larger charitable organisations who offered more generalist services and economies of scale (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a, 2015b). Not only has the capacity of community organisations to engage in particular kinds of policy work altered, but the kinds of research, evidence and information that used to be seen as persuasive in policy development has shifted.

As governments began to contract out services they also began to close their in-house policy and research sections, limiting their own capacity for evidence-informed policy and evaluation. Independent think tanks gained more purchase as lobbyists and larger charitable organisations and not-for-profits developed their own research and policy units to provide the evidence base for output measurement in their funding agreements; these

units also helped them gain professional reputational advantage in the field (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a, p.107). In addition, the growth in private companies with research and evaluation consultancy arms has made it more difficult for smaller community organisations, who may be offering a more critical voice, to influence the policy process.

New public managerialism and economic rationalism have also changed key aspects of government administration. Productivity measurement and performance auditing began to regulate the operation of public service departments, and heads of public service departments were appointed who were not necessarily experts or professionals in their subject field but capable technocratic managers (Fishwick 2016). This has had implications for their understanding and knowledge of the research, evidence and issues relevant to their particular department and their readiness to advocate within government for programs and policy options that may conflict with performance and budgetary targets.

The research and advocacy work of government-funded organisations and charities has also been subject to increasing legislative, regulatory and funding restrictions. Generally, advocacy is seen to be a key indicator of a healthy democracy and a well functioning civil society (Philanthropy Australia 2018b). It provides an avenue for governments to receive feedback on the efficacy or otherwise of policy and for policy development to be informed by the evidence of policy in practice. Advocacy also provides an avenue for governments to be held accountable by civil society and for those marginalised from the political process to have access to decision-making both directly and indirectly. However, since the years of the Howard government, with a slight reprieve during the Rudd/Gillard years, the policy advocacy work of government-funded and independent community services and charities has been subject to attack from both Federal and State governments. Although there is not enough room here to discuss this in detail, it has been noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and others that the increasing constraints placed on their advocacy activities in Australia have had a negative impact on democracy (see Forst 2018; HRLC 2017a; Maddison & Carson 2017; Star 2016).

Government actions include the introduction of “gag clauses” into service sector funding agreements that limit comment on government policy and remove law reform and legal policy activities from core services (Forst 2018; Maddison & Carson 2017; Sercombe 2014). Additional government actions include: funding cuts to community legal services, Aboriginal Legal Services and Environmental Defenders’ Offices that restrict their capacity to engage in research and advocacy; challenges to the Deductible Gift Recipient

(DGR) status of charities that are deemed to engage in political activity or receive funding from international sources; and the criminalising of protest (see Community Law Australia 2016; HRLC 2017b; Philanthropy Australia 2018a). In many cases these actions have led organisations to “self-silence”; that is, they are not prepared to comment on government policy and practices for fear of losing funding (Goodwin & Phillips 2015a; Maddison & Carson 2017; Seccombe 2014). In this climate of constraint, the research and advocacy activities of academics and youth justice policy networks gain even more importance in relation to commentary on government policy.

3. The role of research and evidence

In light of the reality of the policy processes outlined above, it is clear that the capacity of research and evidence to directly impact on policy decision-making is contextual and that policy advocates need to understand the nuances of the policy process in a changing policy and political landscape. Policy and political commentators also argue that what constitutes research and evidence is also contestable and politically slippery (Ransley 2011; Sanderson 2003). As discussed above, in more deliberative, consultative government phases, a range of research data, including individual case histories and professional testimony, are acknowledged as legitimate sources for informing policy development; whereas in a more technocratic performance-based environment this may not be the case and other forms of research and evidence are prioritised. Since the 1990s there have been calls by governments and policy stakeholders for policy to be based on scientific, objective, empirical research. Quantitative statistically complex analyses (known variously as evidence-led, evidence-based or evidence and research-based policy, randomised control trials and meta-studies of what works) are valued above qualitative and client-informed testimony, or professional experience (Ransley 2011; Sanderson 2003). In Australia, a statement by Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd that policy needed to be based on “facts not fads” encapsulates this approach (Rudd 2008, cited Allard & Manning 2011, p.188). Underpinning this is the belief that scientifically rigorous research automatically leads to good policy outcomes in human services; such an approach envisages a linear, cause and effect relationship between research, evaluation and policy.

However, critics of evidence-based policy argue that is too often a political rhetorical device used to dismiss critical commentary on policy choices; that it includes cherry picking details that suit the ideological outlook of the government, with a retrospective appeal to evidence; and that it is cynically used to support decisions that have already been made – referred to as termed policy-led evidence. Cairney (2018) notes this is a key feature of government approaches to research in general, highlighting that, by necessity,

governments have a very pragmatic approach to the use of research evidence and policy to support strategic decision making. “The dynamics of political systems encourage politicians to make choices based on limited evidence, address problems that cannot be resolved by ‘the evidence’, and adjudicate between competing ideas about what constitutes ‘good’ evidence” (Cairney 2018, p.2). Policymakers usually have only a finite set of resources for making decisions and will look to in-house advice or readily available trusted sources of information to make their tasks easier. These are what Cairney and Kwiatkowski (2017) call cognitive “shortcuts” where simple solutions are easier and more convenient to process in comparison to complicated research and evidence from external sources. Policy research also shows that the presentation of research and evidence needs to be simple, easy to comprehend, PowerPoint friendly with memorable charts or phrases for it to be organisationally persuasive and effective (Stevens 2010).

It is in these situations that policy advocates need to position themselves as experts in their respective fields, with readily developed options available to government policymakers. This increases the advocates’ chances of competing with influential, well-resourced lobbyists and research bodies like think tanks, consultancy firms, police and other professional associations, and private industry groups.

4. Maximising policy capacity and influencing decision-making

In order to maintain their influence as policy players, policy networks like the YJC have had to adapt and build their policy capacity and hone their advocacy and research skills in response to the changing policy landscape. The work of the YJC provides a case example of how advocates can optimise their influence on the policy process.

In the 1970s and 1980s a constellation of factors enabled the YJC to have a significant input into policy agenda setting and decision-making. There was a growing interest internationally and domestically in children’s rights and the legal process, and in implementing the principle of “best interests of the child”. At an international level, the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child was formally being adopted as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), with Australian government representatives playing a large part in its development (Mezmur 2018). The Australian government signed the UNCRC in 1989, and it was ratified in 1990. In NSW, the juvenile justice section of the Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS) led by their director, were keen to develop and implement policies based on the research and evidence of international scholars specialising in diversionary juvenile justice schemes and rehabilitation, as well as in restorative justice and conferencing (see Barga, Clancey & Chan 2005;

Fishwick 2016). The *Kids In Justice Report* 1990 captured this zeitgeist and set in motion a policy reform process that eventually culminated in the *Young Offenders Act 1997* (YOA, implemented in 1998). The report itself was based on an extensive research exercise involving a review of international and Australian comparative policy materials, extensive consultation with public servants, youth workers, police, solicitors, judges and other key players in children and youth services. Another component was action research with young people who were, or had been clients of juvenile justice and/or care and protection services.

It was not, however, simply the quality of the research project that drove the changes that led to the eventual implementation of the *Young Offender's Act 1997* but sustained and skilled advocacy activities from YJC members. During the research and development of the *Kids In Justice* campaign, the YJC recognised that they needed to convince key policy players of the value of the project and the proposed reforms. The research team worked hard to include politicians, public servants and senior police in the development of the project and the reform agenda, establishing sector-wide support from the policy community for the aims and objectives of the research-informed report. Influential politicians like successive attorneys-general from both major political parties and senior public servants developed an emotional and political investment in the policy agenda and policy options; although it took seven years, they continued throughout that time to push for their implementation. During this period representatives of the YJC became members of key parliamentary committees and inter-departmental consultation groups, providing a consistent message about the reform proposals. Members built solid professional relationships (and friendships) across key agencies and at different levels of seniority within organisations (see Fishwick 2016). These personal and emotional attachments to the policy agenda were invaluable to the eventual success of the reform process.

By the mid 2000s, the kinds of deliberative and consultative policy mechanisms that had enabled the YJC and other community organisations to have a place at the policy table began to disappear and a different political and policy culture emerged. This was partly a result of the shifts in policy governance towards new public managerialism and marketisation outlined above, but was also due to the fact that many of the individuals involved in implementing the *Young Offenders Act*, including politicians, YJC members, public servants and senior police officers, had by then moved on from the sector, and their understanding and skills in youth justice policy went with them. Some of the long-established personal and professional networks were broken. In addition, the dominant discourse and associated practices underpinning youth justice policy had shifted towards

risk management and individualised treatment (Muncie 2009) and away from children's rights, diversion and rehabilitation. In this context, it became more difficult to have input into decision-making as the kinds of research evidence that offered alternative, critical or contradictory perspectives were to some extent marginalised.

Nevertheless, the YJC alongside other community-based networks continue to engage in research and practice-informed advocacy, representing the interests of young people in contact with the youth justice system. By re-establishing professional links with key policy players, maintaining familiarity with policy processes and key events and sustaining communication and information across the network, the YJC has maintained a significant policy presence. For example, the YJC is currently engaged in a research-informed campaign to raise awareness about the impact of the New South Wales Police Force Suspect Targeting Management Plan (STMP). The STMP is a police intelligence tool targeting individuals deemed to be "at risk" of offending due to their past record or because of their association with people with a criminal record (Sentas & Pandolfini 2017). In order to raise awareness about the STMP the YJC held a well-publicised launch, inviting key policy players to attend, and this event coupled with a social media campaign led to media interest in the story. In response, the NSW Police Commissioner released a statement about the STMP and the newly established NSW Law Enforcement Conduct Commission has expressed an interest in some of the issues raised in the report.

Conclusions

This article has argued that the capacity of youth justice research to influence policy decision-making has to be understood in the context of a complex policy environment. By outlining the dynamics of the policy process and the changing policy landscape, the article has highlighted the importance of developing policy skills and advocacy strategies as a means of enhancing the potential of research to influence decision-making.

The role of research and evidence in informing advocacy activities and holding governments to account is vitally important, especially when the input of civil society into democratic processes is becoming increasingly circumscribed. With the *de facto* silencing of many government not-for-profits and the recent attack on charities, it is incumbent on academics and independent organisations like the YJC to continue to advocate for social and legal justice, especially by working alongside and on behalf of the children and young people who are marginalised from both policy and political processes.

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Author

Elaine Fishwick is an academic, freelance researcher and writer currently based at Sydney University. Her subject areas include human rights and criminology, youth justice policy, social justice and access to justice. Since 1988 she has been an active member of the NSW Youth Justice Coalition.

‘Relationshipwork’ in youth justice research

Weathering the storm

Julie White, Philippa Moylan, Kitty te Riele, Tim Corcoran, Alison Baker and Simon Lenten

Little has been written about the enabling relationships that precede and permit quality research to take place. Introducing this concept of ‘relationshipwork’ as an integral part of the research process, this paper argues that development of strong relationships between members of the research team as well as between the researchers and the project stakeholders is an important precursor to research. The funded project described here provides the context for this argument and considers how the educational experiences of young people incarcerated into the youth justice system can be improved. The authors outline the significance of the positive interactions with people that make it possible for this research to be undertaken and add their concept of ‘relationshipwork’, to the three terms ethnographer John Van Maanen (1988, 2011) uses to describe the components of research: ‘fieldwork’, ‘headwork’ and ‘textwork’.

Key words: youth justice, research methodology, education

A common assumption held about research is that it means “fieldwork”. Fieldwork conjures up the idea of researchers leaving the laboratory or the desk to go out into the field to observe at first hand, and gather information about, the object of their inquiry. This kind of work often involves the researcher doing things with people whether it be interviewing them, asking them to answer surveys or gathering other kinds of data from them.

Van Maanen (1988, 2011) offers a corrective to this idea by suggesting ways in which research is about more than just undertaking fieldwork. Rather, research can be broken down into three key (and overlapping) tasks. The aforementioned fieldwork (gathering information from the field) is one task, but it is accompanied by two other kinds of research work. “Headwork” is what the researcher does to understand the previous

scholarly literature and consider how that previous work might be used to analyse and think about the new data, and “textwork” is the craft of writing about what has emerged from the headwork and the fieldwork.¹

Our study addresses the educational experiences of vulnerable young people who have been incarcerated into the youth justice system, including groups who are disproportionately represented in the justice system (Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AGAIHW) 2018); for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are 14 times more likely than non-Indigenous young people to be under youth justice supervision.

During the early months of our research, the project stalled as a series of events beyond our control played out in the public domain. What follows is the story of how the various forms of what we term “relationshipwork” were undertaken by our team and how this made it possible for us to stay on track. Given that we are still in the early stages of fieldwork, ours is not a narrative that reflects back on a completed project. However, it does show that as relationships are built and developed across the course of a project, such relationships are required for authentic research (White & Drew 2011).

Relationshipwork

While engaging with Van Maanen’s (1988, 2011) conceptions of fieldwork, headwork and textwork, the particular contribution of this paper is to identify yet another concept – relationshipwork. This refers to the way in which key relationships are built, developed and fostered within a project’s orbit, including across the research team and with research partners, funders, research administration, stakeholders and interviewees.

Established predominantly at the project’s front end, relationshipwork complements and extends Van Maanen’s (1988, 2011) original three aspects of research. We argue that the relationships developed between researchers and stakeholders enable goodwill and clear communication as well as the flexibility needed to adapt to changing circumstances as a project proceeds.

The significance of relationshipwork can be overlooked in the research rush. The literature in various research disciplines, such as management, social work and psychology, emphasises the study of relationships, but not in relation to the research process itself.

¹ Van Maanen (1988, 2011) coined these three terms to describe the tasks of ethnography. We focus on the relevance of the terms for describing the work of qualitative research more generally.

A brief Google Scholar search yielded 600,000 references in response to a search query on how to do research. When the word “relationships” was added to the search, 17,800 articles and chapters were returned. The focus of the publications identified, however, was mostly trust and rapport between those “doing” the research and those “being” researched – the researchers and their participants. Very little has been written about the existence of important enabling relationships that allow the research to be undertaken.

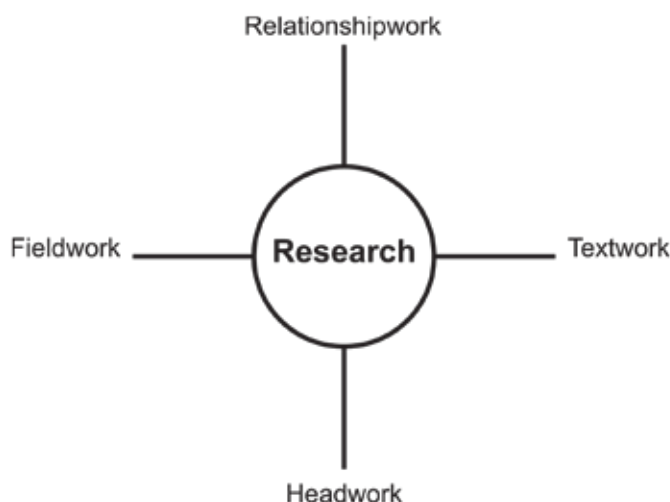


Figure 1 The four tasks of research

The project focus

Although the actual project is not the focus of this paper, a brief explanation of the study is provided here as context for our conception of relationshipwork. Titled *Improving education for young people on remand: Forging a prison to school pipeline*, our study examines education for young people who have been either sentenced or remanded in custody.

Our research partner, Parkville College, operates from within the youth justice system in Australia’s state of Victoria. Established by the state government in 2012 and working with the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR), the college provides schooling for young people detained in custody, operating six days a week 52 weeks each year. The college delivers education in youth justice centres at Parkville and Malmsbury (the Flexible Learning Centre located outside the secure fence on the Parkville site) and at Victoria’s Secure Welfare Services, which provide a short-term residential placement for children who are at substantial and immediate risk but not involved in youth justice.

The school's positive impact on its students is acknowledged in a key recommendation of the Parliament of Victoria's *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria*:

That the Department of Education and Training's Early Childhood and School Education Group consider whether the successful methods at Parkville College, including teacher training and lesson structures, can be adapted to provide further assistance to at-risk students in mainstream schools (Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Issues Committee (PVLSIC) 2018, p.xxii).

Our study investigates why Parkville College is successful at engaging young people in education and what the school could do to improve longer-term educational planning.

By the conclusion of our project, the study will have interviewed incarcerated young people who attend Parkville College, students at the college's Flexible Learning Centre and teachers, leaders and managers from the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR), the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Parkville College. The study will also analyse policy and operational data from DJR and Parkville College. The outcomes of this study are expected to identify strategies and advice for future operations.

The socio-political context of the study

Late in 2016 the project was granted funding from Victoria's Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, a philanthropic organisation. This coincided with a media storm that followed in the wake of riots that took place at the Parkville and Malmsbury youth justice centres during late 2016.²

As indicated in the foreword to the recent Parliament of Victoria's *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria*, several factors of concern prompted the inquiry. Among these were "well-publicised critical incidents in Victoria's youth justice system" (the youth justice centre riots) and increased numbers of young people on remand (PVLSIC 2018, p.xiii). As the inquiry observed: "It has become increasingly apparent in recent years that the youth justice system is not functioning as well as it once did" (PVLSIC 2018, p.11).

A key Victorian Ombudsman report from 2010 considered the precinct at Parkville "inappropriate for a custodial facility which houses vulnerable children" (Victorian Ombudsman 2010, p.37). The report recommended that the precinct be reviewed with "a view to replacing it with a new facility" (p.40). These changes were not made at that time. More recently, several reports and inquiries have emerged nationwide regarding the critical state of youth custodial institutions (PVLSIC 2018; Armytage & Ogloff 2017;

2 For a summary of the unrest at the youth justice precincts, see PVLSIC 2018, pp.11-12.

Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) 2017; Victorian Ombudsman 2017; Attorney-General's Department, Australian Government 2017).

Although there has been a marked decrease in youth crime (Victorian Ombudsman 2017, p.6), the media reportage of the disturbances at the youth justice centres has been sensationalist and extensive, fanning community fear and negatively influencing community perceptions of the youth justice system and the young people themselves (Guerra 2017, p.3; *The Guardian* 2018; PVLSIC 2018, p.15). In 2017 the Victorian Government announced plans for a new facility to be located in an outer suburb of Melbourne. In the meantime, the Government transported some young people from Parkville to an adult prison near the regional city of Geelong, a controversial action that drew legal challenges, accusations of human rights breaches (Davey 2017) and a high level of media attention.

Problems also came to light regarding the working environment, staff training and staff shortages of custodial workers at the youth centres (Armytage & Ogloff 2017, pp.24-28). Following the disturbances, an inquiry by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) looked at the ways isolation, separation and lockdowns were used in the Victorian youth justice system. Lockdown periods refer to the times when young people are "secured in their rooms during times of the day when they would otherwise be out of their rooms, engaged in daily activities and routines" (CCYP 2017, p.77). The Commission's report revealed that unexpected lockdowns impeded the children and young people's ability to participate in education (CCYP 2017, pp.82-83).

In the midst of the events referred to above, the oversight of young people in the youth justice system was shifted from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR), the government department that oversees adult prisons.

These events, and particular versions of the events that appeared in the media, presented concerning representations of the youth justice system and of young people themselves. As the Victorian Parliament's *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* notes:

Inaccurate media narratives perpetuate negative stereotypes that cast young people as something to be feared and youth offending as an overwhelming problem. This achieves nothing aside from damaging young people in contact with the youth justice system ... (PVLSIC 2018, p.16).

Inevitably, these events impacted on our capacity to begin the research and, indeed, the feasibility of the project itself. Being able to gain access in order to conduct this study

became a concern. And even if access was gained, these shifting circumstances impacted on the feasibility of the study.

Reflection and contingency plans

At this point, our focus on relationshipwork became critical to the life of the project and took the lead. In discussions with our entire research team, it was agreed that the project should pause until the dust had settled. The funding body was consulted and supported this decision. They agreed to an extension of four months, adding this to the initial two-year lifespan, and allowing us to postpone the fieldwork. The study required access to people and data, based on formal ethics approval not only through the lead university but also through two government departments. In light of the recent events, this became even more sensitive than before.

During this extended time, we put our energies into:

- 1) building a reference group comprising community and government stakeholders who could provide informed guidance, advice and support
- 2) undertaking a review of international literature as well as Australian reports and recent inquiries
- 3) writing and revising the numerous ethics applications (including revisions, different project stages and amendments) required by the lead university and two government departments.

The hiatus brought home to us the extent to which the ground had shifted in the youth justice space since we had first conceptualised this study. The exposure, and effects, of staffing issues, inadequate buildings and delayed government responses now sharpened our focus, emphasising even more the relevance of the project. The preparatory work for this study, what became our “learning”, resonates with the idea that “... learning in (and out) of the field is uneven, usually unforeseen, and rests more on a logic of discovery and happenstance than a logic of verification and plan” (Van Maanen 2011, p.220).

Moreover, what had appeared to be a constraining circumstance revealed itself to be advantageous. The tides of public opinion may continue to swirl around us, along with the pressures on each government tier to balance accountability with the perceptions of its constituency. However, as independent professional university researchers, our stance is one of self-containment. Since our project is not commissioned by a government or private body, we are not beholden to institutional perspectives, employer restrictions or public opinion. Nor are we in an advocacy position. The study is not an evaluation of Parkville College, but a rigorous investigation of educational practices and potential for

improvement, especially for post-custody education. This freedom allows the study a high level of rigour, authenticity and credibility.

Fieldwork, headwork and textwork

We are currently undertaking the fieldwork, interviewing participants, including young people in custody, teachers, managers, leaders from Parkville College, the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR) and the Department of Education and Training (DET). The data includes policy and other internal documentation related to the education of young people in custody. Analysis of data in relation to the scholarly literature and research questions is being undertaken. This is the headwork (Van Maanen 2011, p.222) of synthesis and analysis required for development of conclusions and delivery of recommendations. Some of our textwork – reports, academic articles and book chapters – will follow close on the heels of the headwork, but, fulfilling Van Maanen's point about how these tasks can overlap, these elements appear in a variety of combinations at other times in the project. The writing of this paper is an example of where a concentration of headwork and textwork can take place separate to, yet still be informed by, the fieldwork currently unfolding. Additionally, just as the six members of our research team – from three universities, two cities and Parkville College itself – collaborated to bring this piece of writing to completion, this paper is a tangible result of the previous relationshipwork undertaken.

Narratives of relationshipwork

We turn now to narratives drawn from our research experience thus far to focus on different aspects of relationshipwork. The purpose of this section is to illustrate how strong research relationships require communication, respect, time and work, but result in authentic and rigorous research, leading to new insights and a useful contribution to knowledge. It is hoped that this is useful not only for other researchers but also for those who commission or consume research.

1. Partnering research

When the researchers joined forces with leaders at Parkville College to develop this study, we were building on strong, established relationships from previous collaboration and relevant, practical project outcomes. The researchers worked closely with school leaders to develop, refine and present the study proposal to the funding body.

It was through extensive discussion at a later point that the project team developed the proposal to put to the funding body that the project should be slowed down to allow

for more “temperate weather” to arrive. The heat and dust generated by the media, politicians and legal challenges did eventually blow away, allowing the researchers to begin the lengthy ethics approval processes with the lead university and two government departments. The researchers and school leaders continued to maintain regular contact throughout all phases of the study.

Advice and clarification were frequently sought. When the school principal suggested that valuable data would be gained by also interviewing the older students, the researchers listened carefully. The principal argued that this group had been sentenced into custody and, so, lived without the complicating uncertainties of being on remand. This opened up the possibility of seeking their advice about how younger students could be better connected to education. Although it required yet another ethics amendment to three different committees, we saw the value in this suggestion, so we listened and acted.

When members of the leadership team met with the researchers to discuss fieldwork, advice was offered about spending time in classrooms, getting to know routines and processes. This, they advised, would lead to greater success at the later point of recruitment. Researchers would spend many days just being part of the classrooms. The school leaders advised the researchers to establish themselves in the field and build trust and rapport with the potential participants. This contrasts with the more traditional image of researchers swooping in with clipboards and questions.

The advice to the researchers to embed themselves in the classrooms was sound and also afforded the opportunity for classroom teachers to get to know the researchers and the purpose of the study. Because of the high levels of trust established between teachers and their students, the teachers would be key to researchers being able to talk with the young people. The researchers would benefit substantially from spending time in classrooms and from the positive interaction with the young people and their teachers. Indeed, in this instance, a benefit of our relationshipwork strengthened the fieldwork. It also demonstrates what Van Maanen has argued should happen during fieldwork – researchers learn to “live with and live like” someone else (2011, p.219) and come to terms with “the situational dictates and pressures” involved (p.220).

The leadership roles at Parkville College are demanding, with critical incidents and unexpected events frequently occurring. There are many demands on these staff members’ time, so they are not always immediately available. A flexible approach has therefore developed between us. For example, one of our team members has commenced teacher interviews and, predisposed to forward planning, the researcher initially set up

the interviews in advance, seeking to secure interview times. In practice, many different challenges occurred on any given day, so having pre-set interviews would not necessarily be the best way to work. After discussions, the specific timeframes of 3.00–5.00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and all day Fridays were earmarked for the interviews. These were confirmed each day in the early afternoon via email, allowing for the required level of flexibility but still allowing for planned time. Aware of the partner's "situational dictates and pressures" (Van Maanen 2011, p.220), the researcher rearranged planning and other commitments in order to hold these spots for interviews. Because of the strong relationshipwork already undertaken, an effective shorthand style developed and changes were communicated very quickly via text message. Consequently, in spite of the contingencies of this arrangement, interviews were efficiently completed.

Early in the project, the need for a reference group was agreed upon by the researchers and school leaders. The invitations extended were readily accepted. Given the independent nature of the study, it might appear constraining for this sort of assistance to be sought. However, the knowledge and expertise of those in the reference group is significant for the study. The overall aim of strengthening educational connections for young people in youth justice is shared by the school, the researchers and members of the reference group. Individuals approached to join this group were proposed by the school leaders and the researchers, drawing upon existing networks, previous collaborations and knowledge of the field. Members include individuals from government departments, the court system, and philanthropic, advocacy and community organisations. This participation demonstrates interest and support for the study, providing the researchers and the school leaders with sustaining encouragement. The work and knowledge of these individuals provide valuable policy and system-level perspectives to the study, and, at its conclusion, the study is expected to deliver useful and thoughtful advice to these individual members of the reference group and the youth justice sector about how education in the lives of the young people can be strengthened. This partnership is also built upon foundations of relationshipwork and continues to develop.

2. Working with gatekeepers

Given the timing of this study, and the "inclement weather" at its inception, it was inevitable that close scrutiny would occur; after all, we were seeking permission to undertake research in a field that was not only highly sensitive but in which the media had exercised undue negative influence. Challenges to government department decisions were being made in the courts, and politicians were frequently questioned about youth

justice. Everyone was nervous. We proposed interviewing vulnerable minors held in custody, many of whom had not been convicted but held on remand.

The old-fashioned term “gatekeeper” is a suitable one used here to refer to the ethics committees and government departments. It aptly describes those whose decision it is to grant, or not grant, access to our research field (Homan 2001) and implies an ethics of care approach (Brooks, te Riele & Maguire 2014) aimed at protecting participants. Without approval from the various gatekeepers, the project would not have been able to get off the ground.

The approval process required to undertake this research was extensive, involving the preparation of eight separate but overlapping lengthy documents. At each ethics committee meeting more concerns were raised and more revisions were required. It took 15 months to gain all required approvals to conduct the fieldwork. Relationshipwork was undertaken with staff and chairs of Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) and with government department officials who manage the approvals processes. Telephone calls were made and meetings were held. Draft documents were prepared, and advice was provided and accepted. Electronic systems were navigated, and there was goodwill and collegiality throughout. To accompany these applications for approval, letters from key gatekeepers were also required. Senior officials generously supported the project by repeatedly providing positive letters of support in time for submission. Relationshipwork played a major role here. This aspect of research is rarely listed in the many books that advise how research should be undertaken.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that developing strong relationships is an important and enabling precursor to research. We have introduced the concept of relationshipwork as an integral part of the research process, as demonstrated through the contextual information about a funded project. However, the significant argument put forward is that it is the interactions and relationships developed between stakeholders and researchers that allow the research to proceed. Relationshipwork, as we have argued here, is not only a requirement for substantial and useful research but is also a necessary fourth element to the three “tasks” of research identified by Van Maanen (1988, 2011): fieldwork, headwork and textwork. The contribution of this paper, therefore, is the illustration of how maintaining and sustaining relationships with partners, gatekeepers and stakeholders conceptualises, establishes, negotiates and improves research. Indeed, it is through this relationshipwork that research is able to be realised.

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Authors

Julie White is an associate professor and Principal Research Fellow in Victoria University Research's Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities. Her research interests span social justice, inclusion, youth justice, research methodology and the connections between education, health and the law. julie.white@vu.edu.au

Philippa Moylan is a rResearch officer in Victoria University Research's Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities where her focus is the Students in Custody project. philippa.moylan@vu.edu.au

Kitty te Riele is a professor and Deputy Director – Research in the Peter Underwood Centre at the University of Tasmania. Her research is focused on enhancing young people's opportunities to participate and succeed in education. Kitty.TeRiele@utas.edu.au

Tim Corcoran, Deakin University, is an educational psychologist by trade interested in researching ways of knowing/being. tim.corcoran@deakin.edu.au

Alison Baker works in social pedagogy at Victoria University. Her research aims to understand the impact of inequality on young people from marginalised backgrounds. alison.baker@vu.edu.au

Simon Lenten is Director of School Improvement at Parkville College, the Victorian Government School within the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct. lenten.simon.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

Exploring Māori and Samoan youth justice

Aims of an international research study

Tamasailau Suaalii-Sauni, Juan Tauri and Robert Webb

This article provides an overview of a current three-year (2017–2020) international youth justice research project. The research aims to reveal how Māori and Samoan young people and their families interact with and make sense of youth justice systems across three different settler-colonial countries: New Zealand, Australia and the United States. The research into these culturally distinct communities is building a community-level analysis of youth justice for comparison within and across these countries. The article outlines the study objectives and the theoretical and methodological frameworks used in the research; it also explains why an Indigenous criminology approach is being considered for policy and programmatic solutions that address the youth justice concerns and needs of these communities.

Key words: youth justice, Indigenous criminology, settler-colonial justice systems, Māori and Samoan youth research

The objectives of the research project described here are: to address the lack of empirical research with the Māori, and most especially the Samoan, experience of crime control in New Zealand; to provide a community-level critique of the efficacy of state responses to youth offending and victimisation; and to analyse the state's response to the specific sociocultural needs of Māori and Samoan youth and their families who are caught up in the criminal justice systems across the three jurisdictions of New Zealand, Australia (Gold Coast/South-East Queensland) and California (USA).¹ Finally, we are also endeavouring to consider policy and programmatic solutions that address the justice concerns and needs of these communities. The 2017–2020 project is funded by

¹ We acknowledge that the three jurisdictions involved in the study often use different terms for youth justice, with the term “juvenile” most commonly employed in the USA. For this work we use the term “youth justice” to refer to all systems that focus on youth offending.

a Marsden Fund grant administered by the New Zealand Royal Society Te Apārangi. We provide a short rationale for the research followed by an introduction to the objectives and methodologies based on the Māori and Samoan approaches to gathering and disseminating knowledge. It is these approaches that are guiding the research on the experiences of youth justice in all three jurisdictions. The article ends with a brief discussion of the processes the researchers are following to ensure the project is conducted in ways that reflect cultural and ethical considerations for participants.

Why research Māori and Samoan experiences of youth justice?

An ongoing area of concern for Māori and Pasifika communities in New Zealand is the disproportionate, often negative, engagement of their peoples with the formal criminal justice system. Official statistics on the country's youth justice system from the Ministry of Justice (for the year 2016/17) indicate a proportionally significant over-representation of Māori and Pasifika youth, with the estimated offending rates for young people aged 14 to 16 years at 642 per 10,000 population for Māori, and 256 per 10,000 population for Pasifika (Ministry of Justice 2018, p.7). While overall numbers of young people facing serious charges have declined in recent years, of the total number of youths who are charged in the New Zealand Youth Court, the greatest proportion are Māori, and this proportion has increased from 44% of all charged in 2006, to 66% in 2017 (Youth Court of New Zealand 2018). Likewise, Pasifika youth figure highly in comparison to their percentage of the total population, and the majority of these youths are Samoan (Suaalii-Sauni 2010).

Of particular concern to these communities is the impact that engagement with the system is having on the wellbeing of young Māori (rangatahi) and Samoan (talavou) people (Tauri 2011; Tunufa'i 2017). Many Māori and Pasifika young people experience the criminal justice system at a young age, an experience that often involves contact with a range of state agencies, community services and interventions. Information like this suggests deep systemic, institutional and cultural ruptures and disconnections between the lives of Māori and Pasifika young offenders, and the youth justice and care and protection systems arguably set up to address their needs.

The importance of dealing with the issue of Māori and Pacific youth justice issues has long been on the agenda for policymakers in the NZ context. Policy and programmatic responses in the NZ youth justice system have included the family group conferencing (FGC) forum that was introduced with the *Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989*. The introduction of the FGC forum influenced the development of a range of

restorative justice initiatives, some of which targeted Māori youth (Tauri 2016). Since 2008, a number of targeted court alternatives for Māori and Pasifika youth have been established, including Rangatahi Youth Courts that are held on the Māori community marae (across 13 sites nationally), and a smaller number of Pasifika Youth Courts introduced in Auckland in 2010. These relatively recent alternatives (to the formal court process) have a stated intent to involve Māori and Pasifika communities in culturally focused justice responses (see Kaipuke 2012; Taumaunu 2014).

Māori and Samoans are not simply the passive recipients of state interventions and actively work towards community advancement and development (Durie 2003). Māori and Pasifika non-governmental organisations and groups have made significant contributions to building community-based responses to offending and victimisation. Developing interventions in response to Māori and Pacific youth and communities is not unique to NZ. Internationally, there are sizeable Māori and Samoan communities also living in Queensland and New South Wales, Australia, and a large Samoan community living in California, USA. In the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, the Albert Cobarubbias Participatory Defense Project offers a family- and community-based advocacy model for Samoan and other youth charged within the California juvenile court system (see API Youth Violence Prevention Centre 2007; Tamayose & Takahashi 2012).

Similarly, in South-East Queensland, the Pacific and Indigenous Nations Network (PINN), produces advocacy and support for young people facing the Australian juvenile justice system. As in NZ, these Australian communities are concerned about the number of their young people who experience the respective criminal justice systems and are seeking the development of interventions to engage and support community responses (Amato 2012; Liddell, Blake & Singh 2017; NSW Attorney General and Justice 2012; Ravulo 2016; Shepherd & Ilalio 2015).

All this policy and programmatic activity, however, has produced very little research on the specific youth justice experiences of Māori and Samoan youth and their families living in Australia and the USA. This project therefore represents the first significant, independent (meaning non-government directed) empirical study of Māori experiences of settler-colonial youth justice and the respective state and community apparatuses since Moana Jackson's (1988) acclaimed critique of the New Zealand criminal justice system. Similarly, there have been few independent in-depth analyses of Pasifika experiences of settler-colonial criminal justice systems. Much like the Māori situation in New Zealand, few Pacific academic scholars work in the area of Indigenous criminology and justice; this study will be among the first independent studies of Samoan youth experiences of

contemporary crime control policies and interventions, such as the Pasifika youth court. Lastly, the study is one of the few in-depth cross-jurisdictional investigations into both Māori and Samoan peoples' engagement with community or youth justice programs.

Researching Māori and Samoan youth and their families' experiences of youth justice

In response to the lack of research that privileges Māori and Samoan youth experiences of crime control, the authors developed a study that will provide youth and their families with a process in which their experiences are paramount to developing effective responses to their justice-related needs. The approach taken in this project looks at youth justice in all its facets – including policy and intervention development and implementation – from the perspective of the community members themselves.

Research aims

The research aims to reveal how Māori and Samoan young people and their whānau/aiga (families) interact with and make sense of youth justice systems across three different settler-colonial countries: New Zealand, Australia and the USA. This research specifically investigates the systemic, institutional, social, cultural, political, economic and historical drivers that shape the individual and collective stories of these young people and their families, as they interact with the youth justice systems of the respective countries and the settler-colonial contexts within which they reside.

As the study progresses, we are looking to offer new insights of international significance into Indigenous and ethnic minority youth experiences of crime control in New Zealand (Māori and Samoan), as well as members of the diaspora communities residing in Australia (Māori and Samoan) and the West Coast of the USA (Samoan). The results will elucidate first, how communities experience the sociocultural dynamics and philosophies that underpin the justice systems they engage with, and second, the responses they seek of these systems for their specific sociocultural needs. This research explores these experiential, jurisprudential and cultural complexities and asks to what degree they exist in similar forms internationally. Following this, the objectives of the project are four-fold: 1) to collect primary data on the overall aim of the project; 2) to test the methodological rigour of the interdisciplinary research methodology to be employed and to widely disseminate the learnings gained; 3) to develop theoretical insights into how the experiences of communities are reflected in the development of new policies and interventions developed by youth justice practitioners and institutions; and 4) to build Māori and Samoan researcher capacity in this topic area by taking on postgraduate

Māori and Samoan researchers and/or scholars and mentoring them through some of the research process as part of a project-related and funded MA, PhD research and/or research assistant roles.

The research questions and explanations

The project explores four central research questions:

1. What are Māori and Samoan youth and whānau/aiga (families) experiences of the youth justice systems? Central to this research is identifying how Māori and Samoan youth and their communities experience youth justice. We are looking at overlaps and divergences in community experiences within and across New Zealand, within South-East Queensland, Australia, and within California, USA, and then comparably across all three countries.
2. How does the youth justice system “work” in New Zealand, South-East Queensland and California for Māori and Samoan youth offenders and their families? The research design focuses on comparing the current overall set-up of the youth justice system operating in each of the three countries. By examining the historical, institutional, policy and legislative particulars of each country’s youth justice system, we are seeking to identify policy and institutional developments and differences. In doing so, we are interested in how the agents and agencies of the state apparatus (e.g. police, social work, law advocacy, courts, conferencing etc.) work in this area and with the community sector (including community intervention programs for young people and offenders). We are seeking to document specific programs or initiatives that have shown successful outcomes in terms of reducing offending/reoffending, mitigating sentencing and improving youth and/or community participation in the system, and we will critically analyse reasons offered for this success by criminal justice agents and community service providers.
3. What policy and practice strengths exist across the three jurisdictions to enhance Māori and Samoan youth wellbeing? The over-representation of Māori in New Zealand’s criminal justice system has long been recognised as having a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of their communities (Durie 2003). We are identifying existing policy, practice strengths and any innovations specifically used to enhance the wellbeing of those young people most engaged in New Zealand’s youth justice system or the juvenile systems abroad, and are considering the international significance of these strengths and

innovations. In a comparison across the Māori and Samoan case studies, we are thinking about the ways policies are developed and implemented and the ways in which youth programs and alternatives also recognise or work to support family and community wellbeing. For this reason, the research seeks to elicit detailed knowledge of Māori and Samoan communities and their experiences of criminal justice programs and interventions. Our intention is to inform the future development of policy initiatives that better support Māori and Samoan communities to achieve positive social wellbeing outcomes. To achieve this, the project focuses upon participants' experiences of interventions and programs ostensibly designed for Māori and Samoan offenders in order to ascertain how they address the social, cultural, education and health needs of participants.

4. What can Māori and Samoan Indigenous knowledge and jurisprudence contribute to youth justice policy and practice? The study explores and draws upon Māori and Pasifika Indigenous knowledges and jurisprudence to see how these can inform positive development of youth justice policy and practice. In examining justice alternatives that specifically engage with Māori and Samoan cultural aspects, we are considering whether or not there is a new jurisprudence emerging, one that is informed by Māori or Pasifika Indigenous knowledges and values. We are asking how indigeneity and ethnic cultural values are expressed and understood by the state, the young person and their families, in New Zealand and internationally, and how their respective understandings and expressions are responded to by each other. The research looks to make visible the voices (including vocabularies and epistemological paradigms) of Māori and Samoan young people and their communities across the different sites and will note how their voices resonate or not with those most dominant in the youth justice system to which they are subject. For this reason, the project will also analyse the activities of community-based providers and non-government organisations and the programs designed by them in order to capture the nuances and complexities of their approaches to youth, to offending and victimisation, and to enhancing the social wellbeing of youth and their communities.

Methodology

As Muncie (2006) argues, it is important for international youth justice studies to engage with both the global and localised dimensions of justice. This project offers a cross-jurisdictional, multi-site, multi-level, interdisciplinary, qualitative, international comparative analysis of youth justice. We are exploring the multi-dimensional identities

and experiences of Indigenous Māori and Pasifika youth and their communities, within and across the countries in this study, in order to prioritise the knowledge and understandings of their values and cultural practices and the historical context of their attitudes towards the respective settler-colonial youth justice systems. The research will enable the investigators to provide analyses of various youth justice programs and interventions, and to look at informing the development of future policies, legislation and interventions by the criminal justice sector in all three jurisdictions.

A further anticipated outcome is the promise of Māori and Samoan theoretical innovations and new findings in the emerging field of Indigenous criminology (see Cunneen & Tauri 2016; Webb 2017). The Indigenous criminology approach calls for the widening of the research lens to one that engages with Indigenous and ethnic minority populations to examine their conceptualisations of wrongdoing and how these inform community responses to social harm. It is hoped that this will make a direct contribution to criminological knowledge about the impact of settler-colonial justice practices and to Indigenous-informed alternatives to the formal justice system.

The research study is being carried out across the three different youth justice jurisdictions discussed previously. Through travel to the different sites, the primary data is being collected with Māori and Samoan young people, their family members, relevant community leaders and/or groups, the youth justice system and community-based social service providers. The project moves beyond a social control paradigm that problematises Indigenous and ethnic minority communities (Blagg 2008), and instead values community knowledge by following a decolonising, empowering research protocol for Māori (Smith 1999; Tauri 2014a) and Samoan peoples (Suaalii-Sauni & Aiolupotea 2014; see further discussion below).

Case studies

New Zealand forms one of the main country case studies, and its findings will be compared with the Australian and USA case studies. The New Zealand component involves five different regions/provinces chosen to enable us to capture and analyse insights from both major urban and provincial centres. The Australian section will focus on South-East Queensland (mainly South Brisbane and the Gold Coast), while the USA component focuses attention on Samoan communities in Los Angeles county and the San Francisco Bay area of California. These countries, regions or provinces/counties have been selected because: a) these geographical locations or regions have large Māori and/or Samoan communities with significant numbers of young people and members

who engage with the spectrum of youth justice state and community services; b) a deliberate academic analysis of Indigenous (Māori) and ethnic minority (Samoan) youth engagement with youth justice processes as experienced in and outside of New Zealand is not yet available; and c) the primary investigators have specific research and cultural expertise and networks in each of these countries and regions.

Participants

There are three main participant groups within this study: a) young people currently involved with the justice system and their family members who have supported them through the system; b) the youth justice system (or other relevant state) officials or advocates and community intervention program workers set up by the system to help them; and c) relevant community leaders or groups not formally involved in youth justice. Family members often support young people involved in a range of justice forums and will therefore share many of the experiences of justice practices. Non-government, community-based organisations often provide justice services to families (for example, as part of counselling) or simply as supporters for various communities of concern. Furthermore, it is a methodological strength to include the families of youth in a study such as this as Pacific peoples' cultures emphasise collective social relations, values and experiences (Jones et al. 2010; Tuafuti 2011; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs 2006).

Developing a culturally appropriate approach

The study combines Māori and Samoan research methodologies and qualitative social science research. Kaupapa Māori theory is said to have “its roots in two intellectual influences – the validity and legitimacy of Māori language, knowledge and culture, as well as critical social theory” (Smith 2012, p.12). The same could be said of the central theories that underline the two Pasifika/Samoan research methodologies used here: the Talanoa (generally translated to mean “talking stories” in informal, casual, reciprocal ways) and Faafaletui (generally translated to mean “holding formal meetings”) (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba 2014; Vaiioleti 2006; Tamasese et al. 2005).

The research also values the phenomenological approach in social sciences to complement those of Kaupapa Māori research, and Talanoa and Faafaletui research. The research team is taking an approach to bring to the fore the “life-worlds”, that is to “suspend ... any presuppositions, interpretations and prior understandings in order to enter the world of the unique individual being studied ... to try to see the world from [his/her/their] point of view” (Finlay 1999, p.302). The research approaches work together to listen to each participant and participant group, weaving together the

particular and transcendent meanings they share in order to provide us with the important strands of each individual and collective story. In the case studies with participants we engage these cultural methods of interactions and observing and speaking to as many different participants as possible to enable us to explore layers of meaning and diverse interpretations, including the experiential and circumstantial diversity of the people, both in terms of cultural context and geographical placement (Suaalii-Sauni et al. 2009). Employing a range and combination of qualitative social science and Indigenous research approaches will assist in capturing the diverse and nuanced interpretations and experiences of justice (Darbyshire, MacDougall & Schiller 2005).

Comparative case study research has a long and rich tradition in social science and justice research (Bennett 2004; Zimring 2006). Qualitative comparative case study research offers, on the one hand, in-depth insights into different cases, capturing complexity and allowing for holism and intimacy. On the other hand, this approach can produce some level of generalisation by creating tables and models from all the narratives (more than a handful) that highlight those conditions shared in common and those not, so that some general “grounded” conjectures about the phenomenon of Māori and Samoan youth experiences of their settler-colonial youth justice systems can be made and be of some value to policymakers and practitioners (Rihoux 2006).

Institutional ethical approval was gained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee. Additionally, all primary data collection ranged from qualitative semi-structured interviews to focus groups and gatherings (referred to as hui, talanoa and faafaletui) that involve concepts and practices of engagement as determined by the cultural customs (tikanga and kaupapa) and guided by ethical guidelines developed for research with Māori and Pacific peoples (see Hudson et al. 2010; Health Research Council of New Zealand 2014).

Concluding comments

In summary, the research being undertaken is one of the few in-depth, qualitative projects on Māori and Samoan engagement with youth justice. Apart from Moana Jackson’s 1988 study and a small number of boutique projects, little research since has been undertaken to enhance our knowledge of these particular communities experiences of criminal justice in NEW ZEALAND and internationally. The research is designed to address this gap by privileging the Māori and Samoan experiences of crime control policies in these jurisdictions through collecting Samoan and Māori community stories about their experiences of the youth justice systems of New Zealand, Australia and the USA.

The research also uses Samoan and Māori cultural paradigms to analyse, compare and contrast these experiences so that, ultimately, the findings may inform contemporary readings of indigeneity, ethnicity and culture in youth justice for youth justice policymaking.

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Authors

Tamasailau Suaalii-Sauni is Associate Professor in Sociology and Criminology in the School of Social Sciences, Te Pokapū Pūtaiao Pāpori, University of Auckland. Her current research interests focus on Indigenous jurisprudence in the Pacific, Indigenous criminology, and Pasifika Indigenous research and evaluation methodologies.

Juan Tauri is a senior lecturer in Sociology in the Faculty of Art and Social Sciences, University of Waikato. His research interests include Indigenous criminology, Māori and family group conferencing, restorative justice, research ethics, the Waitangi Tribunal and the regulation of Māori protest.

Robert Webb is a senior lecturer in Sociology and Criminology, in the School of Social Sciences, Te Pokapū Pūtaiao Pāpori, University of Auckland. His research interests include Indigenous criminology, state criminal justice policies and Māori, youth justice and Māori social issues.

Tamasailau, Juan and Robert are co-principal investigators on the Marsden Fund research project looking at drawing international comparisons (NZ, Australia and USA) between Māori and Samoan experiences of youth justice.

‘Like now I’m confused ...’ the blurred boundary between art and crime

Devaluing the cultural worth of graffiti writing

Ron Baird

The City of Melbourne is recognised as a vibrant cultural and intellectual metropolis that is home to a thriving graffiti and street art scene. However, municipal authorities draw a clear distinction between graffiti and street art that results in tensions related to the cultural worth of each art form. Despite domestic and international visitors’ obvious interest in graffiti, Melbourne has taken a solid stance focused on the eradication of graffiti via its graffiti removal program, and by working to prevent graffiti via anti-graffiti education programs and the cultivation of what it terms ‘high quality street art’. The contradiction at play here has the potential to negatively impact the development of young street artists about whom little is known. Based on qualitative interviews with active Melbourne graffiti writers gathered as part of a larger PhD study, this article presents the lived experiences of graffiti writers, arguing that Melbourne takes a myopic policy position on urban art that justifies the promotion of a valued art practice in ‘street art’, while simultaneously criminalising and devaluing graffiti writing.

Keywords: graffiti, street art, youth, crime, policy, economies of worth.

Grffiti¹ has become part of the contemporary cultural landscape of the City of Melbourne, a city recognised as a vibrant cultural and intellectual metropolis and home to a thriving graffiti and street art scene. As such, Melbourne is branded as a graffiti capital of the world (Cubriilo, Stamer & Harvey 2009; Dew 2007; Ganz 2004). Yet, there

¹ For the purposes of this paper, graffiti is defined as “to write one’s street-name or signature as a ‘tag’ (calligraphy letters depicting a writers or crew’s name), ‘throw-up’ (quickly executed bubble font graffiti) or ‘piece’ (large-scale stylised mural that depicts a writer’s or crew’s name) in public either illegally or legally, using spray-paint, textas/markers or paint rollers”.

is debate and tension about the significance of graffiti as a recognised and legitimate cultural artifact. On the one hand, graffiti is viewed as vandalism or criminal damage, a blight on the city landscape that defaces the urban environment (Carney 2017; Dow 2017; Moreau and Alderman 2011; Simonis, Langmaid & Hore 2017). On the other hand, graffiti is increasingly viewed as a vibrant, cutting edge art form showcased in a number of city laneways and featuring in internationally acclaimed compendiums of graffiti (Cubriilo, Stamer & Harvey 2009; Dew 2007; Ganz 2004; MacDowall 2006; McAuliffe 2012; Young 2013).

In the course of the analysis of the interview data for the larger PhD study, an interesting theme emerged around the notion of the relative worth of graffiti in relation to its potential commercial value. This is often at the heart of the tension experienced between street artists and graffiti writers. Street arts enjoy legitimisation and capacity to be represented in gallery shows, whereas graffiti writing is often perceived as vandalism and is ultimately stigmatised and labeled as an act of willful criminal damage (Campos 2015; Lachmann 1988; Young 2013). This prompted, first, the exploration of the concept of graffiti as a legitimate art practice in relation to its more socially accepted cousin, street art, and second, exploration of how perceptions of graffiti and street art as illegitimate and/or legitimate are formed and justified.

Context

Each year a significant number of people visit the City of Melbourne from both domestic and international locations to experience Melbourne's vibrant graffiti culture. There are now even city graffiti tours, and Melbourne features regularly on "Top 10" internet lists of best international graffiti locations as well as in a range of tourist advertisements about city life and culture (Young 2011, 2013).

Despite a positive shift in the reception of graffiti as an urban art form with aesthetic merit, the value of graffiti continues to be contested, and graffiti still attracts negative media coverage (Carney 2017; Dow 2017; Hudson 2009; Langmaid 2017; Simonis, Langmaid & Hore 2017). Melbourne's young graffiti writers² are portrayed as deviant vandals in newspaper headlines such as "Melbourne's Graffiti Pests", "Painting the Town Dreadful" and "Growing Graffiti Vandalism". It appears that there is a contradiction at play in the wider society's perception and understanding of the youth cultural practice of graffiti, which is simultaneously celebrated and vilified and creates a tension and debate

² Someone who engages in the practice of writing signature graffiti with a focus on stylised lettering in public spaces primarily using spray paint and markers.

regarding the place of graffiti in the contemporary city (Halsey and Young 2006; Iveson 2010, 2013; McAuliffe 2012; McAuliffe and Iveson 2011; Mubi Brighenti 2010; Young 2010, 2011, 2013). While graffiti and graffiti artists like Lister, Sofles and Adnate, who have made the transition to “street artist”, are celebrated, other graffiti writers like Nost, Pork And Lamb are treated with contempt (Bucci 2017; Dow 2017). Yet the artistic skill and aesthetic elements of graffiti are present whether the pieces are produced legally in Hosier Lane³ or illegally along a train line or on a warehouse wall.

The City of Melbourne *Graffiti Management Plan 2014–2018* is the key instrument that sets out the strategy to address graffiti in the municipality of Melbourne. The plan articulates a three-pronged approach to combating graffiti, including rapid response graffiti removal, anti-graffiti education programs and the promotion of “high quality” street art. The plan suggests “graffiti can have a negative impact on community perceptions of safety and public amenity” (City of Melbourne 2014, p.3). The primary target articulated in the plan is the “tag”. All graffiti forms are focused on lettering styles; to be a graffiti writer is to “write”, so letters and fonts are particularly important, and thus tags are stylised calligraphic signatures depicting a writer’s or crew’s name scratched, painted or otherwise marked upon a surface. Tagging and its eradication are the almost exclusive focus of the plan, thus defining graffiti as “writing or drawings scribbled scratched or sprayed illegally on a wall or other surface in public space” (City of Melbourne 2014, p.1). The rationale for graffiti eradication outlined in the *Graffiti Management Plan 2014–2018* states:

The city of Melbourne removes Graffiti in the public space because it has a negative impact on the amenity and presentation of the municipality. Graffiti removal is part of good municipal management – in the same way as street cleanliness and the collection of dumped rubbish.

This statement emphasises why the City of Melbourne municipal authorities view graffiti as problematic; it creates a perception of threats, threats to public safety, and a threat to the city’s image as an aesthetically pleasing, safe place to visit. However, these threats in and of themselves are innocuous and in all probability are unfounded. One effect of this position, implied in the above statement, is that the presence of graffiti generates fear, which aligns with Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) “broken windows” theory; this criminological theory posits that any minor criminality or negative visual stimuli, such as buildings with broken windows or graffiti in an urban area, will lead to increases in crime

3 A city laneway in Melbourne’s CBD that is famous for its “legal” graffiti and street art murals, which are tolerated by municipal authorities due to its popularity among domestic and international tourists.

and anti-social behaviour (Wilson and Kelling 1982). Following this line of argument, graffiti is perceived as producing fear among citizens, and, by drawing on the theorisation of the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966), graffiti is presented by the City of Melbourne in the same category as “dumped rubbish” or pollution that is “matter out of place”. This displaced object has the symbolic power to induce fear as it is linked to and is constructed as criminal behaviour. Little is known, however, about the lived experience of graffiti writers in this climate of contradiction.

This article presents first-hand accounts of graffiti writers’ lived experiences and understandings of their place in Melbourne’s urban art culture that portray a dual and contradictory view of graffiti writing. The findings of this study indicate that Melbourne graffiti writers experience the practice of graffiti writing in the shadow of Melbourne’s municipal authorities. These authorities take a blinkered policy position on urban art, justifying the promotion of “street art” as a valued art practice, to the detriment of the criminalised and devalued art practice of graffiti writing.

Methodology

The data presented was drawn from a larger qualitative PhD study of 11 active graffiti writers using an adapted ethnographic approach that combined a mix of research strategies including semi-structured interviews. The practice of graffiti writing via a city council-run aerosol arts program was also observed. As this study is concerned with understanding the lived experience of graffiti writers, a social constructivist ontology is appropriate. A social constructivist position denotes that the subjective experience of graffiti writers and the meanings they make from their involvement in the practice are negotiated socially and historically, and thus privilege the participants’ experience as related to the researcher (Creswell 2007; Lincoln and Guba 2000). The participants were recruited at two field sites: one in the western suburbs of Melbourne via a local government council and the other in the City of Melbourne, via a street art studio in which a number of graffiti writers rented studio space. This paper draws on a small sample of excerpts from interviews conducted with the graffiti writers who participated in the larger study, which investigated how the practice of graffiti writing is learned and how young people experience this learning.

The process of analysis of the data followed the process described by Creswell (2007); Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) and Richards and Morse (2013). Concepts were not defined prior to coding, but emerged during data analysis. The aim was to become immersed in the interview data and gain an appreciation of the whole interview before

breaking it up into themes and codes. This process allowed for “opening up the codes to reflect the view of participants in a traditional qualitative way” (Creswell 2007). The codes were developed by focusing on the words of the participants themselves.

The theoretical position employed in this paper draws upon Boltanski and Thévenot’s (2006) concept of “economies of worth” that is used to analyse the data. An economy of worth is a new way to view a social phenomenon that deviates from the traditional collective/individual dichotomy of the social sciences and places the focus on the “common elements of these contrasting explanatory methodologies” (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006). An economy of worth stipulates what objects are valid, how they come to be validated and in what graded order this occurs in the world within which people interact. The concept is used to understand how social actors come to justifiable agreements by taking into account “justification logics” and the variety of conceptions of the common good linked to those logics.

Findings

A number of core themes emerged from the analysis of the data. The findings of this study indicate that tensions exist between graffiti writers and street artists. In addition, Melbourne graffiti writers experience the practice of graffiti writing in the shadow of Melbourne’s municipal authorities, who take a blinkered policy position on urban art, justifying the promotion of “street art” as a valued art practice to the detriment of graffiti writing which is devalued as an art practice but simultaneously celebrated and vilified by municipal authorities.

Tensions between graffiti writing and street art

The data indicate a tension between graffiti writers and street artists, a distinction that is also clearly articulated in the *City of Melbourne Graffiti Management Plan 2014 – 2018* (2014). The tension revolves around the nature of the cultural worth ascribed to these objects as derived from what is understood to be in the common good of the public consumers of these objects that are produced in public space (Young 2013).

Graffiti focuses on the production of stylised lettering that depicts an individual graffiti writer’s or crew’s name, whereas street art involves the placement of unsanctioned artwork in public space and can include stencils, posters, paste-ups, sculptures and street installations as well as pictographic images rendered in spray paint (Waclawek 2011). To be a graffiti writer is to “write”, thus letters and fonts are of particular importance to the culture of graffiti writing, a central tenet of graffiti as opposed to street art. As JD, one of the study participants remarked, “unless you paint letters you are not doing graffiti, you

might as well be doing street art”. As mentioned previously, graffiti and street art often suffer from tensions, antagonisms and resentments. Much of the resentment derives from the fact that street art is less vigorously policed than graffiti writing (Young 2011) as Jack, a graffiti writer and youth worker, attests:

... that split between street art and graffiti is pretty strong as well, so if you're a well known street artist and people like your stuff, that doesn't mean graffiti writers will care about it as you register very low on their importance levels ...

Although the tension experienced between the two cultures is real, it is also at times a paradoxical relationship as street artists and graffiti writers will often collaborate or share studio space. Tyrone, a long-term veteran writer in the Melbourne graffiti scene, corroborates this point, explaining that:

... when I was young, doing graffiti, I bashed people who did street art ... that's not me now. I've got a street art gallery right now, I've got studio space here [in a street art studio].

The positions articulated by Jack and Tyrone are justified based on an assessment of the cultural worth attached to the contested artifact. In this case, street art is deemed to be lacking due to its perceived illegitimacy among graffiti writers who place a high value or cultural worth on the illegality of graffiti as distinct from street art, which is largely produced in a legal context (Waclawek 2008). This also extends to notions of risk. Due to the illegal nature of graffiti writing there are more risks associated with the practice than there are with legally produced street art, and this contributes to the perception among graffiti writers that street art is a lesser or inauthentic practice.

‘Do you like me or you don’t?’ The simultaneous celebration and vilification of graffiti writing

As the study participants discussed the tensions between graffiti and street art, a counter narrative began to emerge of a simultaneous and contradictory nature. One of the study participants, Tyrone, recently returned from a trip to a graffiti festival in Mongolia where he painted murals and presented workshops for local graffiti writers in Ulan Bator. On his return, he encountered at Melbourne Airport the intersection of culture and crime in the form of tourist marketing of the criminalised culture in which he participates. As Tyrone relates:

... as you fly into Melbourne there're pictures of street art on the walls, on big canvasses. They have in the [in-flight] magazine – in the Qantas magazine, things to do in Melbourne, the street art tours and stuff like that.

There is a clear articulation of city branding in the display of street art in the arrivals area of Melbourne Airport and in the in-flight magazine's message; however, for the graffiti writer this represents a contradiction of the simultaneous celebration of graffiti and its de-valuing and criminalisation. Tyrone put this contradiction into context when discussing the perception of graffiti as articulated in local government policy. He stresses not necessarily people, the public, but specifically policy designed to control, as Tyrone articulates:

... while they're trying to gain control with their new laws and rules, they'll happily use what you're doing to appear like they're open-minded. Like tourism Australia, welcome to Melbourne, full of graffiti, and then you get caught doing graffiti and they're like OK you're gonna have to do two hundred and fifty hours of community service and pay twenty grand. Like well, do I get a cut of the piece you showed of mine on the TV ad, do you want to pay me 200 grand 'cause you've just made a whole lot of money out of tourism. Like now I'm confused, do you like me or you don't ...

The above quote indicates that graffiti writers experience the blurred boundary between art and crime in the contradictory position espoused by Melbourne's municipal authorities. The City of Melbourne and Tourism Victoria regularly use images of graffiti in their advertising material in an effort to portray Melbourne as an artistic and cultural capital, and in this way seemingly legitimise graffiti as an urban art form (Dovey, Wollan & Woodcock 2012; Stewart 2008). In doing so, however, the artist is still criminalised and subject to penalties (community service or a monetary fine) despite the fact that the graffiti writers' artwork was used in advertising material inviting tourists to indulge themselves in a street art tour and discover the hidden graffiti gems of the city's laneways. The problematic juxtaposition of using graffiti as a marketing tool while simultaneously taking a zero-tolerance approach to the production of graffiti in the public sphere negates the plurality of value systems within the community and privileges acceptance and justification of graffiti practice only when it serves the purposes of Tourism Victoria and the City of Melbourne. In this context, the attribution of graffiti's worth is related to the state's position as an arbiter of "rightness", which can be used to justify an action (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006).

Legitimation or cooptation: Devaluing graffiti in favour of high quality street art

The contradictory stance assumed by Melbourne City Council in relation to graffiti is further complicated by an apparent shift toward greater legitimisation of graffiti among certain community organisations. The apparent positive shift in the reception of graffiti

is best exemplified by the recent launch of the Intercontinental Hotel graffiti laneway-themed ballroom and function room. These graffiti-themed renovations seemingly illustrate the increasing mainstream acceptance of graffiti writing. The graffiti tags and pieces incorporated into the hotel's renovations were carried out by local graffiti writers and street artists, including two of the research participants in this study. While some graffiti writers view these events as steps toward the legitimization of graffiti, others argue this is nothing more than the co-optation and commodification of the culture for commercial means, as indicated in the quote below by Tyrone:

We went to this opening of a new hotel last night that we'd painted in, the Intercontinental Hotel next to Rialto. They'd made the whole place like laneways inside and done it all up with street art and shit. It was kind of like I felt like a prostitute because we'd painted this thing for not much money at all. Then they'd spent all this money and song and dance to say how street art they are and how cool it is and all this. So it's like, yeah, the contradiction of they didn't – they wouldn't let any graffiti artist hang out in the hotel, but they've got all our art in there. So it's just a joke really.

Tyrone's response to his involvement in the Intercontinental Hotel graffiti-themed renovations is instructive as it helps to highlight the sense of co-optation felt by some graffiti writers to these perceived moves towards the legitimization of graffiti. This discussion also signals how these events highlight the contradictory nature of Melbourne's *Graffiti Management Plan 2014–2018* (2014) and its impact upon graffiti writers who are simultaneously celebrated and vilified.

Tyrone explains that he felt like a “prostitute” selling himself – his art – for very little financial gain, and, while the artists were invited to attend the launch, they were made to feel unwelcome and excluded. The concept of economy of worth articulated by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) has two levels, the polity and the common world. A polity is a legitimate order that can be perceived as a higher common principle that will sustain justification. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) identify six different polities: the inspired polity, the domesticate polity, the polity of fame, the civic polity, the market polity and the industrial polity. Tyrone's statement speaks to a conflict between the market polity and the civic polity in relation to the relative worth of graffiti. The polity model gives direction to the ordinary sense of what is just and worthy (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006).

On the one hand, the Intercontinental Hotel graffiti renovation appears to be a step toward the legitimization and acceptance of graffiti, as it is framed within a market polity – that is, a commercial entity celebrating graffiti in the private sphere. On the other hand, however,

the City of Melbourne, within a civic polity orientation, elaborates a contradictory stance in simultaneously seeking to celebrate street art while also criminalising and devaluing the culture of graffiti writing. Melbourne City Council takes this stance on graffiti writing when its purposes do not suit its governance role of catering to the common good of business and property owners affected by criminalised and delegitimised graffiti tags.

The Intercontinental Hotel graffiti theme was staged in Melbourne to further establish and capitalise on the city's status as a leading champion of graffiti and street art culture. However, there appears to be a contradiction at play; while the City of Melbourne celebrates street art and, seemingly, graffiti writing as well, municipal authorities continue to take a "zero-tolerance" approach to graffiti via its graffiti eradication program articulated in the City of Melbourne *Graffiti Management Plan 2014–2018* (2014) discussed earlier in this paper. The eradication program espouses rapid removal of graffiti in an effort to dissuade and demoralise graffiti writers. However, as Tyrone explains, "rapid removal" does not dissuade graffiti writers from producing their artwork, though it does work well on a political level as a tool to devalue the cultural worth of graffiti:

I mean, I've worked with councils and stuff and punishment and removal don't solve anything. It's a Band-Aid. I mean, oh, look, people are tagging the streets. Let's clean it. I mean that's not really addressing anything. That's just addressing people's fears, the broken window effect. The stupid [people] that go, oh, there's a tag, there must be gang activity. It's like, okay, good on you, let's clean it and then tomorrow it will be there again. We'll clean it again and tomorrow it will be there again. Then we'll complain at the end of the year that our budget is blown out because these bloody vandals spent \$1 million.

In this context, the object (graffiti) becomes ascribed with an exchange value and a worth by way of the polity of the common good. Graffiti shifts from an art object to a commodity that is either valued or relegated as worthless based on the conflict between the market polity and the civic polity as outlined above. In the case of the City of Melbourne's response to street art and graffiti, that privileges one art form over the other; we see competing justifications for the value of street art over graffiti. Therefore, the worth ascribed to street art is essentialist in its affirming the value-oriented state of art as a commodity, and graffiti's construction as a valueless object that has very little relative worth for the civic polity. This leads to a zero tolerance approach to graffiti on the part of Melbourne's municipal authorities. This approach may have a deleterious effect on the future of public art if Melbourne continues to criminalise and subject to penalty aspiring artists just because their chosen art form is graffiti.

To further underscore the shortsighted and contradictory position of Melbourne City Council in relation to graffiti writing, it is useful to briefly highlight the example of Adnate, a successful Melbourne street artist who is currently in demand. Adnate's roots are firmly in Melbourne's graffiti writing culture where, as a young graffiti writer, he tagged and pieced Adnate all across the city. We would not have the acclaimed street art produced by Adnate if he had not learned how to write graffiti with a spray can when he began tagging on the Upfield train line in Melbourne's inner north as a young man in the AWOL crew. His is an example of the progression of an art form that is simultaneously celebrated and vilified in Melbourne. Tyrone sums up the contradictory position that challenges the inconsistent position of Melbourne's stance on graffiti:

Well, if they [the city of Melbourne]... love the big Adnate and they hate the tag, it's like, there's a connection there

The connection that Tyrone refers to is that whether or not graffiti is celebrated or vilified, graffiti writers possess skills and produce artwork. And while not all graffiti writers will go on to pursue careers as professional artists, by continuing to criminalise the practice, Melbourne's municipal authorities risk dissuading young, talented artists from emerging simply because they – the authorities – find the chosen art form to be distasteful.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that Melbourne has embraced a myopic policy position on graffiti that justifies the promotion of "street art" as a valued art practice to the detriment of graffiti, which continues to be criminalised and devalued. This paper demonstrates the ways in which Melbourne graffiti writers experience the practice of graffiti writing in the shadow of Melbourne's municipal authorities, who take a blinkered policy position on urban art, justifying the promotion of "street art" as a valued art practice to the detriment of graffiti writing which is criminalised and devalued as an art practice. The practice of graffiti writing often begins with "tagging", but evolves from there into practitioners' production of large-scale colorful and stylised murals termed "pieces" – short for masterpieces. Despite this, Melbourne's municipal authorities enact laws, plans and strategies that attempt to eradicate the art practice of graffiti writing. This position devalues graffiti's worth as not befitting of the common good of the City of Melbourne and questions the very nature of what art is, which leaves its young practitioners in a vulnerable position that not only devalues their art practice but may lead to talented artists giving up the practice entirely.

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Author

Ron C. Baird teaches undergraduate criminology and sociology in the School of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne. His research interests are in the area of youth cultures, youth deviancy and informal learning. rbaird@unimelb.edu.au

Crime and context

Understandings of youth perpetrated interpersonal violence among service providers in regional Australia

Tamara Blakemore, Louise Rak, Kylie Agllias, Xanthé Mallett and Shaun McCarthy

Youth-perpetrated interpersonal violence in Australia is a complex issue of significant scope and scale. Evidence suggests a correlation with individual, familial and social experiences of disadvantage and disconnection requiring a multi-systemic response for effective prevention and intervention. To date, a largely unheard voice in the literature is that of frontline workers instrumental to these efforts. This paper, drawn from a larger study of young people's disengagement with education and involvement in crime, presents findings from semi-structured interviews with 37 regional service providers regarding their work with young people before the Children's Court for criminal matters. Spanning multiple sectors, the majority of participants reported an increasing incidence of youth-perpetrated interpersonal violence within family, in out-of-home care and in peer group settings. Implications for intervention and prevention emphasise the importance of context in informing creative, collaborative, relationship-based and connection-focused responses that are trauma-informed and culturally inclusive.

Key words: youth justice, interpersonal violence, youth crime, Children's Court, educational disengagement, youth work, out-of-home care

Conceptualisations of youth-perpetrated violence vary across disciplines, jurisdictions, focus, specificity and time. A variety of terms have been used to describe behaviours, including threats, harassment, intimidation, physical and/or sexual violence and aggression, social, financial and emotional abuse, and damage to property enacted to gain advantage and assert power and control over another in a domestic, family or out-of-home care (OOHC) setting, or within intimate partner and peer group contexts. Aside from definitional debate, evidence suggests youth-perpetrated violence in Australia is a complex issue of significant scope and scale. Although the predominant youth-perpetrated

offence is theft or larceny (35% of all youth offenders), “acts intended to cause injury” were the second most prevalent offence committed by persons aged 10 to 17 during the period 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016 (15% of all youth offenders) (ABS 2017). In NSW, a 2012 report by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues noted the majority of violence matters before the Children’s Court in 2010 involved young people being violent or threatening violence towards one or both parents, with siblings often witness to violence (LC 2012). When it comes to self-reported criminal and delinquent behavior, a survey of 12- to 13-year-olds across Australia (n=3,581) found that peer-to-peer violence and fighting was the most commonly reported behavior (24% of boys and 8% of girls) (AIFS 2015).

Latest data from New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (NSW BOCSAR 2018), reports that 3,751 persons of interest (POIs, i.e. suspected or alleged offenders) aged 10 to 17 years represented 8.1% of all alleged offenders proceeded against by police for domestic violence-related offences in the period January to December 2017. Domestic violence-related offences included: assault, sexual assault, indecent assault, abduction or kidnap, intimidate or harass, malicious damage and breach of Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs). Of particular note, 395 young males aged 10 to 17 years were proceeded against by police for sexual assault, a number representing 15.9% of all sexual assault cases in this time period.

The literature, both in Australia and internationally, notes a predominance in male-perpetrated crime, including interpersonal violence (AIC 2010). In fact, a cross-jurisdictional study of self-reported problem behaviours (including violence) across cohorts in Australia and the United States describes female gender as a “protective factor” (Hemphill et al. 2009). Consistent with this, a survey of 13- to 17-year-old students from across eight high schools in Perth, Australia (Houghton et al. 2013), found males reported levels of involvement in physical acts of aggression and/or intimidation two to three times greater than that for females. These acts included: deliberately hurt or beat up someone; taken part in a fist fight in which a group of people was against another group; used a weapon of some sort (e.g. knife, stick, chains or bottle) in a fight; used or threatened to use force to get money or things from another person (Houghton et al. 2013, p.11).

The BOSCAR data indicate that in 2017 there were 526 female youth POIs (36%) and 910 male youth POIs (64%) proceeded against for domestic violence-related assault in NSW. The comparative rates for adult populations identify 6,867 (16%) females and 35,736 (84%) males proceeded against for domestic violence-related assaults. In contrast to the research literature, crime statistics indicate double the proportion of young female

to adult female perpetrators and a steady growth in both female youth and female adult POIs in recent years. From January 2012 to December 2016, there was an average annual increase of 5.6% in female POIs aged 10 to 17 years, and 6.7% in females aged 18 and over proceeded against by police for domestic violence-related assault (NSW BOCSAR 2018).

Youth violence in regional Australia has been characterised by Grover (2017) as evidencing “postcode justice” or “justice by geography” with locational differences in rates of offending, reoffending and/or sentencing, particularly for domestic-related offences. In Western Australia, a 2015 report found that between 2009 and 2014, 66% of youth-perpetrated domestic violence-related offences occurred in metropolitan areas (Broadhead 2015). Similarly, although not specific to domestic or interpersonal violence, data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children suggests greater risk of early onset crime or delinquency for urban children, even after controlling for other factors (AIFS 2015). These findings are at odds, however, with the latest BOSCAR data where the relative rate of youth-perpetrated domestic violence was highest in regional and rural locations (NSW BOCSAR 2018). Similarly, Grech and Burgess (2011) found that of the 20 local government areas with the highest per capita rates of domestic assault in 2010, 19 were regional or remote. These findings may, in part, be attributable to reoffending rates, suggesting that young people from regional areas are more likely to reoffend than those from metropolitan areas (Shirley 2017).

Apart from locational difference, dynamics of power and control underpinning violence perpetrated by young people toward their parents, caregivers or other peers, mean youth-perpetrated violence is likely to be underreported. A 2015 report by the Women’s Health and Family Services in Western Australia, which examined violence by young people against a family member, noted “most families do not report their child to the police due to embarrassment, guilt, a sense of needing to manage their own children, and/or a fear of judgment about their own parental capacities” (Howard 2015, p.3).

The family and social circumstances of young people are not only the site and settings of violence, but are also correlates of involvement with the criminal justice system. Young people before the Children’s Court for criminal matters in Australia are commonly reported to have experienced family breakdown and/or family violence (Hemphill et al. 2009; Moore & McArthur 2014). Indig et al. (2011) found that 54% of young people surveyed in New South Wales youth detention centres had parents who had separated or divorced. Socially, more than half of incarcerated young people surveyed reported that their close friends had been truant (66%) or suspended from school (56%), while almost

half (49%) said their close friends had disengaged completely from education (Indig et al. 2011, p.45). Pro-social involvement was found to be a protective factor against recidivism for incarcerated young males in Victorian youth justice custody centres (Shepherd et al. 2016), and young people incarcerated in the Australian Capital Territory expressed a belief that they had become involved in criminal behaviour after they compensated for poor peer relations (Moore & McArthur 2014). Children unable to live with their families and placed into out-of-home care (OOHC) are noted to be at significant risk¹ for involvement with the criminal justice system (Borzycki 2005; Mendes 2009).

In a report undertaken by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2017), young Australians in out-of-home care aged between 10 and 16 years were noted to be 12 times more likely than their counterparts in the general population to be party to a juvenile justice supervision order. The same report noted that 6.5% of children and young people in OOHC, compared to 0.5% of the general population, were engaged in the juvenile justice system (AIHW 2017). Key stakeholders and young people who have recently left out-of-home care have identified a number of factors observed in young people in care. These factors may also contribute to higher levels of engagement in criminal activity, including: substance use, relationship breakdowns, financial instability or hardship, and significant learning or intellectual disabilities (Mendes et al. 2014; Mendes & Moslehuddin 2009).

Consistent with the known characteristics of young people in care, Indig et al. (2011) found that adolescents of Aboriginal origin were significantly overrepresented in juvenile detention, making up nearly half (48%) of adolescent detainees surveyed in New South Wales, despite representing only about 4% of young adults in Australia. Data retrieved from the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey found that high school education significantly lowered the likelihood of engagement in the criminal justice system (Ferrante 2013; Reeve & Bradford 2014), with Ferrante (2013) noting that the protective effect was greatest for those who reached senior high school. Young people with intellectual disability or below average intelligence quotient have also been shown to have higher levels of engagement with the criminal justice system in Australia (Frize et al. 2008; Haysom et al. 2014; Indig et al. 2011), and adolescents of Aboriginal origin who are engaged in the criminal justice system have an even higher incidence of intellectual disability and below average IQ than non-Aboriginal young people (Frize et al. 2008; Haysom et al. 2014; Indig et al. 2011).

¹ The term “significant risk” as applied here is line with the current practice on how to define and describe child protection thresholds.

The complex interplay of individual, family and social factors in the experiences of young people involved with the criminal justice system indicates the necessity of systemic responses to intervention and prevention. However, while there is a reasonable amount of research literature pertaining to young people who are in contact with the juvenile justice system (e.g. Houghton et al. 2008; Moore & McArthur 2014), much less is known or written about the service sector they encounter. This is particularly true from the perspective of the service providers, which is interesting given shifts from new public management models and the emerging emphasis on universal preventative, collaborative and multi-agency approaches. Howell and Lipsey's (2012) commentary on meta-analysis of juvenile justice research indicates a limited number of studies directly examining service sector issues, practices and interventions, with little importance attributed to practitioner voices. The perspectives and understandings of criminogenic factors held by practitioners may be important determinants of their likely rapport, engagement, management and/or support of the young people they work with. Frontline worker perceptions are also vital for contemporaneous understandings of the unmeasurable aspects of their work, its feel and fit with people and place, and how they locate themselves in between.

The following sections outline the method and findings of research focused on practitioner perspectives and the meaning and value they hold for intervention and prevention efforts. Data for this paper was drawn from a larger project exploring the educational experience of young people before the Children's Court for criminal matters in the Hunter region of New South Wales, Australia.

Method

This project was undertaken by a cross-disciplinary research team and was designed in collaboration with the local Children's Court Magistrate in consultation with a steering committee of key industry stakeholders. The project aimed to document and describe a point-in-time overview of cross-sector professional insights into the lives of the young people they worked with and the factors perceived as related to the occurrence and outcomes of educational disengagement and involvement in crime.

Sampling and recruitment

A snowball sampling method was employed to recruit participants from a cross-section of services across the Hunter Region. Steering committee and research team members distributed Expressions of Interest invitations to contacts across sectors, including police, education, child protection (Department of Family and Community Services), health and

mental health, juvenile justice, youth work, Indigenous specific support services and out-of-home care providers. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and interested participants were reassured they could withdraw from the study at any time without reason.

Semi-structured face-to-face or telephone interviews asked participants about: the types of crimes committed by the young people they worked with; the engagement of these young people with education; the factors participants felt contributed to disengagement with education and involvement in crime; and the challenges and opportunities presented to practitioners in addressing these experiences. A total of 31 interviews with 38 participants were conducted, and each interview was assigned to a group depending on their sector of employment: youth work, law, juvenile justice, education, mental health, Indigenous support service, out-of-home care, police or child protection. Of these, 27 interviews were with sole participants, three were with two participants and one was with five participants. Interviews lasted between nine and 50 minutes, with an average of 29 minutes. It was stressed to participants that they should not provide any identifying information or specifics about any situation or person, and they were not required to comment or discuss workplace practices.

Data analysis

Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using a constant comparative method of inductive analysis. All data was de-identified prior to analysis. For this paper, the lead author read, re-read and coded reflections related to the types of crime committed by young people and the factors practitioners identified as important to understanding this behaviour. An independent reviewer was consulted who conducted the same analysis and the two then met to compare codes and establish a unified set of emergent themes. This paper reports on convergent and divergent themes identified in respect to crimes committed by young people and the contextual understandings of these by practitioners in the region.

Findings

Analysis of data identified a number of key themes related to the types of crimes committed by young people in the region, their perceived incidence and prevalence, and factors that contribute to and contextualise young people's involvement in crime.

Violence is common across contexts

Almost 73% (27 out of 37) of the participants used the terms “assault”, “violence”, “sexual offences”, and/or “AVOs” to describe the impetus for young people they work

with coming into contact with the Children's Court. Crimes described included: assaults and serious assaults (against known and unknown victims); grievous bodily harm and assaults occasioning bodily harm; sexual assault and sexual offences; domestic violence and family violence; and attempted murder. While these crimes were described alongside theft (larceny), stealing, shoplifting, property damage, malicious damage, vandalism, stolen vehicles, affray, trespassing, break and enter, possession and supply of illicit drugs, participants across sectors commonly described seeing "a lot" of interpersonal violence, identifying it is a characteristic feature of crimes perpetrated by young people they work with. For example:

At the moment ... we're getting a lot of DV stuff. I think DV stuff on the whole is quite a common offence for young people to come in most young people, if not the majority, come to us with AVOs in place, various family members or neighbours or whatever. (Participant 20, Juvenile Justice)²

We're having quite a lot of violent crimes [I believe]. AVOs ... more assault ... there is a lot of violence, and we see violence as both women and men, young women and young men. It is like fighting, like peer fighting. (Participant 3, Youth Work)

Interpersonal violence was described as occurring within and across families, in out-of-home care (primarily residential care), and in peer group relationships. Participants perceived interpersonal violence to be not only a common reason for young people's involvement with the Children's Court for criminal matters, but they also perceived youth-perpetrated family and domestic violence and sexual violence as increasing in overall prevalence in their community. Commonalities in the descriptions of interpersonal violence in family and out-of-home care settings are underscored by the dynamics of care and control that exist in both contexts. Young people were described by participants as assaulting parents (notably mothers), and sometimes assaulting siblings and other family members as well as residential care and other out-of-home care workers, often alongside acts of property damage. Interpersonal violence in these settings was commonly constructed as unmanaged, or unmanageable, behaviour requiring or relying on external parties to enact power and control:

... families being increasingly dysfunctional are not dealing with the issues themselves. They're looking to the court to find a solution; jump out, get an AVO, get someone to deal with it that way, instead of somehow people working

2 This relates to the participant and their sector of employment – applied throughout.

on the relationships within the family or the family dynamics. (Participant 9, Law)

Competing understandings highlight the complexity for families and care providers in managing risk, and the way in which the, sometimes necessary, involvement of police in that process can take matters out of the hands of the family and the young person involved:

Mind you, there are many families where the parents have tolerated certain bad behaviour by the children, then it's gotten to a really dangerous stage with knives and physical assaults and all that, and they just can't cope anymore. (Participant 9, Law)

... they assault our staff or they might damage the property or steal our cars ... They're in an escalation because of the behavioural issues that they have and why they're with us and the trauma that comes from that. A lot of the time it's them not being able to self-regulate and reacting. Unfortunately, that leads to criminalisation of them, really. (Participant 13, Out of Home Care)

We become the last resort when their behaviour becomes a habit of offending and assaulting staff. It gets beyond what the agencies can deal with at times. (Participant 1, Juvenile Justice)

Interpersonal violence between peers was discussed in relation to fights, assaults, domestic violence and sexual assault. Participants noted that youth-perpetrated crime, including assaults and violence outside the home or care setting, was commonly committed in the company of peers. While a number of participants reported observing an increase in sexual offences – known to disproportionately affect female victims – almost a third of participants (n=12) also noted an increase in female-perpetrated violence across peer and family settings:

We're getting more girls, and the girls that we're getting are more violent and have more mental health issues. There's definitely an escalation in the number of girls and the level of violence that they perpetrate, probably ... over the last 10 years there's been quite an escalation. (Participant 30, Education)

We've found that girls are becoming more violent in their assaults. It's almost like girls have to prove themselves, or they're just ... they're becoming more violent than the boys. (Participant 27, Police)

Violence is multi-determined and multi-systemic

Participants identified factors contributing to youth-perpetrated crime, including interpersonal violence, as located within the individual, their family and their community,

leading to understandings of crime as multi-determined and a complex interplay of risk and sequelae. Individual factors, those located internal to or characteristic of the young person, included: observed antisocial attitudes and beliefs; a lack of communication and self-regulation skills; and a perceived prevalence of both diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, learning disabilities and/or developmental delay. Young people involved in crime were described as “having a problem with authority figures”, with the observation made that this may be rooted in distrust born out of prior (possibly intergenerational) experiences of disadvantage and trauma:

They don't seem to trust authority figures or even ... just adults in general. I'm not really sure where that's stemmed from, whether it's like a history of trauma or whether it's because they've been caught and now they resent authority.
(Participant 10, Mental Health)

Kids who have experienced a lot of family violence end up distrusting authority figures. They see authority figures as disappointing, unreliable, duplicitous, self-serving and disinterested in them. Their behaviour and their antisocial behaviour evolves out of that general mistrust and expectation that people are ... are unreliable. (Participant 1, Juvenile Justice)

Trauma was independently mentioned by 50% (n=19) participants as they discussed the lives of the young people they worked with who were before the court for criminal matters. Trauma was described as a complex, consuming and continuing context for understanding the behaviours of young people involved in crime in the region:

We've got a lot of kids here who've witnessed trauma, who are involved in that still, who witness it daily. The effect on them is huge, yeah. (Participant 36, Education)

Domestic violence and abuse, neglect, poverty, overcrowded situations, living conditions – and then ... on top of that a lot of young people have a lot of other complex traumas that are really, really significant. (Participant 21, Juvenile Justice)

Consistent with observations of both early relational trauma and crimes committed in company of peers, some participants presented understandings of crime perpetrated by young people motivated (consciously or unconsciously) out of a need for connection, belonging and identity – to be seen and heard:

Often for these people, maybe they don't have that connection with their parents or with any other relatives or elders. Their friends are the only ones who give

them that sense of belonging ... so a lot of the (criminal) cases you see, people are in company of another person ... (Participant 2, Indigenous Support Service)

Need – so many needs. One (need) is being heard. Because ... nobody's listening. (Participant 29, Indigenous Support Service)

Discussion of trauma was also linked to motives or reasons for crime, including interpersonal violence as a means of redistributing power, of regaining or reasserting control:

We've had a client recently who attempted [murder. She explained this [as] exercising fairness and equality through the rule or attitude of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; you hurt me, I'll hurt you; which seems fair in her mind ... She felt that that was justified and fair and ethical in her mind, even though it wasn't. (Participant 1, Juvenile Justice)

It's mainly for the power and the control because they've never had that. So, these kids ... that's what it sort of is. It's them getting them trouble or them getting the payback or however they want to look at it. (Participant 8, Out of Home Care)

Participants noted this to be a learned, socially acceptable way of resolving hurts, injustice or conflict in their families and in the regional community:

It's just how they behave. If you ... can have no domestic violence at home ... because they're surrounded by people who swear and yell and drink and carry on and just are dysfunctional, they grow up thinking that's how we all behave. That's how they end up behaving. (Participant 27, Police)

The terms violence, domestic violence and/or family violence were used by a third of participants (n=13) in describing and characterising the family lives of the young people they work with who are before the Children's Court for criminal matters. Framing this, participants also engaged in common and generalised discussion of a perceived acceptance of criminal behaviour among some families in the region. Families were described by some participants as being active conduits to crime in general through modelling and supporting behaviours outside the law and outside normative developmental behaviours. This included observations of familial transfer of drugs and alcohol, engagement in antisocial behaviour, and aiding and abetting interpersonal violence in the community:

Yeah pro-criminal attitudes and beliefs are then just prevalent ... It's a known behaviour. Often siblings are committing crimes together. So there's that connection. (Participant 20, Juvenile Justice)

We've had parents that say, I've told him I'll give him a packet of cigarettes if he doesn't miss a day this week, and you're like, he's 13. Oh well, he's going to smoke anyway, so if I can use it to bribe him to get to school. (Participant 30, Education)

A lot of that experimenting is happening at home with the consent of the carers, from the parents. Their first drinking experience is – we've had recently a 12-year-old telling her first drinking experience was with her nan ... It's not like a sip of beer... they're shots. It's like let's get wrecked ... (Participant 4, Youth Work)

We've had parents actually take their children to a place that has been set up to have a fight, and they have been present while this has happened ... (Participant 4, Youth Work)

The consequences of a perceived acceptance of criminal behaviour was discussed by participants in terms of an inevitability of an intergenerational engagement with criminal justice processes:

A lot of those families the families have within them criminal records so it's not that unusual. It's not ... I wouldn't say necessarily that families are happy when their children start offending ... They're not horrified ... They're not like disgusted and embarrassed like potentially some people might be from other areas. (Participant 3, Youth Work)

There's some pretty high-level crime the parents are committing out there and getting away with, and the kids just follow on from that. There's whole families of them, siblings, three or four siblings in each family that are all doing the same thing. (Participant 30, Education)

In this context, participants commonly reported that they felt young people lacked a real appreciation of either the impact of their crimes or of their involvement with the Court. These observations were made with some frustration by participants, some of whom struggled with a paradoxical observation that incarceration could offer a “preferable” environment for some young people:

Some of those things get quite high-level, and it's the people they damage along the way, the assaults they commit, the old people they rob, the shop people and

the – it's just like, they got away with it for so long they don't believe me when I say to them, you'll eventually – these crimes will eventually catch up with you. No, no, no, I got court tomorrow, aren't you concerned about that? No, they'll just slap me on the wrist and say, don't be a naughty boy, and I'll be back here. It doesn't impact them because they don't see any consequence. (Participant 30, Education)

Incarceration for our kids is not necessarily a penalty for them, because it's a safe, predictable place. Their health needs are looked at. They're getting three meals a day and they are getting education while they're incarcerated. So lots of our kids don't care if they have to go back. Some of them will think it's more of a home than they've ever had before ... (Participant 34, Child Protection)

Discussion

The findings presented above detail point-in-time observations of participating practitioners across a range of sectors engaged with young people involved with the Children's Court for criminal matters. The observations describe rich narratives of complex contexts characterised by disadvantage and disengagement as the situations and settings through which young people become involved in crime. In fact a defining feature of narratives presented by participants is that they are notably context heavy. Apart from detailing the types of crimes committed by young people they worked with, participants' discussion of these crimes was firmly cast in a gaze on the transactions and interactions that surrounded them and gave them meaning. Taken together participants' reflections on the crimes committed by young people and the factors that might influence engagement in crime coalesce around two key ideas – “crime as communication” and “crime as connection”.

As noted in the findings above, participants discussed crime, including interpersonal violence, committed by young people as a means of finding and forming identity – being seen and heard – and as a means of redressing injustice and redistributing power and control. Crime in this way might be understood as a form of communication, an externalised manifestation of airing grievances and meeting needs in a way that participants note may have been learned and/or accepted within their family and social contexts. The primacy of trauma and potentially intergenerational trauma in these contexts is important. It can be argued that trauma fundamentally impairs a person's ability to symbolise their experience, leading to an intergenerational transmission of trauma through often non-symbolic means and a common inability to narrate feeling states (Alford 2015). Parenting in this context leads children, in their efforts to share

and bond with a parent, into trauma-attenuated affective and behavioural patterns (Schechter 2004). Van der Kolk (1987), the seminal author in developmental trauma research, describes children in such families as “often developing difficulties in emotional involvement with others ... frequently characterised by withdrawal and caution lest the wounds of emotional betrayal once again be opened, or by intense involvements and repeated disappointments as nobody is found who can compensate for the sense of loss and betrayal they have carried since childhood” (van der Kolk 1987, p.181). The frustration and lack of ability to name, tolerate and regulate feeling states can lead to re-enactment of their own or others trauma, an overt communication of unmanageable and often unconscious dynamics (Pearrow & Cosgrove 2009).

In a similar way, the findings presented also identify a collective theme as crime as a means of connection. Participants detailed familial and peer transfer of behaviour and experience and a sense of acculturation to pro-criminal ideas and actions that engendered a sense of connection and belonging. Crime in this context was described alternately as a bonding experience and as an inevitability of intergenerational disadvantage and disengagement with systems and structures. While current theory and literature attests to the importance and benefits of belonging for the health and wellbeing of young people, it often assumes a “wholesome” type of belonging that is consistent with prosocial values and socially acceptable relationships. When belonging is discussed in relation to juvenile crime, it tends towards examining the degree of association between peers and the transmission of antisocial values, norms and behaviours that are reinforced through intrinsic and tangible rewards (Seddig 2013; Silverman & Caldwell 2008). This research suggests that there may be some merit in deeper exploration of the meanings and intrinsic rewards that young people attribute to these relationships (and at different stages of their enactment). Consistent with seminal literature that describes how crime becomes community and can be associated with the formation of deep social bonds, the sharing of resources, time, support and protection (Ferrell 1995), co-offending relationships might offer some clues about belonging, consistency and boundaries that can be replicated in non-mandated arenas.

Despite participants obviously being well intentioned and invested, often being able to provide detailed accounts of the lives of generations of families in the local community, common to the narratives presented were signs that the sheer significance of the daily work was taking a toll, with narratives revealing some cynicism, detachment and despondency about the experiences and likely outcome of the young participants worked with. In a way, while participants described young people’s crimes as motivated by

desires for connection and communication, there was a strong sense of disconnection between the participants and the worlds of the young people they worked with. Remarks and conversations of this type were mostly fleeting and were sometimes overridden or contradicted by the participants. Practitioner perspectives highlight the complexity of youth-perpetrated interpersonal violence and the need for joined-up solutions to a phenomenon that is so much about a lack of connection.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight that effective intervention efforts should be grounded in evidence, but need to be inherently relationship-based, trauma informed and culturally sensitive – consistent with a more inclusive and responsive “collaborative methodology” (Burns et al. 2013). Collaborative approaches are considered apposite in work with vulnerable and at risk families faced with complex issues when the nature of their challenges fall between the remit of different agencies (McDonald & Rosier 2011a, 2011b; Robinson et al. 2012). Faced with a seemingly “wicked problem”, the active involvement of many stakeholders in an ongoing process of reflection and problem formation will support responses to this complex social and systemic issue, responses that are reflexive and adaptive to context (Burns et al. 2013; Walton et al. 2012).

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Authors

Tamara Blakemore is head of discipline and field education coordinator for the social work discipline at the University of Newcastle, Australia. She is a member of the Australian Government Family and Child Expert Panel and holds a conjoint position with the Australian Centre for Child Protection, UniSA.

Louise Rak is a PhD candidate in the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University Of Newcastle, Australia, and is the Strategic Development and Partnerships Manager for the university's Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE).

Shaun McCarthy is the Director of the University of Newcastle Legal Centre (UNLC) and is Program Convenor of the Practical Legal Training Program at the University of Newcastle Law School, Australia.

Kylie Agllias lectures in social work at the University of Newcastle, Australia. She is particularly interested in research with vulnerable families about sensitive and often under researched issues. Her prime area of research and publication is in the area of family estrangement.

Xanthé Mallett is a criminologist, forensic scientist and educator with a passion for social justice. She is discipline convener for criminology at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and is undertaking research focused on gendered crime and forensic human identification.

Competition versus relationship

Youth services seen from New Public Management or ecological perspectives

Chris Krogh

In the youth services field, moves to the market-oriented, competition-based policies of New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG) have impacted on service funding, service delivery, working with other services and accounting for value. Under these models, services are purchased, organisations are producers of social outcomes and service users are rational and self-interested consumers, and evaluations focus on quantifiable effects, often measured in cost/benefit terms. While recognised as being central to the youth services field, relationships between services are expected, but undermined, through the processes of NPM and NPG. An alternative to these quantification and finance-oriented rationales is to take an ecological approach that sees services as inextricable from the relationships in which they are enmeshed. These relationships are integral to service achievements and service identities. Evaluation strategies that support story-telling are more effective in allowing the significance of these relationships to be heard. This paper aims to demonstrate that ecological perspectives can help to re-view the service landscape in valuable ways and help to make visible important elements that go unnoticed when competitive and market-based approaches are used. Two key findings from a recent evaluation process presented here illustrate how the ecological experience of services might be recognised, and implications of this for service development and evaluation are briefly discussed.

Key words: youth services, ecological perspective, New Public Governance, New Public Management, evaluation, Indigenous youth

The contemporary policy context of youth services is fraught with contradictions leading to a schizophrenic existence: they are expected to collaborate, while at the same time are forced to compete for their existence; expected to be innovative, while promising specific program outputs and outcomes; and encouraged to be local, while economies of

scale privilege state-wide or national, corporatised agencies. This conflict appears to be predicated upon a competitive and market approach to service development and delivery, which tends towards service monopolies, while recognising that meeting complex human needs is more than one agency alone can achieve. A small number of services survive even though many and different services are required. Some of these tensions are identified by the Australian Productivity Commission's (2017) recommendations for reforms of the human services sector. The issues are more strongly stated by Smith and Phillips (2016).

This paper argues that funded youth services (like all other funded human services) are largely thought about, funded and evaluated atomistically, as though they are individual and independent units that are expected to connect and work together, but whose achievements (or failures) are the result of their individual efforts and competencies, or lack there-of. An alternative perspective might be that services are one of many overlapping and mutually influential elements of an ecology, where each element is interdependent and intersubjective; each service shapes, and is shaped by, others with which it comes into contact. Further, they each rely upon others for their outcomes and each is what it is because of the existence of other elements in this ecology. This has implications for just and effective service funding as well as for program evaluation. This paper aims to demonstrate that an ecological perspective can help to re-view the service landscape in valuable ways. Ecological perspectives can help to make visible important elements that go unnoticed when competitive and market-based approaches are used.

To begin this discussion, this paper uses some contemporary literature about the influence of New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG) on the service landscape. It then describes different ecological perspectives, arguing for those that promote intersubjectivity and interdependence. The paper next illustrates how this was reflected in recent evaluative work for an Indigenous Justice Program on the Central Coast of NSW and considers some implications for ways that we see, fund and evaluate programs.

Background

In Australia, the UK, North America and New Zealand, human services policy and provision have been substantially reformed by NPM and NPG (Carson & Kerr 2014). Beginning in the 1980s, NPM increased the degrees of external management of funded services through increasingly regulated and competitive forms of service purchasing and contracting (Barraket, Keast & Furneaux 2016; see also Considine, Nguyen & O'Sullivan

2018). Following this, since the late 1990s, NPG has been developing as a process by which governments are more consciously integrating human services into strategies of governance. Such services are more deliberately utilised by governments to achieve their vision of public value and the social good (Barraket, Keast & Furneaux 2016).

NPM has focused on the marketisation and commodification of human services delivery (Healy 2009; Sercombe 2015; Smith 2018), while service users are reconceptualised as rational and self-interested consumers participating in transactional activities to meet their requirements (Healy 2009; Sercombe 2015; Smith 2018). Service providers are expected to be enterprising, entrepreneurial and competitive (Smith & Phillips 2016). At the same time, funding bodies expect them to collaborate and form strategic partnerships, although the extent to which this is happening in a committed way is not clear (Carson & Kerr 2010). Within a competition and market model, smaller and community-based organisations are at a competitive disadvantage compared to “big charity” (Onyx, Cham & Dalton 2016, p.175), where economies of scale support operational efficiencies and a perception of more reliable risk management infrastructure (Onyx, Cham & Dalton 2016). In NPM, reporting requirements are substantially increased and accountability is oriented towards quantification of activities and impacts in order to meet the dictates of performance-based contracts (Onyx, Cham & Dalton 2016; Sercombe 2015; Smith 2018). Mechanisms such as unit costs, which provide a quantification of the amount the purchaser (the “funding” body) is willing to pay for service provision to each individual client, may be used to set service delivery levels. Additionally, rather than telling the stories of practice that could reflect the part a human service plays in “the art of living well” (Sercombe 2015, p.104), cost/benefit analysis and social return on investment are used to articulate a service’s value (Onyx, Cham & Dalton 2016).

Sercombe (2015) argues that all knowledge-making involves a process of selecting what to pay attention to and what to ignore; what to admit and what to omit. Under NPM, human services work is framed by risk management rather than relationship-building (Healy 2009) and care work is devalued (Carson & Kerr 2010; Healy 2009). In this context, non-government organisations were found to have difficulties attracting suitable staff and were confronted by high levels of staff turnover due to a range of factors, including uncertain program funding and lower pay levels (Carson & Kerr 2010). NPM seeks a knowledge base about repeatable, transferable and efficient practices against which services can be compared, and to eliminate the messy, less controlled and idiosyncratic dimensions of professional judgement and decision-making. Rather than being technicians in a precision factory, though, Sercombe (2015, p.111) argues that

youth workers, and by consequence the programs in which they operate, “work in the infinitely variable flux of real relationships in an ever-changing social matrix, where those variations are precisely the things that are important”. NPM and NPG’s reductionism and commercialism invite the analogy of organisations as factories manufacturing units of “human service”, which are supplied into a consumer market. They are compelled to account for their efficiency as well as quality, compete for market share through strategies that include brand recognition and loyalty, and (ac)count their value in terms of outcome measures, weighed up in terms of costs versus benefits.

An alternative to this commercialisation might be to see organisations, services or programs through a metaphor of ecology. Ecological perspectives see, at a minimum, individuals (whether a person or an organisation) not in isolation and in competition with each other, but situated in contexts and formed in relationships. Bronfenbrenner’s “bioecological model of human development”, for example, sees human development occurring through dynamic relationships (process), with the individual and context having influence each upon the other (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 2007). The model includes different levels of influence, conceived as layers, hierarchically organised by proximity and strength of influence, each larger one containing the previous one(s). The important role of time as a feature of the bioecological framework and the (generally neglected) recognition that “objects and symbols” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 2007, p.797) are part of the two-way relational developmental process are other important elements of the Bronfenbrenner approach. Moving away from individual human development to more collective issues, human/social approaches to ecology recognise interconnectedness of all entities and the potentially wide-ranging and unpredictable consequences that can occur across the system from change in any one area (Rotello 1997). Another dimension in a socio-ecological frame is geography – all forms of “environment”, including physical location. This is an ecological element specifically named by Levins and Lopez (1999) in their consideration of ecological perspectives on health in the US and the need for a non-reductionist and holistic approach. Finally, ecological approaches emphasise dynamism (White, Rudy & Gareau 2015) – that is, things are never entirely stable or still, but are continually changing (slowly or rapidly), adjusting or radically reforming.

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2007) and others who use systems approaches to ecology suggest multiple independent units interacting in a particular context of time and place, thus retaining a degree of reductionism, even within a perspective of holism. Disturbing this approach are those that either soften or completely erase the boundaries between ecological entities and remove the backdrop of context (see, for example, Morton 2007).

In these approaches, entities may be seen as having a general degree of coherence but also uncertain boundaries or borders, having edges that are, at best, porous (Latour 2017). Following from this understanding, there is a recognition of continual interpenetration between elements, such that “the internal becomes part of the external” (Levins & Lopez 1999, p.288) and the external part of the internal. For Latour (2017), writing about Gaia, ideas of inside/outside are erased, as are the ideas of levels of ecology containing other levels, as per Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) “nesting”. Subsequently, there is no place for an observer to stand outside of the ecology. Further, extrapolating from Latour’s (2017, p.63) statement that “you can no longer distinguish between organisms and their environment”, ultimately that which belongs, or is attributable, to any particular entity is scarcely discernible. Within this ecological view, agency also becomes much more distributed, multi-directional, and the origin of action and/or change harder to identify. These ecological perspectives invite us to see entities as being entirely reliant upon relationships for their ability to be what they are and their ability to do what they do. These relationships include interactions with other entities, dependence upon non-human elements (Barnett 2017), while geography/place and time/history (Levins & Lopez 1999) are also significantly influential. Finally, ecologies do not pre-exist their being named. That is, an ecology is formed as a consequence of its being named/described by a participant/observer and, like all other entities in this ecological view, any ecology of interest has particularly porous boundaries.

While competitive, commercial and quantitative approaches to human service delivery could utilise systems’ ecological perspectives on the basis that they generally retain high degrees of individualism, with inherent reductionism and attribution of agency, “distributed” ecological perspectives do not lend themselves to such uses. When thinking about how to account for services and the differences they make for people or places, providing people with opportunities to give a narrative description and tell stories is likely to provide a better fit.¹

The importance of an ecological perspective was highlighted in a recent piece of evaluation work the author undertook for an Indigenous Justice Program on the Central Coast of NSW. In the rest of this paper, the author presents a description of that program, some indications of general findings from the evaluation, a discussion of two key findings, and closes with a brief section on implications of this argument.

1 This is not to suggest that there is no place for numerical data and statistics. These are likely to be valuable for measuring change with a person, place, group or thing. These data are less useful for accounting for the difference any one service, program or activity has made.

Background to the program

Stopping the Revolving Door is a program provided on the Central Coast of NSW by Regional Youth Support Services Inc. (RYSS). In the local area it is more commonly known as the Indigenous Justice Program (IJP). The program was originally funded in 2013 by the Australian Government's Attorney General's Department, as part of the broader Indigenous Justice Program, which funds "projects that seek to reduce contact of Indigenous Australians with the criminal justice system and improve community safety ... by reducing offending, victimisation and incarceration of Indigenous people" (Attorney-General's Department 2013, p.57). It started operation in July 2013.

RYSS IJP provides intensive case management services, including the option of independent housing, for young Indigenous people who have been in the juvenile justice system or are at risk of entering it. It was modelled on a non-Indigenous program already delivered by the service. The IJP grant application followed consultation with, and support from, key local Aboriginal groups. Some of those initial relationships have remained, such that individuals remained connected with the program and served as important consultants at key points in the development and delivery of the program.

The program design process, in which the author was involved, targeted "criminogenic needs" (Spiranovic et al. 2015). It sought to integrate a knowledge base of strategies for addressing the various factors empirically associated with offending that are amenable to change (Stewart et al. 2014), such as drug and alcohol issues, homelessness and housing instability, lack of education and training, disconnection from culture and family, and mental and physical health issues. Specific cultural dimensions were integrated as explicit elements of the model, as well as in all aspects of delivery.

Evaluation of the IJP

The initial development of the IJP included a plan for evaluation, which, in turn, included a mid-point process evaluation (see below) and an outcomes evaluation set for the end of the original three-year contract. To support the evaluation, a logic model² was developed that depicted the links between needs, actions and short- and longer-term outcomes for the young client group. The actions were focused on making a difference to a range of issues identified as connected with offending for young people (Indigenous young people specifically, where this information was available), with the intended outcomes

² A logic model is a diagrammatic way of depicting the different elements of a program, what it is aiming to do and what it is aiming to achieve. These are often presented in terms of existing situation, resources, activities, outputs and outcomes (shorter, mid-range, and longer-term).

being directly aligned with the actions. The logic model acknowledged the intrinsically relational nature of the young clients' lives, with connection to culture, community and family all included as important actions and results for the program. The logic model provides a reference point for evaluation by clearly identifying what the program is aiming to do and what it is aiming to achieve. Multiple methods are needed to identify the degree of success in these areas, as well as how these methods were achieved, for whom they were better and less well achieved, as well as the experiences of the program.

In 2014/15, half way through the program's three-year timeline, a process evaluation looking at the implementation of the IJP was undertaken. This assessment found the program was being delivered as intended, with positive levels of client engagement and promising short-term outcomes. It found that the program had a clear theory of change³ – as well as being focused on individual needs and providing individualised case planning. The service partners who participated in the evaluation reported being pleased with the program, experienced its collaborations as effective, and saw it meeting the needs of the young people it was serving. Cultural engagement was part of the program but did not take the place of meeting other needs such as accommodation and living skills and addressing health and wellbeing needs.

In mid-2016, at the end of the three years of operation, an evaluation of the outcomes of the IJP commenced. This ongoing work is a multi-stage evaluation, with a series of different steps being undertaken over a period of two years. The first phase of the evaluation, described and reported briefly here, took a “story-telling” approach. It focused on hearing about service providers' relationship with the RYSS IJP over time and their views about which young people, generally, the program did and did not work for and why. These focusing questions are consistent with the realist evaluation approach pioneered by Pawson and Tilley in 1997 and developed by others since (see, for example, Westhorp 2014; Westhorp, Stevens & Rogers 2016). This story-telling method, in addition to being culturally meaningful, sought to make space for specific details over generalisations and interpersonal elements over data/technical information, which Sercombe (2015) identifies as reflecting an epistemological approach consistent with a youth work/professional perspective.

Method and results

For this evaluation project, information was gathered during a series of focus groups and interviews. Three small focus group events were held, with four people participating

³ A theory of change is a logical way of working to convert the activities undertaken to results for the program participants (Nutbeam, Harris & Wise 2010).

at each. The participants for these groups were drawn first from the host organisation (four workers from RYSS who were directly involved in the delivery or running of the program) and then from staff of other agencies who worked with IJP as service delivery partners. Following these meetings, service delivery partners who could not be at the focus groups were contacted and interviews were arranged; three of these latter interviews were held. In total, 16 workers participated in the focus groups and interviews. The services they represented included a community housing provider, an Aboriginal health service, a family program, a mentoring program, a program supporting young people in out-of-home care, and government agencies providing child protection and juvenile justice services.

Following data collection and initial analysis, a meeting was held to present the initial findings to, and to get comment from, the evaluation participants. All participants in the focus groups and interviews were invited to this meeting, as well as two additional people who had been consulted at different points in the evaluation process. Twelve people attended this session. During this meeting, an overview of the first analysis of information was presented. Some of the important points from this presentation included:

- Routine reporting data showing that the IJP's clients had consistently needed support for issues including alcohol and other drugs, mental and physical health, and anger management. They had also accessed support to increase their independent living skills, education and training, and ability to maintain accommodation. In addition, culture-specific supports had been required, including "cultural identity support" and connections to community and family. While a degree of this assistance was provided within IJP, external service referrals were common and helped to meet the needs of the young people in the program. There were few needs for which there was no service available for referral.
- Young people and service partners saw IJP as a valuable program that made a difference for young people. Illustrative statements included:

Young people who haven't taken up IJP have ended up in the adult (corrections) system. (Participant 8, partner agency)

If he hadn't got stable accommodation, with support, he would have been dead. (Participant 6, partner agency)

- Participants were able to identify young people the program worked for and young people for whom it did not work as well. In many cases, success was dependent upon a good alignment between the high service intensity and the young person's level of need.

- Staff recruitment and retention had been a significant issue for this program. This impacted on service stability. Despite staff changes, the broader stability and intimacy of the organisation meant that young people were not without a reliable point of contact.

The discussion that followed this presentation covered many points including the evaluation process (see Limitations below) and reflection on the evaluation findings. From this latter content, two syntheses of the findings were articulated. First, the RYSS IJP not only made a difference for young people in the program, it had also strengthened a substantially stretched local network of services providing support for Indigenous young people with complex needs and offending histories. In this way, IJP made a positive difference for the service sector, not just for young service users. Second, the evaluation found that the successes of the IJP were born of a fragile harmony, reliant upon a number of interdependent and precarious factors, some of which were not under the control of RYSS; that is, the program was most likely to be successful when the following elements were present and enduring:

- The young person entered the program with a sufficient degree of readiness for change.
- The young person remained engaged with the program.
- There was a good match between the intensive support offered and the level of support the young person needed.
- There was enough stability of IJP staff to remain engaged with the young person and maintain consistency of worker/relationship.
- There were enough suitable local support services to meet the young person's needs which could not be met within RYSS.
- Collaborative service relationships were maintained, whether through formal agreements (such as memoranda of understanding, (MOUs)) or informal processes.
- The balance between practical and cultural supports was informed by the young person's needs and readiness, not predetermined.

Discussion – evaluations and ecologies

The evaluative activity reported here is one part of a larger process discerning the effects of the RYSS IJP over time. Future evaluation activities will include review of (re) offending and case management data, as well as qualitative measures such as hearing from young people in the program through methods such as interviews or focus groups. Although these evaluation activities and the findings are not yet comprehensive, they

provide an opportunity to make two comments about the program and relationships. The first is about how programs are conceptualised, the second about how programs are evaluated.

NPM creates an operational context of marketisation, competition and efficiency-based contracting (see Smith & Phillips 2016 for a thorough description of this situation) where relationships are functional/utilitarian. In contrast, the two key findings described above suggest that the RYSS IJP not only affects the lives of the young people who come into contact with it, but also affects, and is affected by, the services and communities within which it is enmeshed. The findings indicate that the RYSS IJP is one element in the local service “ecology”, where each program shapes and changes the others around it (they are inter-subjective) as well as being reliant each upon the other (they are inter-dependent). Westhorp, Stevens and Rogers (2016) describe this as programs being complex systems that are embedded in complex systems, with each affecting the other and impacting on what they can achieve. Applying these insights to service development and service “contracting” would invite processes that are fundamentally relational in nature, that recognise interdependencies and appreciate that outcomes arise within a field, not out of any one service.

Without an evaluation approach that allows these “relational” features to be seen, vital factors shaping program delivery and outcomes might be missed. Evaluations that measure reoffending (see, for example, Poynton & Menendez 2015; Ringland 2016) or even multiple aspects of a program but not its external relationships (such as, Cunneen & Luke 2007; Spiranovic et al. 2015) miss an aspect of vital importance to these programs. Realist evaluation, on the other hand, is a method that attends to a service’s setting – its ecology – by asking what about a service’s context allowed or inhibited its mechanisms to fire in order to achieve the outcomes it did or did not achieve (Westhorp 2014; Westhorp, Stevens & Rogers 2016) and can address some of this limitation. Accepting Sercombe’s (2015, p.107) view that how we look changes what we see in the “fog of limitless connection” of any situation, this article encourages evaluation methods that incorporate attention to relationships, understood in ecological terms of inter-subjectivity and interdependence, as a constitutive dimension of program identity and efficacy.

Limitations

The evaluative activities described here were not without limitations and flaws. During the participants’ meeting, where initial findings were shared, and in conversations following it, Indigenous participants identified that the evaluation had treated the young people

as isolated units within their lives and not considered the connecting people, places and cultural elements that make them who they are. Despite best intentions, the evaluation had not paid sufficient attention to the relationships that were important to the community. In addition, it was pointed out that the evaluation's focus was on funding body interests and not on community priorities. These are important limitations of this evaluation and aspects to be addressed in future work. The importance of learning what the community values, and ensuring this is addressed in evaluation, is stressed in writing about evaluation of Indigenous programs (see, for example, Hudson 2017; Rossingh & Yunupingu 2016).

Conclusion

Carson and Kerr (2014) describe a complex and variable landscape of policy-making and funding approaches for Australian human services over the past 30 or so years. During this time, state interactions with service providers have fluctuated between dictating terms and cooperation. More recently, agencies have been increasingly expected to operate within business models, with conceptualisations of services now based on market forces. Carson and Kerr (2014) conclude that the service delivery context has become competition-oriented, with a local devolution of responsibility but a general centralisation of decision-making power. Ecological approaches to the human services field (including youth services) start from a non-reductionist premise that foregrounds relationships with other services, with place, with time, with workers and service clients and with non-human elements. Recognising these entanglements and enmeshments in the process of funding/contracting, as well as in evaluation is a complicated but more just and more accurate way to approach youth/human services.

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Author

Chris Krogh is a lecturer in human services at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Informed by his earlier work as a practitioner, Chris' ecologically-informed research interests include the power of professional writing and the human impacts of changes to physical places. chris.krogh@newcastle.edu.au

SHINE for Kids ‘Stand as One’ mentoring program

The role of mentoring in supporting the transition from a juvenile justice centre to the community

Tanya Macfie, Stand as One Program Coordinator

Joel Robert McGregor, Stand as One Program Mentor and Associate Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Newcastle

Highlighting the structure of the SHINE for Kids ‘Stand as One’ mentoring program, this article explores the role of mentoring in supporting young people who are transitioning from a juvenile justice centre into the community. The ‘Stand as One’ program matches a young person in custody with a mentor to foster a caring, non-judgemental relationship so that when the young person needs advice, support and assistance, they have a neutral person¹ to turn to. Young people (mentees) between 16 and 21 years are accepted into the program three to six months prior to their release date. The program’s mentors, aged 21 or over, have been assessed by the mentoring coordinator as being mature and aware of the responsibility the role carries.

The need for mentoring of young people

The importance of protective factors in recidivist juvenile offenders is well known, see, for example, White (2015). Reducing a young person’s likelihood of reoffending, requires not only meeting their individual needs, but also developing family relationships, positive social group activities and community engagement. To enhance the young person’s protective factors, the mentor and mentee develop a relationship prior to release and continue this throughout their transition period by engaging in activities that might include attending supporting events, undertaking outdoor activities, or just having a meal together.

¹ Young people in the program use the term “neutral person” to define their mentor as they are outside of the mandated case worker and Juvenile Justice staff.

Mentees who are preparing to leave custody have reported that they feel pessimistic about their ability to integrate back into the community without resorting to criminal activity to survive. While the majority of young people exiting custody undertake case planning where they are provided with ongoing assistance, a number of the young men in this program have disclosed that they are fearful of being discharged from custody. They have in the past experienced barriers and access to basic needs such as accommodation, employment, Centrelink benefits – all of which is compounded by the stigma of being a labelled a criminal. This means that while they have been promised ongoing assistance with accessing housing, tertiary and/or vocational education, support with job-seeking skills and employment, emotional/psychological support, budgeting and financial counseling, it may not be delivered. This can be for reasons ranging from an organisation not following through with support, to the young person not having a trusting relationship with the organisation and/or worker. Having a mentor, however, can build the bridge between the young person and wider services by holding those services accountable, or being with the young person while they attend the organisation. As one mentee, a 17-year-old Indigenous male said²:

I left Baxter with seven case workers from different services and they promised they'd help me get housing and a job ... I have been out for seven months now. They've all brushed me and I'm still homeless ... My SHINE mentor is the only one still around.

While this young person has been able to maintain his life in the community with little organisational support, many young people find this distressing and return to custody. For some young people, custody is seen as a safe place where support is offered, as another 17-year-old male said:

They promised they'd get me somewhere to live and help sort out my Centrelink, but they didn't ... I had nowhere to live 'cos my Dad's girlfriend wouldn't let me live with them ... I caught up with my mates on Christmas Eve, got fully baked and out of control, punchin' on with some dude so I'd get arrested and go back inside ... It's not that bad there, I get food and a room and I know all the workers and boys.

The origins of the 'Stand as One' mentoring program

The need for a supportive relationship in young people's lives, a relationship that is independent of both family and formal organisations, was identified by SHINE for Kids

² All quotes within this article have been used with permission.

in 2010 at a meeting with the management of NSW Department of Juvenile Justice to discuss the concept of a mentoring program for young people in custody. Initial support in the form of a small grant allowed us to further explore identified gaps in service provision for incarcerated youth. The program began at Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre (NSW), where management were extremely supportive of the concept and welcomed SHINE for Kids' commitment to working collaboratively with the centre to turn young lives around and provide them with much-needed support when released.³

Further development in 2010 allowed us to employ a youth worker and to begin working with a small number of young people in custody and then continue to support them as they transitioned back into the community. The success of this pilot program was quickly recognised, and in 2011 SHINE for Kids expanded the 'Stand as One' mentoring program at Frank Baxter. The expansion allowed the program to train additional volunteer mentors to work with young people who were preparing to exit custody and reintegrate into the community.

Since the beginning of the program, the aim of the 'Stand as One' program has been to support the young people so they may define their own particular needs and achieve their own goals alongside the justice system and other welfare departments' mandated goals. The program works from a strengths-based approach and towards reducing recidivism for young offenders. The mentor works with the mentee to promote positive life choices and enable their potential. The program's key objectives are to:

- reduce the likelihood of young people returning to youth justice or entering the adult prison system;
- improve the young person's resiliency factors through modelling and encouraging the young person to develop and build positive self-esteem and pro-social thoughts and behaviour patterns;
- empower young people to draw on and utilise their own individual skills and strengths to enable them to reach their potential;
- develop a supportive, caring and non-judgemental relationship through fortnightly mentoring meetings/activities for up to 12 months in order to enhance existing communication skills, interpersonal skills and trust;
- provide the young person with a mentor who is focused on the *young person's* wellbeing; and
- work collaboratively with young people to help them plan and achieve their

3 SHINE for Kids has a number of programs which operate to support young people and their families who are affected by the criminal justice system.

goals. The mentor does this by providing their mentee with guidance, advice, pro-social options, support and encouragement.

Matching mentor and mentee

The correct matching of mentor to mentee is crucial to foster the strong bond and relationships between the parties. To achieve this, the 'Stand as One' program coordinator undertakes a comprehensive assessment of both mentor and mentee before the match is made. The young person's suitability for the program is identified by the juvenile justice caseworker or psychologist, but it is ultimately the young person's decision to participate. The eligibility for the program is confirmed by the Stand as One program coordinator through an initial intake interview. The young person must agree to participate honestly and openly in an assessment undertaken by the program coordinator to determine what assistance can be provided. They must also be willing to participate in the program at least three months prior to their release and a minimum of nine months after release.

The prospective mentor will be at least 21 years of age, able to show the program coordinator that they are mature, understand the value of the role and can commit to the responsibility of the role. This is done through a case-by-case screening assessment for attitudes and motivation. The mentor must be willing to participate in initial and ongoing training.

Once a mentee and mentor have been accepted into the program, the program coordinator begins identifying a potential mentor-mentee relationship through the matching process. Matching is based on information gathered on both the mentee and mentor from the time each entered the program. The program coordinator considers:

- personal interests
- communication style and personality
- attitude and temperament
- location of the community mentees will be returning to upon release from custody
- whether mentors have access to their own car or public transport
- mentee family dynamics
- mentor family dynamics
- any unique needs of the young person such as their cultural background, special talents, hobbies, interests etc.

The screening, assessment and matching process of both mentor and mentee has proved a successful model for this program. It ensures that people are genuinely interested in the program, an interest that is not merely self-gratifying.

What the mentees say about the program

What I like about my mentor is he always comes to visit me when he says he's going to ... that's a big thing when a lot of people have let you down before ... My brother always promises to come and see me, but he never does. (Mentee, 20)

If I'm stressing out and having a bad day and my mentor comes to see me, I always leave feeling heaps better. (Mentee, 18)

We can talk about stuff that I can't talk to boys in here about – like relationship stuff and how bad I feel about letting my family down again. (Mentee, 17)

I made a pact with mentor and psych that I wouldn't self-harm for a week I haven't self-harmed for 32 days now ... not sayin' that I won't again but I don't want to disappoint her. (Mentee, 19)

He helped me do my resumé and get a job ... I couldn't do it by myself 'cos I'm no good at spelling and all that. (Mentee, 19)

What the mentors say about the program

I feel useful again. It was really nice to hear my young bloke tell me excitedly that he used the techniques we tried in a job interview role play and actually credit that coaching, if you can call it that, to him getting the job. (Mentor, 52, male)

He has come a long way. I hope he thinks he is doing well because he is doing really well in my opinion ... He has a job; he's saving some money; he's got a girlfriend who he wants to make proud, and a sense a confidence that I hadn't seen until recently. (Mentor, 32, male)

Although the journey hasn't always been easy, I reckon I've learnt as much from him as he has from me ... I really enjoy spending time with my mentee, whether we're nutting out one of life's problems or chatting about cars, I always seem to learn something new. (Mentor, 48, male)

He told me the other day that he is so happy he can talk to me about things he can't talk to his mates about ... He said he thinks I'm like a really nice aunty that gives good advice ... I had to laugh when he said, "I actually trust you now, I tested you in the beginning ... you probably didn't know but I did". (Mentor, 25, female)

With the support of positive relationships, young people from the juvenile justice system have the potential to become active participants and contributors to the community. The 'Stand as One' mentoring model ensures that young people receive support beyond the confines of the institutions, the family and formal organisations. Without fear of retribution, the mentors' pro-social, non-judgemental support is vital to these young people in achieving their potential.

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Authors

Tanya Macfie is Program Coordinator of Stand as One, and Joel Robert McGregor is a program mentor. He is also Associate Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Newcastle.

Interview with ABC investigative journalist Caro Meldrum-Hanna

'Australia's Shame' was one of the most socially impactful media stories to break in 2016. The ABC *Four Corners* program put the Northern Territory's youth justice system in the spotlight highlighting the appalling treatment of minors at Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre. A Royal Commission¹ was called the morning after the program aired in July 2016. Presented by Meldrum-Hanna and written by her and fellow investigative journalist Elise Worthington, the program's reach has been far wider than anyone anticipated.

Meldrum-Hanna does not shy away from the hard stories and has an extensive history of impactful reporting, including exposure of live baiting in greyhound racing and the sports supplements saga involving many NRL and AFL clubs, as well as this year's three-part investigative documentary 'Exposed: The case of Keli Lane'. She has been recognised through many awards, including a Gold Walkley for Investigative Journalism, and in 2015 she was named NSW Journalist of the Year by the Kennedy Awards Foundation. She speaks here with *Xanthé Mallett, Joel McGregor, Erina Finau and Joshua Markulin* from the University of Newcastle about her work on 'Australia's Shame' and what drives her to bring these challenging but important stories to light.

Q: 'Australia's Shame' was really a challenging piece of investigative journalism. Can you tell us how the report came about?

A: We started not even looking at the juvenile justice system at all, and the Northern Territory wasn't even our focus. How it began was with my producer at *Four Corners*, Mary Fallon, who was really keen to produce a report looking at the overcrowding of our prisons – adult prisons actually.

I found a moment where I looked – burrowed – into the research she had put together. Boom-boom, red lights going off, I couldn't believe my eyes. The statistics were

¹ The findings of the subsequent Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory can be found at: <https://childdetentionnt.royalcommission.gov.au/Documents/Royal-Commission-NT-Findings-and-Recommendations.pdf>

staggering in the Northern Territory. The rate of incarceration for Indigenous people was the highest. Then when it got to the juvenile justice system, it was just totally off the planet. At any given time, it could be that one hundred percent of the children incarcerated were Indigenous, and the rate of crime there for Indigenous children was just so high. It really stood out. It stood out so much that it was one of those moments where my heart begins to race, because immediately I could see that there's the story. What is going on there? Why is it so high? That automatically meant that all the systems around these children – child protection, education – were all failing.

We then requested access to both the adult prison and the juvenile correctional centre. We could also see there was a really big investment, and the Northern Territory government did actually deserve some recognition for this, a concerted effort to improve conditions in the adult prisons. When we burrowed down into the figures and the funding, however, that (investment) wasn't matched with the centres for juveniles.

We requested access to both of the centres. We were given access to the adult prison, but we were declined at Don Dale. Obviously, my antenna is up: why allow us access to one and not to the other? We pushed and pushed, and they gave us access to both, then revoked it. By this time we'd booked our flights, and we were saying, "we have invested all of this money coming to the Territory, it's not cheap, and you've just revoked the access". We flew over anyway, and over several weeks it just went on – access was given, then it would be revoked, given, revoked, given, revoked. So that was the pattern there when we were on the ground.

What started as potentially a story about overcrowding in our nations' prisons, ended up being refined down into the spotlight being shone on the juvenile justice system in the Northern Territory ... It was like it was a hot, boiling pot of the biggest problems.

Q: Could you touch on the ethics of your reporting?

A: Giving your voice to the voiceless is a big thing.

I would like to say from the outset that my personal feelings don't have any bearing on what I choose to report and choose to not report. And I reckon the majority of journalists – the great journalists – they all say the same thing. It's not about how we feel about something, because how we feel about something is not representative of what the population feels about something.

I've trained myself to push those personal feelings aside. What I want to happen isn't really relevant. What's relevant is that you are searching out and seeking the truth, not

making a story to scaffold around what I personally believe is the situation, rather than truth. You're not making the story to prove a point that you yourself believe in; it's just to follow the truth, really objectively.

Q: 'Australia's Shame' gave Dylan Voller a personal voice within the media, and he's continued to be in the spotlight since the report. Can you comment on this further?

A: It's an interesting one. You can never predict what the outcome or the fallout of a program is going to be. Most of all you can't predict what is going to happen or become of the subjects in a story. The remarkable thing about this was that there were other boys that spoke in the program, such as Jake Roper. He spoke in the program; I thought he might get a platform and speak further about these things, but that didn't happen. It was that one individual in the report, the person who didn't speak in the program [referring to Dylan Voller], that ended up being the one who spoke most afterwards – because he could, and he had a position to.

I do think it's wrong to see it in a way that a program or a story gives a platform to someone. You cannot predict whether that person is going to want to speak about something again. Dylan Voller decided to; he chose to. I did not support or encourage him in that. I did not say no to him doing that. I actually never spoke to him because he was incarcerated. Everything was through his lawyers.

People were interested in him. I think it says more, too, about what the media's, the community's and society's levels of interest are in someone. I think the media appetite to hear from Dylan Voller was massive. It would be arrogant for a journalist to think that they are giving a platform to someone.

Q: What did you think of the response when the story aired?

A: Yeah, well, it was really interesting that the response evolved, I found. I think that when you ... when a program or a report or a piece of journalism goes out there, and it challenges people's perceptions because it confronts them with something new, and shocks them with something that challenges how they felt about that particular group of people, or about that business, or about that corporation, or about that government, sometimes some people are willing to say, "wow, gee, what I thought was wrong, and I'm really angry now that I believed what I was being told". Others will respond by digging their heels in even deeper. And, in this case, it was, "well, I don't care if that kid was tied down to a chair, he deserved it. I don't care that that boy had tear gas sprayed, you know, in close proximity to him. I don't care that those kids were in solitary confinement for that long. They must've deserved it. They're the worst of the worst. They've harmed

people themselves, you know, tough luck, kid, this is what happens when you behave badly, you deserve it". So, those two responses came out, and they were obviously in such stark contrast to one another. That's what people genuinely felt and really believed, and you can't change people's opinions.

The thing for me, though, is there is a difference between the truth and the proof. Every single one of us has our own version of the truth, our truth. We could all be sitting at the same event and there is an assault that occurs in front of us. One of us could be the police officer; another one could be the victim. One of us could be a spectator with our group of friends; another could be a mother who's watching a boy being assaulted and feels terrible about it. We're all at the same event, but we are guaranteed to all have our own recollections and our own version of the truth about what happened. Everybody's memory is going to be different dependent on what role you're playing in that scenario – who you are, what you've been exposed to, what your life experience is, what your job is. The police will have a very different view about it to the offender, but it's all the same act.

And I remind myself of that all the time. That (different points of view) is what is occurring. What I strive to do is present every single one of those views in a piece of journalism because they're all really relevant, so that's a fair way to go about it. And, when I said before there's the truth and the proof, that's the whole debate about the truth there; let everyone have their go about speaking about what they were involved in, but then the next bit and the golden key – the nugget – is the proof. So, of course, the boys and the young people who're in this institution are going to say, "we've been harmed, we've been wronged". The guards are going to say, "well, they deserved it, this kid was spitting at me, he was violent, he assaulted me, he threw an apple at my head, he bit me", anything. But then, what do you do with those two versions of the truth? Because again, they're starkly different from each other. Then it's the proof; we get the images, and that's the stuff that doesn't lie – the pictures and video – they never lie. And that was the power of that *Four Corners* program, because it wasn't people's recollections and their own personal experience; it was the proof. It was recorded there on tape. I think that's why there was that outrage, because people could see it.

Q: Social media is an amazing tool for journalists to gauge public interest. What was the reaction on social media to this story?

A: What I've learned now from being on these social media platforms is that it can become such an ugly and abusive place. People from zero exposure to issues and knowledge of them can shout just as loudly as a magistrate, or a professor, or an expert in

something. It's amazing how there's equal footing, but it also can become pretty vitriolic.

Twitter was probably the most heated place, and it evolved. It evolved from people saying "thank you for showing me this", "wow, I didn't believe that this was happening", to "this was a stitch-up", "you were duplicitous", "you tricked the minister into speaking with you". There was a pushback by certain areas of the media who have certain affiliations and were highly critical of the program.

It all went sort of topsy-turvy. It was amazing to watch, and it's actually really insightful to see how the political process plays out as well when it is hurting a party.

Twitter was one platform where it was a little bit intense. Facebook was different. Facebook was "show me more ... I want to share this with people", and it travelled broadly and widely. I've found that there's much more room for purposeful debate on Facebook rather than Twitter with its limited number of characters.

One thing I learned ... and someone very experienced, a very experienced reporter said to me, "Caro, just switch off". At one point she said, "just switch off. You can't, you won't be able to reason with them, you can't change people's minds. These people are nameless and faceless. Just don't worry about it, you've done your job, your job is to report this story, your job is not to engage on social media". Yeah, I found it a bit grueling.

Q: Were you aware of the particular response from young people?

A: There are not a lot of younger people on Twitter. We were hearing more from people in their, maybe, late twenties upwards. On Facebook, we were hearing more from younger Australians. They were like: "this is shocking", "far out man this is crazy", "shivers, I know what it feels like to be thirteen", and "look at those six guys that ran into that cell, I would've been terrified". You know, "shit mate, look at this", share, share, share, share. I could see more younger people connecting to it on Facebook, but by and large it was older Australians.

Q: It definitely allowed people to draw their own conclusions from what was presented to them, and almost immediately Malcolm Turnbull called a Royal Commission. What are some of the practical changes that we can see from that report?

A: Well, we've seen that the use of restraint chairs is no longer legal, is not a reasonable use of force; we've seen that extended periods of isolation are now no longer appropriate; we've had it confirmed through the Royal Commission that the system that was described as "the juvenile justice system" was not a juvenile justice system. It wasn't a system that was providing rehabilitation and justice to these young offenders who, sure, may have

broken the law, but many of the others were there on remand, hadn't even been convicted. We saw that it was a system that, rather than providing justice and rehabilitation, was re-traumatising and re-abusing these children, and that was confirmed in the Royal Commission.

Another really interesting thing – and I think such an important point, too – is that what many people forget is that these kids, I think roughly sixty per cent of the boys and eighty per cent of the girls, had experienced some form of sexual abuse prior to even entering the justice system. And a hundred per cent had experienced neglect or abuse of other forms in the world that they grew up in. They were the most vulnerable, traumatised group of young people, and they were entering a system that was re-traumatising them, I guess. And I think what people realised – and I hope they did through this program and what came through the Royal Commission – was that these kids, once they crossed that line, entered that door into that system, they were then the children of the state. They were the children of the government, the government was their guardian, the government was their parent.

Q: This raises questions about broader issues, such as sentencing, punishment and the values of the community that might be influencing the way these systems operate.

A: This was obviously a wider problem, and we saw that through the Royal Commission. There were lots of kids falling through the cracks and really getting down to the point where an Indigenous child would be in court. We sat in court for a couple of days and watched proceedings to get a feel for what the problem was. It was actually very, very, very upsetting. The kids had no one in their lives who cared about them. The only person there with them was their social worker, if they could attend. No one was there to take them back to any safe place, so they would go to Don Dale. The magistrate would be sitting there going, “I actually can't send you out of this courtroom to somewhere safe, so safer is for you to go to Don Dale, even though you haven't been convicted or you're on remand”.

I can't talk about sentencing, but I can talk about something being proportionate or disproportionate. That's what it's all about. Once these kids were in Don Dale, were the guards, and was that system, using a proportionate level of force and response to what a child had either threatened or done while they were inside, incarcerated? Was it proportionate to put Dylan Voller in the chair and hood him when he had threatened self-harm? The Royal Commission found that a better way to respond to that, if a child is threatening self-harm, would be to bring in a mental health practitioner to sit down with them, rather than shackling them to a mechanical restraint device and putting a hood on them.

I remember when I was visiting Don Dale and I was with Minister John Elferink, I was very keen to see and hear his explanation as to how apparently the juvenile justice system had improved. All these improvements that were promised, the programs that were promised for children when they were moved from Don Dale to Berrima, the old adult prison, they were (to be) there. Apparently there were going to be all these programs for the kids; there'd be a library; the rates of attendance for school while inside would be higher; there would be an on-site sort of mental health ... counsellor, a psychologist. None of that was there ... When they'd moved over to Berrima, there was still no on-site psychologist or counsellor there, even when, as I said before, sixty per cent of the boys and eighty per cent of the girls had suffered sexual abuse and were a hundred per cent from neglectful, abusive backgrounds. I mean it was just staggering. So, yes, they are going to be acting inappropriately, possibly violently and possibly quite often. But if there's no one there to guide them out of that behaviour or see them into regular schooling, how can there be an expectation that they are all of a sudden going to behave appropriately? It's just not going to happen.

Back to that proportionate thing, was that a proportionate response? Well, no, the Royal Commission said it wasn't. It's not proportionate to lock kids up in solitary confinement either. It doesn't do anything beneficial for them.

Q: As a Walkley Award winning journalist, how do you decide which issues to highlight in your reporting?

A: It's a bar that I've set for myself, and I always approach an issue or a story this way: Number one, will reporting this ... is it in the public interest? The second thing is, will it be for the public benefit? That's my test, and it has to reach that bar. It has to be something beneficial for the community, and it has to be in the interests of the community to hear it.

I remember many years ago, one of the first stories I did for *Four Corners*, it was called 'The Boy with the Henna Tattoo' ... about a little boy, about five or six at the time, maybe he was even eight by the time he was removed by authorities. He'd been adopted by a gay couple. They told the world that he was the result of a surrogate pregnancy. They wanted to become fathers, but they'd bought him in Russia. They were paedophiles themselves, but they presented a wonderful life of a happy, loving homosexual couple, gay parents, raising this boy in a wonderful community with lots of friends. In fact, this boy was being fed straight into a paedophile network. He was being abused from the day he was two weeks old.

I remember a lot of people saying to me at the time, “Why are you telling this? This boy’s been removed; he’s safe now, and it’s just disgusting and weird”. I said because it took a network to catch a network, and how hard it was to break into this paedophile ring, how amazing these police were, what resources the police in Queensland needed for this, what funding they continue to need, and also the calibre of people involved in this ring. There were partners from, I think, from a law firm or an accountancy firm over in New York; I mean, we were talking about high end people in this network and people at the lower scale. So it was also to raise education and awareness of this terrible area of offending and who’s involved in it. And it was a huge story, one of the highest rating programs of the year, but it was something that, contrary to what so many people said – “people aren’t going to watch that” and “that’s disgusting” – people did watch it because they cared.

And I guess you can choose what you want to report, but if journalists find themselves saying no to reporting things based on what they feel or think, or what other people in the industry feel or think, or what people in the community feel and think, you are no longer a journalist. You are in public relations.

Q: What do you think are the ongoing implications of the Royal Commission?

A: There has been criticism of the Royal Commission, that it didn’t go far enough, wide enough or deep enough. There’s criticism that there were no criminal prosecutions of guards or people who were working at these facilities. But look, the success of a Royal Commission doesn’t rest on whether there is someone that is charged or there is a prosecution.

Others would see the Royal Commission as really successful in that legislation has been changed ... things have been rewritten. There has been the lifting of the age of criminal responsibility and a push for that to become nationwide. And you can’t use a restraint chair there anymore ... So much has come from it. A big, big, spotlight has been shone on this part of Australia, and there is, of course, a huge round of funding for the child protection system.

Also, Don Dale has been closed and more kids are being diverted into programs that are non-custodial; so things are changing in the courtroom. These are all really great steps in the right direction. And also there’s training, much better training for guards and juvenile justice officers in the Territory, which is great. Also, in the wake of the report, we had inquiries in Queensland, Victoria and in WA. So the spotlight then was shone and picked up by other journalists, great journalists, who dug into it in other states. It became a national conversation.

Gender and relatability in digital culture: Managing affect, intimacy and value

by Akane Kanai

2019, Palgrave Macmillan, 195 pp.

ISBN 9783319915159 (ebook) RRP 53,54€

ISBN 9783319915142 (hardcover) RRP 67,59€

This book explores the practices and the politics of relatable femininity in intimate digital social spaces. Examining a GIF-based digital culture on Tumblr, the author considers how young women produce relatability through humorous, generalisable representations of embarrassment, frustration and resilience in everyday situations. Situated in debates about postfeminism, self-representation and digital identity, this book connects understandings of digital visual culture to gender, race and class, and neoliberal imperatives to perform the “right feelings”. This book will be of interest to students and scholars across disciplines including gender studies, cultural studies, sociology, and media studies.

Youth, class and everyday struggles

by Steven Threadgold

Routledge, September 2017, 246 pp.

ISBN 9781315725079 (ebook) RRP A\$31.82

ISBN 9781138849983 (hardcover) RRP A\$189.00

The concept of everyday struggles can enliven our understanding of the lives of young people and how social class is made and remade. This book invokes a Bourdieusian spirit to think about the ways young people are pushed and pulled by the normative demands directed at them from an early age, while they reflexively understand that allegedly available incentives for making the “right” choices and working hard – financial and familial security, social status and job satisfaction – are a declining prospect.

Improving services for transgender and gender variant youth: Research, policy and practice for health and social care professionals

by Tiffany Jones

Jessica Kingsley Publishers, January 2019, 208 pp.

ISBN 9781785924255 (paperback) RRP A\$49.99

A research-based best practice guide for professionals who work with trans and gender variant youth. Acting as a reference for practitioners, students and researchers, this book covers four key areas – mental, physical, sexual and social health – providing essential info and outlining professionals’ roles under these headings.

Body work: Youth, gender and health

by Julia Coffey

Routledge, March 2016, 162pp.

ISBN 9781138592841 (paperback) RRP A\$73.99

ISBN 9781315692609 (ebook) RRP A\$33.63

ISBN 9781138911512 (hardcover) RRP A\$252.00

The rise of the health, beauty and fitness industries in recent years has led to an increased focus on the body. Body image, gender and health are issues of long-standing concern in sociology and in youth studies, but a theoretical and empirical focus on the body has been largely missing from this field. This book explores young people's understandings of their bodies in the context of gender and health ideals, consumer culture, individualisation and image.

Muslim youth in the diaspora: Challenging extremism through popular culture

by Pam Nilan

Routledge, February 2017, 216 pp.

ISBN 9781315651330 (ebook) RRP A\$63.82

ISBN 9781138121027 (hardcover) A\$242.00

In a world where the term Islam is ever-increasingly an inaccurate and insensitive synonym for terrorism, it is unsurprising that many Muslim youth in the West struggle for a viable sense of identity. This book takes up the hotly debated issue of Muslim youth identity in western countries from the standpoint of popular culture. In the context of Islamophobia and pervasive moral panic, young Muslims frame up their identity in conditions that only see 'good' and 'bad' Muslims. It illuminates the way in which diasporic Muslim youth engage with, and are affected by, the radical Islamist meta-narrative.

How global youth values will change our future

by Gayle Kimball

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, March 2018, 300 pp.

ISBN 9781527505834 (hardcover) RRP £61.99

This book reveals the values and religious beliefs of Generations Y and Z, representing over 4,000 young people from 88 countries. This book is based on their own voices, rather than adult projections, from multiple-choice surveys. It also includes futurists' projections of significant trends to predict where society is headed. As the largest, best-educated and most connected generation ever, today's youth are creating a more democratic world.

Valuing disabled children and young people: Research, policy and practice

Eds Berni Kelly and Bronagh Byrne

Routledge, November 2018, 184 pp.

ISBN 9780367028190 (paperback) RRP A\$77.99

ISBN 9781315542430 (ebook) RRP A\$143.18

ISBN 9781138687080 (hardcover) RRP \$A\$221.00

Focusing on contemporary childhood disability issues, and relevant to the lived experiences of disabled children and young people and their families, this book addresses themes such as transition, identity, education, inclusion and service provision. It also includes insightful contributions on participatory research and practice with disabled children and young people, including an emphasis on capability, voice and communicative spaces for those with life-limiting and more severe levels of impairment.

Making change: Youth social entrepreneurship as an approach to positive youth and community development

by Tina P. Kruse

Oxford University Press, February 2019, 232 pp.

ISBN 9780190849795 (paperback) RRP £32.99

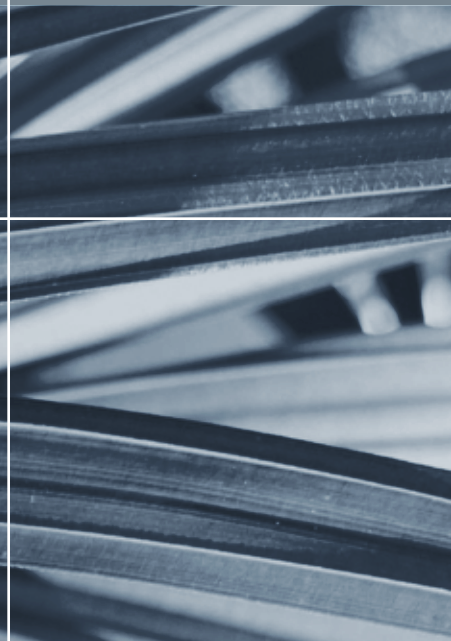
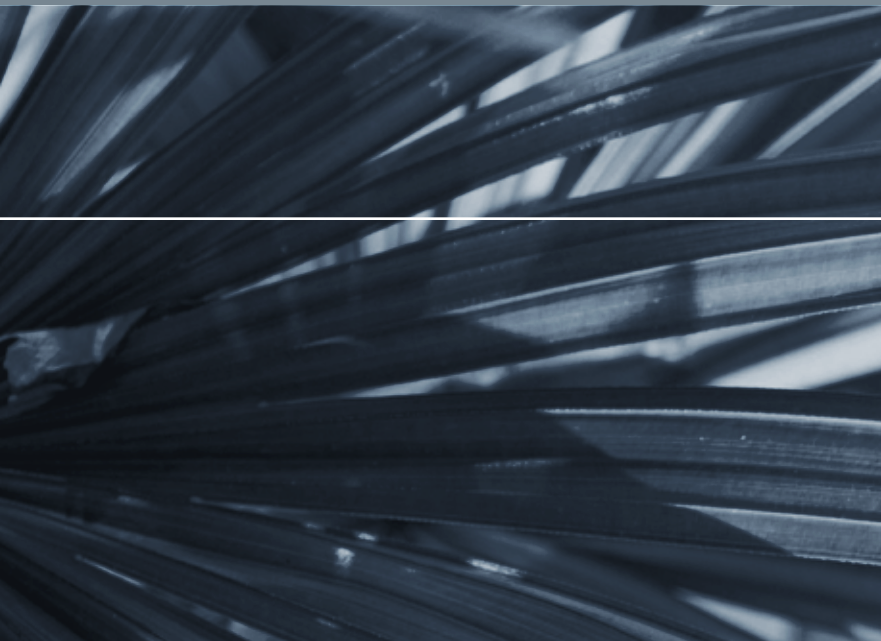
Making Change demonstrates the potential for youth to engage in social entrepreneurship to transform themselves and their communities. Effective for all young people, this approach is most impactful for youth in marginalised communities where the opportunity gap, suppressed social mobility and economic disparity are most profound. In such settings, engaging youth as leaders of social change offers the exponential benefits of personal empowerment, community enhancement and economic transformation.

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The mission and purpose of the Centre for Applied Youth Research (CAYR) is to promote and support the development of applied youth research, policy and practice, including the social, moral, cultural, emotional, spiritual and physical development of young people, particularly in the 12 to 30 age group in the Asia-Pacific region. CAYR's principal communication medium is the Journal of Applied Youth Studies (JAYS), an online interdisciplinary, research-based, peer-reviewed resource with information and analysis on issues affecting young people as they prepare for the responsibilities of adulthood and citizenship.



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**UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA**

Centre for Applied Youth Research Inc.
PO Box 5011, UTAS LPO, Sandy Bay
Tasmania 7005 Australia
Email: info@cayr.info