

**Beyond Good and Bad Practice: Disrupting power and discourse at
"Urban Youth". A Foucauldian analysis of the possibilities of youth work**

Deirdre Niamh Duffy, BA (Hons), MSc. Econ.

Thesis submitted to the School of Politics and International Relations, University
of Nottingham in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2012

Abstract

Youth work, as a form of engaging young people "in which the participation of young people is voluntary and the aims are broadly educational" (Harrison and Wise (eds.), 2009: 1) has been positioned as an inherently ethical practice (see: Sercombe, 1998; National Youth Agency, 1999). However, what makes youth work ethical and what constitutes ethical youth work is currently the subject of some debate. At present, two broad, overlapping schools of thought exist: that youth work is made ethical by the fact that the procedures within it are more equitable and fairer (Young, 1999; NYA, 1999); or that youth work is made ethical by the fact that it holds the young person as its primary constituent, receiving its 'mandate' directly from them (Sercombe, 1998; 2010). To this debate I would like to provide an alternative model of ethics which focuses on the potential to disrupt unequal relations of power and unsettle discourse. In doing so I will be able to highlight the existent possibilities for and limitations on the production of an ethical youth work practice.

This model is drawn from a Foucauldian reading of ethics. Foucauldian ethics focuses on the capacity of the subject to disrupt discourse and challenge power relations. Applying this Foucauldian ethics, the thesis explores what about youth work creates openings for the subject to disrupt discourse. These openings, I argue, are rooted in the *ambiguity* of the discourse of youth work. This ambiguity is the result of the production of youth work discourse by multiple, contradictory understandings of youth, adulthood and 'good' youth-adult relations. These manifest in the varying sub-discourses of positive youth work co-existent within the overarching youth work discourse.

Using evidence from policy textwork and ethnographic fieldwork at a youth club in Nottingham (Urban Youth) I illustrate how the co-existence of these understandings renders the subject-positions and subject-functions of youth

workers and young people in youth work discourse ambiguous. As such what constitutes positive youth work, a 'good' youth worker and the dimensions of positive youth worker-young person relationships is unclear. Because of this ambiguity, openings for critical reflection and disassembling of the subject (what Foucault considers as the epitome of being ethical) emerge.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been made possible without the support of a number of people. First, I would like to thank my supervisors – Dr. Sara Motta and Prof. Steven Fielding – for their constant and unwavering help, advice and understanding, particularly towards the end. They have been incredible throughout the project and I don't think I can thank them enough for the care and attention (professional and personal) they have given me.

Second, I would like to thank my colleagues in the School of Politics and International Relations and School of Sociology and Social Policy for their support throughout my studies. Specifically I would like to thank Prof. Bruce Stafford for the professional opportunities and guidance he has given me. Without his willingness to continue to employ me as a Research Assistant during my studies the project would never have been possible.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Máiréad Enright, Simon Bailey and Aoife Nolan, who have willingly (and without complaint) given up their time to read drafts, provide advice on fieldwork experiences and difficulties, listen to my frequently confused intellectual ramblings, and have ensured that my confidence and enthusiasm for the research did not dip *too* low.

Thanks also go to my office mates – Peter Cruttenden and Nathan Jones – for never commenting on how loudly and how regularly I talk to myself and for always making sure there were biscuits to hand when things went wrong. I would also like to thank Sarah and Katya for introducing me to the wonders of running, Kezia for introducing me to the wonders of yoga, and Phil and Frances for introducing me to the wonders of letting it out. My mental health, my peptic ulcer and I are definitely the better for your help.

Above all I would like to thank the youth workers at Urban Youth for allowing me to be part of their lives. Their stories, observations and conversations have been invaluable to the project. I can never repay them for the help they have given but I do hope that I have at least done them justice. To protect confidentiality, all names have been changed.

This thesis is dedicated to Mark,
who said it would all be all right if I
just stopped worrying

Table of Contents

Abstract2

Acknowledgements.....4

Table of Contents6

List of Tables9

Chapter 1: Introduction10

A brief note on terminology..... 10

Thesis overview 12

What the thesis does not do 17

Thesis structure..... 19

Chapter 2: Reconceptualising Ethics23

Introduction 23

Discourse, power and the subject 25

Discourse and ethical youth work..... 36

Foucault and ethics 40

Ethics and ambiguity 47

Conclusion 50

Chapter 3 Part 1: Methodology - Data gathering52

Introduction 52

Single case study research..... 52

Why Urban Youth? 60

Construct validity and ethnography..... 62

Textwork 63

Ethnography and fieldwork..... 66

Observing young people	89
Urban Youth.....	92
The young people – a warning note.....	101
<i>Conclusion</i>	102
Chapter 3 Part 2: Methodology - Analytic frames.....	104
<i>Introduction</i>	104
<i>Subjectivities and power relations in youth work</i>	105
A warning note on false binaries	119
<i>Models of 'good' youth work practice</i>	120
Theme 1: Pedagogy	120
Theme 2: Participation	133
<i>Conclusion</i>	149
Chapter 4: A Genealogy of Youth Work	151
<i>Introduction</i>	151
<i>A short genealogy of youth work</i>	154
<i>Early years</i>	154
<i>Albemarle</i>	164
<i>Fairbairn-Milson</i>	170
<i>Thompson</i>	176
<i>Connexions and Transforming Youth Work (TYW)</i>	183
<i>Conclusion</i>	194
Chapter 5: "We're not like school"	195
<i>Introduction</i>	195
<i>Social conditioning and Urban Youth</i>	197

<i>Critical pedagogy and Urban Youth</i>	205
<i>Subjectivities, power relations and social education</i>	215
<i>Producing the 'ethical subject'</i>	222
<i>Conclusion</i>	231
Chapter 6: "No come on – what do you think?"	232
<i>Introduction</i>	232
<i>Developing agency</i>	233
<i>Preventing exclusion</i>	243
<i>Subjectivities, power relations and participation</i>	259
<i>Constructing an ethical practice</i>	269
<i>Conclusion</i>	284
Conclusion: Producing ethical youth work	286
<i>Introduction</i>	286
<i>Overview</i>	287
<i>Evaluation and contribution</i>	289
<i>Blank spots and blind spots</i>	291
<i>Blank spots</i>	291
<i>Blind spots</i>	293
<i>Future applications and research possibilities</i>	294
Bibliography	296
Annex A: Fieldnotes extract	317
Annex B: Urban Youth – Monitoring Records	319
Annex C: Urban Youth Floor Plan	321

List of Tables

Table 1: Criteria for judging quality of research designs

Table 2: Researcher positions in fieldwork

Table 3: Strategies in fieldnote taking

Chapter 1: Introduction

A brief note on terminology

Before introducing the background and structure of this thesis I first want to make a brief comment on the terminology used – particular my use of the term 'youth work' and ethics. As I will show, youth work is an inherently ambiguous practice embedded with multiple sub-discourses and understandings of subject-positions and subject-functions within it. In fact it is this, as I outline in **Chapter 3 Part 1** that makes it a useful case study for the project. Indeed, as I will illustrate in **Chapter 4** (through a genealogical analysis of youth work) the practice is better understood as a discourse, a particular understanding of young people, adults and youth-adult relations. At the same time, for clarity, it is important to provide a rough indication of what I mean by this term.

My treatment of youth work follows the arguments of commentators such as Young (1999) and Sercombe (1998). These theorists conceptualise youth work not as a specific 'sector' (in the sense of a particular type of organisation) but as a *relationship* between youth workers and young people. By relationship here they do not just mean the emotional connection between youth workers and young people but also how each are understood (and understand one another) within this relationship; their positions relative to one another; and the assumptions and divisions that construct and sustain this relationship. Sercombe (1998; 2010) explains such an interpretation of what youth work is in terms of the notion of the 'professional'. What defines a profession, according to Sercombe, is not a set of practices, expertise or belonging to a certain organisation but the expectations, understandings and ways of interaction associated with it. To explain this further Sercombe uses the example of the dentist stating that:

A dentist isn't someone who fixes teeth. A dentist is someone who works with people to ensure their mouths stay healthy (Sercombe, 2010: 11)

The location of the dentist or whether they belong to a particular professional body is not what defines dentistry. Rather it is the aims and dynamics of their relationship with patients.

I will explore what defines or characterises youth work in more depth later in this thesis. For now what I want to point out is that because of this 'relationship-oriented' definition I do not fully differentiate between manifestations of youth work. This is most obviously indicated by the fact that I treat the Youth Service and youth work as synonyms. At the same time I do recognise that there are distinct structural (in terms of the managerial frameworks and rhetoric) within between these. The key point here is that by treating youth work as a discourse rather than 'a set of practices' or immersion in a particular organisation or agency the different labels matter less as, I would argue, all share discursive commonalities.

At this stage it is also important to reinforce what I mean by the term ethics. This is not a study on the ethics of youth work per se. Questions of the relative morality of specific practices within youth work will not be considered in this thesis. It is a study of *Foucauldian* ethics (this will be explained further in Chapter 2). The focus of this theoretical framework is power relations, the formation of subjects and the relations between subjects within and through discourse. The fundamental ethical relationship in a Foucauldian paradigm is a relationship wherein unequal relations of power and the subjectivities produced and informed by these power relations are disassembled and challenged. Unethical relationships, on the other hand, are ones wherein unequal relations of

power and associated subjectivities are sustained and reinforced. Thus when I use the terms ethical or unethical I am primarily referring to equal or unequal relations of power between subjects in youth work and the subjectivities relating to young people and adults in youth work settings.

This obviously means excluding a variety of different issues which could also be included in a discussion of the relative ethics or the ethical potential of youth work, e.g. whether it is ethical to engage in particular discussions with young people, whether young people can be made more ethical or moral in their actions through youth work, what it means to be a moral being and so on. To engage in a discussion of these issues would require a broader consideration of the nature of ethics more generally. This would make the thesis a very different study. As it stands the study's main concern is the possibilities for challenging unequal relations of power youth work presents rather than an assessment of the relative morality or ethical nature of youth work. Such an assessment can be found in the work of Sercombe (2010), Banks (1999) or Williamson (2007).

Thesis overview

This thesis considers the possibilities for and limitations on the production of an ethical youth work practice by analysing youth work using Foucault's theories of discourse and ethics. Youth work, as the practice of working with young people towards 'broadly educational' aims (see: Harrison and Wise, 2009: 1) has become a central feature of current political discourse on how best to support young people in society. Through policy initiatives such as *Every Child Matters* and *Aiming High for Young People*, youth work has become embedded in UK social care provision for the young. This increasing role has been accompanied by further academic discussion on what youth work's ethics and values are (see: Jeffs and Banks, 1999; Banks, 1999). Although, as Harland et al (2004) assert, youth work is "value-driven" (cf. Spence et al, 2006: 1), and portrays itself as

an “inherently ethical practice” (Sercombe, 1998) there is significant debate over what this means *exactly*.

In the main the debate relating to youth work’s ethics has broken into two camps: the ‘procedures’ argument and the ‘mandate’ argument. Within the ‘procedures’ argument, youth work is positioned as ethical because the approaches within the practice – how it relates to young people, what the practices of youth workers are – generate a ‘fairer’ and more ‘equal’ relationship. As Young (1999) argues, what makes youth work an ethical practice is that it “is based on a voluntary relationship with young people involving honesty, trust, respect and reciprocity” (Young, 1999: 5). The implication here is that youth work is ethical because the relationship between young people and adults within it is equal and thus the procedures of youth workers are ‘fairer’, more ‘honest’ and more ‘respectful’. This interpretation of youth work as ethical due to a presumed equality of power within the practice is further reinforced by the National Youth Agency’s statement of principles of youth work which suggests that youth work constitutes an ethical practice due to the fact that it “is informed by a set of beliefs which include a commitment to equal opportunity, to young people as partners in learning and decision-making and to helping young people to develop their own sets of ideas” (NYA, 1999; reprinted in Harrison and Wise (eds), 2009: 17).

The ‘mandate’ argument, on the other hand, is both an extension and a critique of the ‘procedures’ argument. According to proponents of this position such as Sercombe (1997; 1998; 2010), the procedures position is disingenuous as all organisations are unequal to a degree (due to the nature of power). This follows a Foucauldian understanding of power as the frame through which subjects are positioned, produced and controlled within discourse. According to the mandate explanation, what makes youth work organisations ethical is not that their procedures are more equal but that they position the service user as their

primary constituent and take all direction from them (see: Sercombe, 1998). The relationship between practitioners and service users, while still unequal, are "non-coercive" (Sercombe, 2010: 124).

However, such an ideal of "non-coercive" relationships in youth work have also been problematised as belying the potential disconnect between producing a 'mandate' based on young people's interests and viewpoints and 'acting ethically'. Predominantly, academics such as Jeffs and Banks (1999) and Williamson (1997; 2007; 2009) have criticised a 'mandate' interpretation on the basis that, at its extremes, it can lend itself to permissive or disengaged relations between young people and adults within youth work settings as youth workers merely respond without guiding. Such relations, according to Williamson (2009) debilitate youth work's potential to have a real impact on young people's lives by allowing interactions between youth workers and young people to devolve into non-specific "banter". This, as I will illustrate within this thesis, raises a question mark over the quality and 'ethic' of the support provided by youth work as it fails to challenge or critically engage with young people productively.

This thesis attempts to provide an alternative reading of why youth work might be considered as ethical. I argue that neither of the above explanations is fully accurate. Youth work organisations contain the same unequal relations of power present in the rest of society and the relationships between practitioners and service users are still inequitable to a degree. Applying the work of Foucault, this is due to the fact that the possibilities of these inequitable relations are introduced through the production of the subject in discourse. The unequal relations of power are an innate element of the production of the subject and are reproduced through the understandings of subjects (of themselves, of their position within discourse, of other subjects) not solely through their actions. As such 'equal' relations are not established through engaging in particular

procedures or through reacting to young people in certain ways but through disrupting the understandings that render these relations possible.

As part of this alternative explanation, the thesis extends the observations of Sercombe (2010) by adding Foucault's work on ethics to Sercombe's use of Foucault's theory of power. Central to Foucault's ethics is the capacity for the subject to disrupt discourse. The purpose of this is both to resolve some of the problems encountered when applying the 'mandate' explanation and to provide a more nuanced insight into the ethical possibilities presented by youth work. This is important as by identifying what makes youth work ethical and the possibilities existent for this, the production of a more ethical youth work practice can be facilitated.

Taking Foucault's arguments, I propose that what potentially makes youth work ethical is its *ambiguity*. This furthers Sercombe's arguments by advocating the notion that ethical practice is epitomised in the process of reconstituting organisations according to the subjectivities relating to service users. However, whereas Sercombe suggests that deference to the service user as the primary constituent provides a mandate which is more ethical, I argue that deference to the service user as the primary constituent produces a discourse which is ambiguous and tension-ridden as the service user can be interpreted a number of different ways. This is represented by policy and practice in which different (sometimes contradictory) models of ethical practice are promoted and different practitioner-service user relations advocated simultaneously. Such ambiguities and tensions open up further possibilities for practitioners to engage with the boundaries of discourse – to reconsider their subjectivity and the assumptions underpinning their approaches. It is this ambiguity, not deference to the service user, which makes youth work ethical.

To illustrate this argument fully the thesis does two things. First it outlines how different discourses are formed, emphasising the role of power relations and subjectivities in the production of supposedly 'positive practices'. This helps show the way through which particular approaches are constructed as beneficial. Furthermore this discussion illustrates the subject's role in the production of discourse – through self-subjectification and the enacting of particular regimes of power (see: Foucault, 1968; reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991; Faubion, 1994). In doing so the thesis demonstrates how subjects within discourse are constituted, regulated by and produce discourse.

The thesis then uses this discussion to reconceptualise the potential for being ethical in terms of the existence of discursive ambiguity and the capacity to disrupt discourse. Using policy textwork and ethnographic fieldwork (from an informal youth work organisation in Nottingham) it identifies the ambiguities and tensions embedded in youth work discourse and the possibilities for producing an ethical subject this presents. At the same time, the thesis also highlights the limitations facing practitioners, specifically the limiting effect of the discourse framing them on their capacity to be ethical in a Foucauldian sense.

Overall the thesis findings are intended to provide a fuller explanation for the ethical possibilities presented by youth work beyond establishing 'equal' or 'fairer' approaches or responding to young people's wishes. This thesis is not unique in exploring what makes youth work ethical beyond 'fairer' procedures and receiving a mandate from young people. Nor is it unique in introducing what I will explain as a Foucauldian understanding of ethics. A significant element of Sercombe's (2010) work is focused on reconceptualising ethics in terms of "transformation" (Sercombe, 2010: 11) towards discourses in which the position of subject (previously unequal, subordinate or dominant) is renegotiated. As I will illustrate in **Chapter 2** such an orientation is embedded in Foucault's work on the production of the ethical subject through discourse.

This thesis is distinct in that it does not just reconceptualise 'being ethical' towards such an understanding but also because, through analysis of both the genealogy of youth work discourse and the 'lived experience' of youth work, it indicates that there are existent possibilities for youth workers to act ethically in a Foucauldian sense. In this way the thesis both reconceptualises ethics (thereby deepening the explanations of theorists such as Sercombe) and applies this conceptualisation to youth work discourse to assess the current possibilities (and limitations thereon) for this ethics. As a result the thesis does not just indicate what it means to be ethical but also whether youth work can be considered as ethical according to a Foucauldian definition of ethics.

What the thesis does not do

In his commentary on educational research Wagner (1993) observes that every piece of research, regardless of its comprehensiveness, contains *blank spots* and *blind spots*. The former are areas where further research is needed or where insufficient information was provide; the latter are areas that were not factored into the original research approach. The existence of blank and blind spots does not, Wagner argues, invalidate research. Reports should not be judged on whether they tell the reader everything but on, as Wagner states, "how far beyond ignorance they take us" (Wagner, 1993: 16). That said, in order to avoid appearing ignorant to significant debates, I want to emphasise what this thesis does not do or what I do not talk about. This, I want to stress, is not because these debates or issues are unimportant (this would be fundamentally untrue) but because I wanted to explore one issue in some depth and because of this had to leave others to one side.

Principally this is *not* a discussion on the *nature* of ethics; it is an investigation into how youth work is produced as a potentially ethical practice using a specific theoretical frame. For this reason I do not consider Kantian philosophy, for example, or the difference between consequentialist, deontological or virtue-

based ethics. My starting point for this thesis is not *whether* youth work as it stands now is ethical (from an absolutist definition of ethics as 'good'/'bad') but the possibilities for producing a Foucauldian ethical subject embedded in the discourse of youth work. This introduces slightly more nuanced questions regarding the limitations on practitioners to be ethical (to actualise this ethical potential) within youth work organisations. The purpose of this is to provide an alternative viewpoint to current discussions. Such an orientation is also useful in illustrating the power relations that render particular discourses of youth work (what subjectivities youth workers and young people should embody within youth work, what the relations between youth workers and young people should look like and orient towards) ethical, problematising these discourses, and suggesting ways in which the ethical potential of practitioners could be maximised.

The thesis not a comparison of the difference between types of youth work organisations or the impact of the enveloping on previously non-statutory organisations under a statutory framework. As such issues which are of great import in youth work writing – for example the increased professionalization of the service in recent years, the introduction of training programmes – are given some recognition but are not the central focus of the analysis. This is also not a study on whether service users experience organisations as ethical; its focus was what about the discourse of youth work indicates the possibilities for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject and the limitations on practitioners' capacities to actualise these possibilities. As such, while interactions between youth workers and young people were included in data collection, the opinions of young people were not gathered. Although this leaves the position of the young person somewhat under-theorized, this does not necessarily detract from the research findings as the main focus lay elsewhere. There are other, more wide-

ranging studies – such as that of Spence et al (2006) – which provide this sort of data.

Thesis structure

Centrally this thesis projects a Foucauldian understanding of ethics as a better means of identifying what potentially makes youth work ethical. To assess this argument further the thesis adopts a combined conceptual and empirical approach. Predominantly it applies a Foucauldian-informed analytic model to a single case study (a youth club in Nottingham). Using different potential interpretations of good youth worker-young person relations, the thesis illustrates how the discourse of youth work – the relationship it is trying to engender and the needs of young people it is trying to address – is ambiguous. As such the precise discourse of ethical youth work and the subjects within it are unclear. The discourse speaks to a range of different sub-discourses in the subjectivities relating to youth workers and young people and the purpose of youth work it advocates. These sub-discourses (I label them critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency and preventing exclusion) are embedded with conflicting understandings of youth and adulthood and varying youth-adult relations. However, combining this with Foucault's arguments on the production of the ethical subject, the thesis argues that analysing youth work in this way helps identify the possibilities for and limitations on the emergence of an ethical practice wherein unequal relations of power are challenged.

The central conceptual basis of the research is outlined in **Chapter 2**. The chapter outlines how discourse forms and is formed through power relations and subjectivities. This discussion, as I will explain in this chapter, helps explain why the procedures-oriented interpretation of what makes youth work ethical is problematic. This chapter will also discuss Foucault's understanding of ethics not as procedures but as the disruption of the power relations and subjectivities embedded in discourse. Central to this conceptualisation is the capacity of the

subject to critically engage with the boundaries of discourse in order to recognise and destabilise the unequal relations of power underlying society. The chapter describes how this capacity is augmented by *discursive ambiguity*. The chapter concludes by arguing that analysing the discourse of youth work according to the subjectivities and power relations embedded within it helps illustrate the presence of such ambiguity and show the possibilities for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject.

Taking this conceptual argument, I then outline how I will explore the research questions empirically using data from a single case study – informal youth work (specifically a youth club). Information is gathered through textwork and fieldwork (case selection and data gathering is outlined in **Chapter 3 part 1**) Principally I adopt a discourse analysis approach to show: (i) how the dimensions of ethics are shaped by subjectivities; (ii) how there are multiple subjectivities informing the discourse of ethical youth work (manifested in policy and practice); and (iii) the – limited - possibilities for the production of an ethical subject this presents. I propose four potential interpretations of ethical youth work – each constituted by a particular understanding of youth and adulthood. These are outlined in **Chapter 3 part 2** and labelled critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency and preventing exclusion. Importantly this is only an indicative list. Moreover, as will become apparent through textwork and fieldwork analysis, these sub-discourses are not wholly discrete from each other but are co-existent within the overarching discourse of youth work. This reflects the fact that there are multiple understandings of youth and adulthood underpinning youth work policy and practice at any one time.

The key purpose of analysing textwork and fieldwork data through these frames is to illustrate the co-existence of multiple subjectivities in youth work discourse and the potential for ethical youth work to be constituted according to very different interpretations of positive youth worker-young person relations. In

doing so I am able to illustrate that there is no single model of ethical youth work – the discourse is ambiguous in the relationships and understandings it produces, promotes and constitutes itself by. Connecting this back to the theoretical arguments, by evidencing the ambiguities embedded in youth work discourse, I am better able to elucidate where the conditions for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject – which challenges discourse, subjectivities and power relations – exist.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then apply these analytic frames to youth work policy (textwork) and practice (fieldwork). Specifically I use UK policy relating to youth work and evidence from six months participant observation at an inner city youth club in Nottingham – Urban Youth. Applying the analytic frames from **Chapter 3 part 2** I indicate how the discourse of youth work was produced and is reproduced through a combination of policy frameworks and the 'lived practice'. By constructing a genealogy of youth work (in **Chapter 4**) I illustrate the subjectivities and power relations that have been used to produce contemporary understandings of what youth work should look like, what youth workers should do and what the youth worker-young person relationship within youth work organisations should entail. Through constructing this genealogy I will also show how the discourse of ethical youth work is ambiguous in these understandings, projecting varying sub-discourses simultaneously. Taking this genealogy forward, I will then explore the approaches and understandings of youth workers, illustrating how these are made possible through this discourse. Because of the relationship between discourse and the subject, as **Chapters 5 and 6** will demonstrate, similar ambiguities to those in policy emerge in the 'lived practice' of youth work.

Overall this suggests that the discourse of youth work is ambiguous, advocating 'multiple subjectivities and power relations. In practice this makes for a tension-ridden experience as practitioners shape their interactions with young people

according to divergent interpretations of 'good' practice. The result is a discourse which orients itself toward varied, and sometimes contradictory, approaches simultaneously. This emerges in the statements and practices of youth workers. At the same time, in **Chapters 5 and 6**, I illustrate how this ambiguity opens up the possibility for youth workers to produce a Foucauldian ethical practice as it affords the opportunity to critically reflect on the discourse informing their practice. That said, again drawing in the work of Foucault, these opportunities are limited by the nature of discourse.

The thesis **Conclusion** then revisits the theoretical propositions in **Chapter 2** and key research questions in light of the findings from this analysis. The thesis ends by suggesting that the findings from this study provide a more nuanced picture of what is ethical about youth work and the limitations practitioners face in trying to produce an ethical practice.

Chapter 2: Reconceptualising Ethics

Introduction

Given the limitations of each of the explanation for what makes youth work ethical outlined in the preceding chapter, it is therefore important to look to alternative, more nuanced explanations. To this discussion I bring a Foucauldian approach. Predominantly this is a discussion about *formation*. What the current discourse of ethical practice is, how it was formed, the subjectivities and power relations it produces, why these may be problematic, and what are the possibilities for the formation of a *more* ethical relationship between practitioners and service users that youth work presents. These are very different considerations. The first four points are fundamentally a process of identifying how the subject (in this case the ethical practice) is produced through discourse and what the problems associated with this might be. The fifth is more nuanced. It involves illustrating how the – potentially – problematic ethical practice can be remedied and the possibilities for such remedying encapsulated by youth work.

It is this point that the thesis spends more time on. Using youth work as a frame I illustrate how the discourse of positive youth work practice was formed, the subjectivities and power relations it produces and the problems that this discourse represents. Specifically I demonstrate how this discourse produces procedures which can reinforce controlling and unequal relations between youth workers and young people. Furthermore I argue that the conceptualisation of making youth work 'more ethical' oriented towards changing procedures is disingenuous as different procedures can reinforce the same unequal relations of power where not accompanied by a disruption of the subjectivities and power relations (in the Foucauldian sense – see below) that produced them.

At the same time, I indicate that youth work also has the capacity to disrupt such understandings and potentially remedy these problems. This capacity is afforded by the combination of the subject's role in its own formation and the co-existence of multiple sub-discourses relating to the objective of the practice and what 'good' youth work entails made possible and visible through the production of the subject in discourse. Because of these multiple sub-discourses youth workers gain the potential to engage in their own formation on a more critical basis as both their and young people's subjectivities and positions within discourse are made ambiguous. Without a clear subject-position or subject-function to occupy within discourse an opening for youth workers to consider their subject-position/-function more deeply emerges. Foucault addresses this type of critical engagement as a characterising feature of an ethical subject. It is within the nexus of ambiguity and 'becoming aware' that the possibility of producing an ethical subject that problematizes and challenges discourse emerges.

The role of this chapter is then to indicate how the subject becomes critically involved in its own formation, explain why this is indicative of the production of an ethical subject, and conditions under which this can occur. Specifically the chapter will highlight why ambiguity engenders the production of an ethical subject. Having established this, the remainder of the thesis will then explore the existence of such conditions/ambiguities within youth work discourse (manifest in policy and practice) as well as the limitations on practitioners' capacity to take advantage of these opportunities.

Prior to this however it is important to first indicate why it is important to consider discourse rather than procedures when thinking about how to disrupt produce a more ethical practice. To do this I will briefly show the relationship between discourse, power relations and the subject within Foucault's thought. The purpose of this is to highlight how the subject is produced, directed and

controlled by discourse. Importantly this 'control' is not a structuralist (see: Giddens, 1977) with the essentialised subject which exists prior to discourse oppressed from above. As I will outline further below, the 'control' of the subject comes from the fact that the subject is produced by discourse according to particular understandings of its subject-position/-function and what distinguishes it from other subjects.

This will indicate why it is important to focus the consideration on discourse rather than solely the actions of the subject as these are only made possible by the production of the subject through discourse. At the same time this section outlines how the subject is not separate from its own formation but that the subject is produced through self-subjectification. Such self-subjectification, Foucault argues, opens up possibilities for the subject to transform or "mutate" both their own modes of being and discourse. This will then be woven into the second part of the chapter where I consider what it means to be ethical from a Foucauldian perspective and the possibilities for this occurring.

Discourse, power and the subject

Within the parameters of Foucauldian thought the formation of the subject is made possible by discourse and directed by power. When trying to understand how the ethical practice (as the subject of discourse) is produced it is first important to understand what Foucault means when he discusses these concepts. According to Foucault discourse is constituted by the linguistic and material 'ordering of things'; it is "a space of differentiated subject-positions and subject-functions" (Foucault, 1968, reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991: 58). Foucault summarizes three criteria for identifying discourses:

1. Criteria of *formation*. What individualizes a discourse such as political economy or general grammar is not the unity of its object, not its formal structure [...] it is rather the existence of a set of rules of formation for

all its objects [...] all its operations [...] all its concepts [...] [and] all its theoretical options.

2. Criteria of *transformation* or of *threshold*. I shall say natural history or psychopathology are units of discourse, if I can define the set of conditions which must have been jointly fulfilled at a precise moment of time, for it to have been possible for its objects, operations, concepts and theoretical options to have been formed; if I can define what internal modifications it was capable of; finally if I can define at what threshold of transformation new rules of formations came into effect
3. Criteria of *correlation*. I will say that clinical medicine is an autonomous discursive formation if I can define the set of relations which define and situate it among other types of discourse [...] and in the non-discursive context in which it functions.

(Foucault, 1968, reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991: 54)

The central feature of these three criteria is the *formation* and identification of the subject, of the subject's position relative to other subjects and of the characteristics and identities associated with the subject (subjectivities) within the plane of objects. Foucault conceptualises discourse's role as making it "possible to describe [...] the divergence, the distances, the oppositions, the differences, the relations" between and across subjects (Foucault, 1968, reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991: 55). Moving away from a Cartesian model of an essentialised 'thinking' or 'knowing' subject outside of discourse, Foucault argues that the possibility for the subject to exist and for it to be recognised as existing is intertwined with discourse. From this perspective, the characteristics of the subject in its current state – how it is understood, how it acts – are given form by the existence of discourse. Connecting this to the ethical practice indicates that by taking a Foucauldian approach particular orderings of subjects relative to one

another, understandings of those subjects and procedures of those subject are only (i) made possible and (ii) made legible as ethical or 'unethical' through a particular discourse.

If discourse embodies the *possibility* for the formation and recognition of the subject then the *process* through which this possibility is *actualised* and the subject produced and controlled (to adhere to a certain mode of being) is embedded in power. The dynamics of the formation of the subject through power is epitomised within Foucault's description of the two meanings of the word 'subject', "subject to someone else by control or dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986: 212). According to this dual definition it is important not to see power solely as a process wherein the individual is oppressed by an external force or placed in a particular position by an overarching suprastructure. Rather power should be understood as the process through which the subject is attributed a 'position' and a 'function' within discourse.

Within Foucault's conceptual frame power is positioned not as an external oppressive force but as the frame through which subjects are produced and positioned within discourse. As such, from Foucault's perspective, it is both disciplining (in the sense that it controls the formation and actions of subjects) and productive (in that it is through power that the subject's position and identity within discourse come into being). Faubion (1994) outlines this aspect of Foucault's thinking further when he explains that:

The two ideas that came to guide Foucault's own investigation were those of the *productivity of power* (power relations are integral to the modern social productive apparatus, and linked to active programs for

the fabricated part of the collective substance of society itself) and the *constitution of subjectivity through power relations* (the individual impact of power relations does not limit itself to pure repression but also comprises the intention to teach, to mould conduct, to instil forms of self-awareness and identities) (Faubion, 1994: xix)

Foucault's understanding of power repudiates what he calls the 'juridical notion of sovereignty' (Foucault, 1975; cf. Rabinow, 1994: 59). This model, according to Foucault, conceives power as both a bounded entity used by some on others and a relation of control between the sovereign and the subject manifested through the exercise of the law. Such an approach, Foucault argues, belies the relationship between the subject and power. According to Foucault, as I will explain below, the subject does not exist outside of power but is produced through power. With power defined as the 'system of force relations' (see: Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986) which produce and order subjects within discourse. As he outlines in his Collège de France lecture *Society Must be Defended* (1975), in order to study power relations comprehensively:

One would have to study power not on the basis of the primitive terms of the relations but starting from the relation itself, inasmuch as the relation is what determines the elements on which it bears: instead of asking ideal subjects what part of themselves or what powers of theirs they have surrendered, allowing themselves to be subjectified [...], one would need to inquire how relations of

subjectivication can manufacture subjects

(Foucault, 1975; c.f. Rabinow, 1994: 59)

Here Foucault is emphasising that a comprehensive study of power needs to primarily concern itself with the production of the subject's position, function and relations with other subjects (their subjectivities) within discourse. Moving away from structuration theory (see: Giddens, 1977), Foucault argues that power relations are not necessarily embodied in structures which regulate and control from above. Rather it is through power that the practices and understandings of subjects through which such structures – as manifestations of discourse – are constituted, legitimised and sustained.

According to Foucault power is not something which is held by some and not by others but "exercised in action" (History of Sexuality). Power is, as Fraser (1989) explains, "anchored in the multiplicity of... 'micropractices', the social practices that constitute everyday life" (Fraser, 1989: 18). Moreover, power is not, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1986) note, "in a position of exteriority to other relationships [...] power is a general matrix of force relations within a given moment" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986: 185-6). In terms of the production of the subject, the key point here is that the interaction between power and the subject is not best understood as a straightforward hierarchy where individual subjects are compelled to act in particular ways through the imposition of rules 'from above' (see: Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986; Foucault, 1968). Within modernity, according to Foucault, the accuracy of this conception of how subjects are controlled is questionable as institutions no longer take such a responsive approach to controlling behaviour. As Foucault (in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986) explains in relation to the "modern state", control of subjects should not be considered "as an entity which was developed above individuals" (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986: 214). Rather current approaches to governing behaviour lend themselves towards a 'control society' whereby:

[I]t is not a question of socializing and disciplining the subject ab initio. It is not a question of instituting a regime in which each person is permanently under the alien gaze of the eye of power exercising individualizing surveillance. [...] Conduct is continually monitored and reshaped by logics immanent within all networks of practice. (Rose, 1999: 234)

One of the ways Foucault explains this productive/disciplining nexus in relations between discourse, power and the subject in modernity is using the concept of governmentality. This is defined by Foucault as the mobilisation of "technologies of government" which facilitate turning populations into objects - i.e. the production of subjects - which are divided from one another and controlled and governed through the normalization of particular modes of thought and action - i.e. power relations(see: Foucault, 1978; Burchell et al, 1991; Foucault, 1979, in Rabinow, 1994). These technologies constitute:

The 'techniques of the self', which is to say, the procedures, which no doubt exist in every civilization, suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of self-mastery or self-knowledge (Foucault, 1979, reprinted in Rabinow, 1994: 87)

From a Foucauldian perspective, governmentality - as a manifestation of power - acts as the frame through which discourse produces and disciplines the subject.

If discourse can be understood as what makes the formation of the subject possible then governmentality (as a representation of power) can be understood as the way in which this possibility is actualised. In considering this, Foucault identifies three ways that the formation of the subject has taken place throughout modernity: through the promotion of 'scientific knowledge' as truth, through dividing practices and through self-subjectification.

First, the attribution to scientific modes of inquiry relating to the social sphere and the use of the label of objective understanding in modernity, according to Foucault, has resulted in the production of the subject. The ascension of scientific inquiry proposed a view of society as a fixed, observable object of analysis populated by subjects who acted in certain ways. Foucault describes this phenomenon in his genealogy of the modern individual as subject (see: Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986). As Foucault states in *Discipline and Punish*, "knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytic investment" (Foucault, 1979: 305). In other words, the production of the subject – in this case addressed as "knowable man" – is facilitated through scientific investigation. Furthermore, by developing a narrative which purports to be objectively true, Foucault argues, human sciences have facilitated the formation of the subject:

We are subjects of the truths of human
sciences that constitute us as objects of study
(such as delinquents) and define norms with
which we identify (such as homosexuality)
(Simmons, 1995: 2)

Foucault explains this phenomenon in his critique of the concept of the "dangerous individual" in the penal system and psychiatry. The emergence of this concept – as an undeniably true model of how humans act – "is bound up

with the transformation of the mechanism of power through which the control of the social body has been attempted in industrial societies since the eighteenth century" (Foucault, 1978, reprinted in Faubion, 1994: 189). By embedding the notion that mania was an identifiable characteristic emblematised in particular actions, 'regimes of truth' were able to facilitate the formation of particular subjects and control these subjects.

Second, and associated with this, Foucault identifies the existence of 'dividing practices' through which "the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others" (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986: 208) as part of the production and disciplining of the subject. Foucault addresses these 'dividing practices' as acts of subjectification or 'objectivising acts' – for example producing 'the sane' and 'the mad' – which produce both a particular subject-function and a subject-position for individuals. By dividing society according to norms such as sanity and madness, health and illness, and morality and delinquency, power thus allows – according to Foucault – for the subject to be "categorized" and "identified" as occupying a particular position and having a certain way of acting (see: Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986). As Foucault explains:

This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognise and others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986: 212)

The critical point here is that through the division of individuals from one another made possible by discourse, the subject is formed towards certain understandings of their behaviour (subjectivities) and located within a particular position in the plane of objects (as a subordinate for example). These dividing practices thus represent technologies of government which both produce the subject and produce the hierarchical relations which can restrict subjects. It is therefore another example of how the subject is produced and controlled through governmentality.

Interestingly for this thesis the identification of 'dividing practices' as one of the ways through which the subject is produced and controlled resonates with the experience of youth work – as I will illustrate later on in the thesis one of the ways through which the position of the 'ethical youth worker' is produced is through the division of youth workers (as adults) from young people. This in turn produces the hierarchical relationships embedded in certain aspects of youth work. From a Foucauldian perspective then, the degrees to which the relationship between practitioners and service users is hierarchical depends on how they are divided from one another through discourse.

This leads to the third way the subject is produced and controlled in modernity proposed by Foucault – the process of self-subjectification. This is facilitated through human beings' self-identification as objects of social relations. The subjectification – or creation of object-identities – inherent to modernity propels us to ask "who we are in the present" (Rabinow, 1997: xviii) and "what should one do with oneself" (Foucault, 1979, reprinted in Rabinow, 1997: 87). Building from his disagreement with the Cartesian notion of an essentialised 'thinking subject', Foucault argues that the subject is formed through a process of consideration on the dimensions of the self by the individual and their self-location in the plane of objects. For example, the subject of the doctor is formed through the individual subjectification of himself (as possessing certain abilities

and knowledge), of his relation to other subjects (as their peer or medic), of his role (to make people healthy) and of his position within discourse (within the hospital and the discourse of medicine). Importantly, this is both a process of self-regulation – in that it is informed by the other technologies of government noted above – and a process of introducing the possibility for the subject to engage in self-transformation.

In conceptualising the production of the subject in terms of scientific knowledge, dividing practices and self-subjectification Foucault identifies another layer to the relationship between the subject and discourse. The production of the subject is not, according to these arguments, a process that the subject is uninvolved in; the subject (through their subjectivities, 'micropractices' and self-subjectification) also produces the discourse which makes their existence possible and identifiable. As Foucault notes, subjects are *discoursing*; "they form part of the discursive field" (Foucault, 1968; reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991: 58). Predominantly Foucault uses this argument as a way of explaining the dynamics of 'self-regulation' by the subject and identifying a further way that the subject is controlled and disciplined. Discourse, as I have already outlined, produces the subject which is then prescribed a subject-position and subject-function – their subjectivities – through certain 'technologies of power' (scientific truth for example) and through the enacting of these subjectivities and 'technologies of power' the subject reproduces the discourse that makes them possible. As Foucault explains:

There are not on the one hand inert discourses, which are already more than half dead, and on the other hand, an all-powerful subject which manipulates them, overturns them, renews them; but that discoursing subjects form a part of the discursive field [...] Discourse is not

a place into which the subjectivity irrupts
(Foucault, 1968; reprinted in Burchell et al,
1991: 58)

That said Foucault argues that the place and function of the subject within discourse, while predominantly targeted at reproducing discourse through the enacting of subjectivities, also includes the possibility of disruption and "mutation" of discourse. "Mutation" is defined by Foucault as "the displacement of boundaries which define the field of possible objects [...], the new position and role occupied by the speaking subject [...], a new mode of functioning of language with respect to objects [...] [and] a new form of localization and circulation of discourse within society" (ibid: 56-7). As a totality, these four aspects represent the process of the subject transforming itself towards a different mode of being and position within discourse and the process of renegotiating the parameters for the subject's attributes and functions that discourse makes possible. The subject is both given form by and has the capacity to form discourse.

This positioning of the subject as a product and *producer* of discourse – and as both disciplined and enabled through discourse - is not only one of the key distinctions between a structuration approach (see: Giddens, 1977) and Foucault's work but also a crucial point for this thesis. The formation of the self through self-subjectification helps explain the dynamics of self-regulation and the possibilities for self-transformation within discourse. Self-subjectification, according to governmentality, is both a means through which the subject reinforces its own position relative to other subjects and subjectivities within discourse (and reproduces the discourse that makes these possible) and an opening for the subject to 'mutate', to transform themselves towards a new position and mode of being within discourse. As I will illustrate later in this

chapter, this role is essential to understanding how the production of the ethical subject occurs.

Discourse and ethical youth work

Applying a Foucauldian approach provides a more nuanced insight into how the ethical practice – embodied in the image of the ‘ethical youth worker’ – is produced and identified. It illustrates that our interpretation of positive youth work is a product of a particular discourse and directed by power relations. As such there is neither an essentialised ‘good’ practice nor a single ‘good’ model of being a youth worker; these are manifestations of the subjectivities and systems of power embedded in discourse. A Foucauldian approach also indicates the role of the subject in the production of discourse. As Foucault points out, discourse is produced through the enacting of the subjectivities made possible by discourse and formed through techniques of power. According to Foucault, this means that the subject is both an active agent in the reproduction of discourse and power relations and that the subject has the capacity to ‘mutate’ or transform discourse. As I will return to later, this is a critical point as it indicates how the different discourses of youth-adult relations were produced, how they are sustained and introduces the possibility for youth workers to challenge these discourses. At the same time, Foucault’s work on governmentality illustrates how the subject is also disciplined to reproduce particular formations of power relations by discourse. This process of control is embedded in the subjectivities, roles and relations with other subjects associated with the subject in discourse during its formation. This nexus between production of the subject and disciplining of the subject will be critical to appreciating fully the capacity of youth work practitioners to transform towards a more ethical practice wherein relations between young people and adults are disrupted.

In terms of proposing an alternative rationale for what makes youth work ethical applying a Foucauldian approach achieves two things. First it reinforces my

critique of a procedures-oriented interpretation. Such a procedures-oriented view neglects the fact that what is considered ethical at a particular moment is a manifestation of discourse. It is through discourse, according to Foucault, that the actions of subjects are rendered legitimate. As Foucault explains in relation to the prison, it was because of the dimensions of discourse, and the understandings embedded within it, that:

The practice of imprisonment [...] – ancient enough in itself – was capable of being accepted at a certain moment as a principal component of the penal system, thus coming to seem an altogether natural, self-evident and indispensable part of it (Foucault, 1981, reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991: 75)

By connecting the legitimacy of the actions of subjects – or their identification as legitimate forms of action – to discourse in this way, Foucault highlights how there are no essentialised good/positive or bad/negative approaches. Particular procedures are deemed positive relative to the discourse and power relations they are framed by and can equally be interpreted as negative. As such a procedurally-oriented understanding of how to be ethical and how an ethical youth work practice is formed is misleading. Such a view belies the fact that these procedures are rendered ethical by the discourse (and the ordering of subjects and technologies of government within it) they are framed by. They have no meaning (either as positive/good or negative/bad) in themselves. I will explore this critique further in the empirical section of this thesis by illustrating how supposedly ethical practices can be equally interpreted as unethical depending on how youth, adulthood and youth-adult relations (the key elements of youth work discourse) are understood and on how young people and adults are 'divided' from one another within discourse.

Furthermore, it is important, Foucault describes, "never to imagine that one can change [power relations and discourse] like arbitrary axioms" (Foucault, 1979, reprinted in Faubion, 1994: 448) and to remember that the process of altering discourse:

Is tied to a whole, often quite complex set of modifications which may occur either outside it (in the forms of production, in the social relations, in the political institutions), or within it (the techniques for determining objects, in the refinement and adjustment of concepts, in the accumulation of data), or alongside it (in other discursive practices). (Foucault, 1970, reprinted in Rabinow, 1994: 12)

Such a reading is important as it indicates that altering procedures will not necessarily lead to a change in the relations between practitioners and service users. As Foucault indicates, these procedures and relations are produced within a discourse which the subject (through its subjectivities) also produces. Applying Foucauldian logic thus potentially provides a fully understanding of why changing procedures may not engender a more ethical practice. Without challenging subjectivities and the power relations which facilitate their production, the discourse which sustains them will be reproduced. This is something I will return to later as I show how the discourses of youth-adult relations (and the understandings of ethical practice they convey) are produced by subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood and it is through challenging these subjectivities that the relations are changed.

Second, a Foucauldian approach also strengthens and tightens Sercombe's (2010) argument that a more ethical youth work involves disrupting the position

of young people (as subordinate subjects) and adults (as dominant subjects) within discourse. This is indicated in Foucault within his discussion of governmentality and dividing practices. Here Foucault describes how hierarchical relations between subjects (for example the sane and the mad) are produced by how these subjects are divided from one another within discourse. However, as I noted in the Introduction what limits this 'mandate' interpretation is that it does not go far enough to proposing how to achieve such repositioning. While it correctly identifies that youth work is not 'made ethical' in their formation, it does not fully recognise that such a formation may merely reinforce the unequal relations it ostensibly breaks away from if it focuses on solely changing subjects position relative to one another rather than exploring the rationale for these locations (i.e. how their locations were made possible through dividing practices and 'scientific' knowledge). As I will subsequently outline, the production of an ethical practice requires a critical reconsideration of the power relations which facilitate the formation of 'unethical' or unequal relations between subjects in the first place. In the absence of this reconsideration, even procedures which purport to be ethical can reinforce subject-positionings and subject-identities symptomatic of unequal relations of power.

This problem is alluded to by O'Donoghue et al (2002) who, in the context of youth participation initiatives, describe how the allocation of management responsibilities to young people can reinforce unequal relations between young people and adults when not accompanied by a consideration of how these unequal relations came to be. As I will explain further below, it is through critically engaging with the boundaries of discourse and reflecting on the assumptions sustaining and produced by such power relations that the possibilities for the formation of a more ethical practice emerge.

What makes youth work ethical from a Foucauldian perspective is the opportunities for critical engagement with discourse and power relations it

presents. These opportunities, I argue, emerge from the fact that the discourse of youth work is a manifestation of multiple sub-discourses which produce and support differing relations between and understandings of subjects in everyday practices. The co-existence of these sub-discourses produces an ambiguous understanding of what 'good' youth workers do and of how relations between youth workers and young people should be structured. The 'subject' – in this case 'good' youth work - produced by discourse is thus unclear in its objectives. The process of self-subjectification, within this context, results both in youth workers self-regulating towards an unclear, tension-ridden discourse and being presented with openings for self-transforming through a disassembling of the self (I explain this further below) due to this lack of discursive clarity. Importantly, as I will demonstrate in later chapters, youth workers cannot *choose* to self-transform rather than self-regulate, both occur at the same time. The key principle is that there are openings for the self-transformation to lead to a 'mutation' in discourse and their subject-positions/-functions. At the same time, a Foucauldian approach also helps illustrate where the limitations on the capacity of practitioners to take advantage of such openings is limited. The remainder of this chapter will outline the opportunities for the production of an ethical youth work in more depth using Foucault's conceptualisation of the ethical subject and its relationship with ambiguity. The limitations on the production of the ethical subject will then be explored by applying Foucault's arguments to fieldwork evidence.

Foucault and ethics

Appropriating a Foucauldian approach implies a move away from conceptualising the ethical practice as embodied in specific procedures or codes focusing instead on how it is formed within discourse and the power relations it represents. Considered discursively, particular ethical approaches do not have meaning in themselves but are given meaning by the discourse which constitutes them. As

Connolly (1993) explains, 'ethical codes' are neither absolutely right nor wrong but are manifestations of the forms of governmentality which are shaped by and shape discourse. Performing to an ethic, according to Foucault, should not be conflated with adhering to particular laws as these laws are the frames through which discourse reconstitutes itself towards a particular ordering of subjects.

The distinction here is explained by Connolly (1993) who describes Foucault's project as targeted at differentiating a codified view of ethics emblemized in normalized morals of 'good' and 'evil' – which Rose (1999) considers as part of the 'control society' – from an ethics based on critically assessing the unequal relations of power (or varying degrees of hierarchy) embedded in discourse and understanding how these relations came to exist. The primary purpose of ethics according to Foucault should not be to find precise codes of ethical practice as these are representations of discourse and serve to discipline subjects but to disrupt discourse and power relations through becoming aware of the subject-position, subjectivity and subject-function - as well as their impact on other subjects – produced by it (Foucault describes this as the "care for the self"). Through becoming aware in how it was formed and the systems of power which both facilitated and resulted from this formation, the subject may transform themselves towards a being outside of the subject-position they currently occupy and subject-function they currently embody (in other words 'mutate' their subjectivities in discourse). As Foucault (1985) describes ethics is the:

Process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve his moral goal. And this requires him to act upon himself,

to monitor, test, improve and transform
himself (Foucault, 1985: 28)

The process of 'becoming an ethical being', according to Foucault, provokes the subject to critically engage with the discourse and power relations his subjectivities are produced and framed by. This is a decidedly different interpretation to a vision of 'being ethical' characterised by adherence to particular accepted procedures. It focuses on the subject's capacity to act as an agent of his own formation and the possibilities for the self-subjectification which Foucault addresses as one of the "technologies of government" to become mobilised by the subject as a mechanism for "mutation". By this Foucault means the displacement of the boundaries, identities, norms and roles which discipline the subject and the emergence of a "new mode of functioning" and new position within discourse (see: Foucault, 1968; reprinted in Burchell et al, 1991: 57).

Building on this argument, Foucault identifies four emblematic features of the ethical subject: ethical substance, mode of subjectification, ethical work and *telos* (Rabinow, 1994: xxvii). A brief summary of each of these is provided below (Rabinow, 1994: xxvii – xxxviii):

Ethical substance: The will to knowledge¹:

- The way the individual has to constitute this of that part of himself as the prime material of his moral conduct. Rather than adhering to scientific 'truths' or knowledge, the subject commits himself to exploring his own subjectivities and asserts "I will not deceive, even myself"

Mode of subjectification: Self- stylization or form-giving:

¹ Foucault delineates between the "will to knowledge" and the "will to truth" (Foucault, 1970; reprinted in Rabinow, 1994). The former, according to Foucault, invokes a critical reflection with the nature of knowledge, thereby opening up the possibility to disrupt subjectivities and challenge power relations. The latter, on the other hand, reinforces subjectivities and power relations as subjects try to increase their awareness of accepted 'truths' (which, as I've already noted are one manifestation of governmentality) rather than critically engage with the discursive basis of these.

- The way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obligated to put it into practice. This could also be considered as the formation of the self by the self which, as I have already noted, affords the subject the capacity to transform and 'mutate' their identities and position within discourse.

Ethical work: Critical activity and thought experience:

- The work one performs to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour (what are the means by which we can change ourselves in order to become ethical subjects?)

Telos: Disassembling the self:

- The place an action occupies in a pattern of conduct. It commits an individual [...] to a certain mode of being, a mode characteristic of the ethical subject. Translating this concept from French is difficult but, as Rabinow (1994) states, "the most adequate (or least inadequate) rendering might well be 'to disassemble the self, oneself' – a phrasing that highlights the material and relational aspects of this exercise and introduces a notion of the self as a form-giving practice that operates with and upon heterogeneous parts and forms available at a given point in history" (Rabinow, 1994: xxxviii)

Underwriting this ethical fourfold is a commitment to "care for the self" (Foucault, 1982; 1984b) as an ethical practice. This Foucault defined as the exercise of being concerned with oneself, of examining oneself and one's inner thought not with the project of 'renouncing oneself' and laying claim to the "status of a sinner" (Foucault, 1982, reprinted in Rabinow, 1994: 249) but with the aim of revealing the subjectivities and power relations that constitute oneself – a combination of exercising the will to knowledge and the teleological disassembling of the self – in order to "constitute a, positively, new self" (ibid).

As Foucault explained in an interview with Becker et al in 1984, the ethic of the care for the self:

Is what one could call an ascetic practice, taking asceticism in a very general sense – in other words, not in the sense of a morality of renunciation but as an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being (Foucault, 1984b, reprinted in Rabinow, 1994: 282)

This moves away from a procedures-oriented view of what it means to be ethical. Foucault argues that a more ethical practice is achieved through greater reflection on the subjectivities and power relations that are embedded in and produce the subject and discourse. The ultimate ethical question should not, according to Foucault, be 'how can I meet accepted ethical standards best? What actions and assumptions about myself do I need to renounce in order to become ethical?' but 'what are the discourses and power relations which render certain behaviours ethical or unethical? What is the impact of sacrificing particular actions on the form I take? How can I transform myself towards a more ethical being? What are the techniques which engender this transformation?' The key difference here is between a view of being ethical conceptualised in terms of assuming certain traits or accepted ethical 'truths' and a view of being ethical as critically assessing the discourses that these 'truths' represent. Such questioning represents a process wherein the subject may consider more deeply the power relations facilitating their formation – and the dynamics of each – rather than accept discourse as is. Connecting back to the formation of the subject, such questioning pushes self-subjectification from a process of self-regulation –

control of the self by the self – towards self-transformation or the disassembling of the self highlighted in the ethical fourfold.

Foucault explains the importance of exercising “care for the self” to the production of an ethical self further by framing it as a process not of “knowing oneself” – the Delphic method – but of becoming aware of the current discourse which rendered the self and the self’s actions *in that moment* possible. It was through this process that the potential for the subject to alter discourse and disrupt unequal relations of power emerged. Drawing from Baudelaire’s hypothesis on ‘seizing the present’ (Baudelaire, 1964; Mayne (trans.)), Foucault interpreted the artist’s ‘keen attentiveness to the passing moment’ as a means of transfiguring the present – i.e. transforming subjects within discourse towards another way of being and acting – and being free. Thinking critically, a characteristic of acting ethically, from a Foucauldian perspective is in itself an act of ‘freedom’ (in the sense of unsettling one’s subject-position/-function within discourse) as it involves mobilising the “treasury of devices, techniques, ideas, procedures and so on [that] constitute, or help to constitute, a certain point of view which can be very useful as a tool for analyzing what’s going on now – and change it” (Foucault, 1983, reprinted in Rabinow, 1994: 261).

In this way Foucault rejected a presentation of ‘being ethical’ as restricting behaviour to meet a normative standard. Rather ‘being ethical’ involves fully considering the dynamics of the formation of the subject, the impact of the relationships this formation engenders on the position and subjectivities of individuals, considering whether these technologies of formation and positioning are favourable and broadening out our awareness of the possibilities for reformation of the subject and discourse that could take place. Ethics is thus characterised by the application of the ethical fourfold to the self by the self – an engagement with the boundaries of discourse through a disassembling of the

self and a deconstruction of the power relations which facilitate the production of the subject.

Such an interpretation of 'being ethical' is crucial to this thesis. Applied to youth work, a Foucauldian perspective would therefore argue that practitioners are not 'made ethical' through adherence to particular approaches or ways of acting (although their 'ethic' would *manifest* in their ways of acting) but through critical self-formation and – potentially - problematization of the current moment and their position and subjectivities within it. In Foucauldian terms, the disassembling and assembling of the self by the self facilitated through a process of becoming aware of one's own subjectivities and the possibilities for embodying other subjectivities (whatever these may be). As Connolly (1993) describes, Foucault advocates ethics as:

Cultivated through tactics applied by the self to
itself [and] *embodied* as care for an enlarged
diversity of life in which plural constituencies
coexist in more creative ways than sustained
by a communitarian idea of harmony or a
liberal idea of tolerance (Connolly, 1993: 378-
9; emphasis in original)

Using this as a definition for what it means to be ethical I now want to look at the conditions within which the possibilities for the production of such an ethical subject emerge. Specifically I want to focus on *ambiguity*. Openings for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject are augmented, I argue, by discursive ambiguity. Should the identities and positioning of the subject within discourse be unclear the process of self-formation may more easily encompass the process of critical reflection which Foucault considers the embodiment of being ethical. As I will illustrate in later chapters such ambiguities and the

possibilities for the production of an ethical practice are manifest in youth work discourse. It is this, I argue, which makes youth work ethical.

Ethics and ambiguity

Foucault's reading of being ethical and the subject raise two important points for this thesis. First Foucault's ethical fourfold gives an indication of what an ethical practice involves and the conditions under which subjects can act ethically. By emphasising the centrality of self-formation and critical reflection within the process of becoming ethical, Foucault's approach implies that discursive frames which facilitate these elements open up further – admittedly limited – possibilities for acting ethically. Relating this to what an ethical youth work practice looks like, a Foucauldian reading suggests that a more ethical practice is one which is ambiguous in the aims and procedures it advocates. This argument is outlined in further detail by Kelly and Harrison (2006) who argue that the "compulsion to choose" engendered by ambiguities regarding conduct – defined in terms of obligations, commitments and responsibilities – facilitate the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject (see: Kelly and Harrison, 2006: 4). Locating their analysis in youth employment, Kelly and Harrison explore how the promotion of entrepreneurialism without attributing this concept with a specific format encourages subjects to reconsider their 'personhood'. This can be understood as the position and function occupied by the subject within discourse. This process has the potential to open up the "fields of possibilities" for "acting otherwise" (Kelly and Harrison, 2006: 10) facilitating the critical reflection and self-formation that Foucault equates with acting ethically.

Additionally Foucault's model of becoming ethical suggests that the subject can be 'freed' to destabilise discourse and act ethically through considering discursive ambiguities in depth rather than minimising these ambiguities. Although, as his writing on the disciplining and control of the subject outlines, subjects, due to their position within and formation by discourse, are compelled

to adhere to the subjectivities and power relations they may problematize a necessity for "care for the self" introduces the potential for subjects to challenge such constraints. Foucault's reading of 'being ethical' is thus intertwined with a reconsideration of the 'freedom' of the subject in discourse. Foucault defines the freedom of the subject as epitomised in the capacity to critically engage with the realities of the present. Freedom – or the potential to renegotiate ones position in the social sphere – is an active process of self-reflexivity based in an awareness of the subjectivities of and power relations within the present. Foucault addresses this under his discussion of the *telos* or the possibility for acting otherwise produced by the disassembling of the self embedded in the process of 'becoming an ethical being'.

Here again Foucault's reading of what ethical practice looks like suggests that should the subject be afforded the opportunity to critical reflect on discourse – through ambiguities relating to the degrees of hierarchy of subject-positions and types of subject-functions ethical youth work should embody for example - the potential for such a practice to come into being is increased. In terms of this thesis this again underlines the importance of withdrawing from an understanding of being ethical characterised by specific approaches towards an opening up through discursive ambiguity. Ambiguity may be here equated with the 'ethic of discomfort' that Foucault promotes as a prerequisite to critical reflection (Foucault, 1979). In order to maintain the project of self-transformation toward forms of the self which are more ethical (Foucault, 1983, reprinted in Rabinow, 1994: 265), Foucault argues for the subject:

Never to consent to being completely comfortable with one's own presuppositions.
[...] To be very mindful that everything one perceives is evident only against a familiar and little-known horizon, that every certainty is

sure only through the support of a ground that
is always unexplored (Foucault, 1979,
reprinted in Faubion, 1994: 448)

By emphasising the need to be 'uncomfortable' with subjectivities in this way, Foucault again projects an understanding of the possibilities for the production of an ethical practice as rooted in discursive ambiguities. Where there are multiple possibilities for how the relationship between subjects can be organised or where the subject's position and function is unclear, there exists more scope for the dimensions of discourse – the presuppositions that render certain actions legitimate and ethical – to be critically explored.

This thesis is not the first time the connection between ambiguity and ethics has been made. In his analysis of child welfare policy Parton (1998) argues that practitioners and policy-makers need to "rediscover uncertainty and ambiguity" (Parton, 1998: 5) as it is "in destabilizing and fragmenting the present [that] a space for the work of *freedom* and *change* is opened up" (Parton, 1998: 7; see also: Rose, 1993). Rather than prescribing pathologies to children and families who do not meet a 'normalized' discourse, social care professionals should embrace the contingency and ambiguity of the present in order to both open up new ways of supporting children but also remain prepared for new challenges to emerge. Moreover, in relation to the philosophy of education, Mayo (2005) describes how Foucault's ethical request for us "to leave home, encounter difficulties, and struggle against normalization to free ourselves [is] nothing more than the task of education in its best sense" (Mayo, 2005: 114). Here Mayo describes an approach to education which promotes the ambiguities and uncertainties in everyday life, and is ambiguous and uncertain in the in-class relationships it advocates, has more potential to be ethical than an approach which standardises classroom interactions and deals in certitudes.

However, I do not solely want to advocate embracing ambiguity, I also want to show that ambiguity already exists, that the conditions for a Foucauldian ethical practice are already embedded in the lived experience of youth work. To do this I will use evidence from textwork and fieldwork (I will explain these terms in the following methodology section). The purpose of this discussion is therefore not to solely highlight the benefits of a Foucauldian ethical approach but also that there is already the potential for such an approach within the discourse of youth work. This potential, as I have already alluded to, is embodied in the co-existence of multiple sub-discourses within youth work discourse. Because of the existence of these sub-discourses the position of the subject – and the position of the 'ethical subject' – is unclear. As such the formation of discourse is interrupted and tension ridden; as I will elucidate using empirical evidence youth workers are transforming themselves towards multiple, often contradictory discourses. Connecting back to the ambiguities arguments, this presents openings for a critical reflection on discourse by subject and openings for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject. At the same time there are limitations on whether this potential can be actualised. These stem from the dynamics of discourse, specifically the reproduction of discourse through subjectivities and power relations (explained above). This is something I will discuss in more depth in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

In applying this theoretical frame I set the thesis two tasks. First, using textwork and fieldwork evidence, I aim to illustrate that the discourse of ethical youth work is a manifestation of multiple discourses (of varying degrees of hierarchy and 'equality') which project conflicting understandings of practitioner and service user. Second, I aim to show that the ambiguities caused by the co-existence of these sub-discourses introduce possibilities for the subject to

become critically aware – through self-subjectification – thereby presenting (admittedly limited) openings for the production of the ethical subject.

Having outlined this theoretical argument I now want to outline how I will explore it empirically. For this I use a textwork from youth work policy and a single case study of an informal youth work organisation in Nottingham (Urban Youth). The following two chapters will outline the thesis's methodological approach.

Chapter 3 Part 1: Methodology - Data gathering

Introduction

Despite the complex theoretical arguments underpinning this study, it is not intended to be a wholly theoretical work and there is a strong empirical element. To test the theoretical propositions I used a single case study research methodology focusing on informal youth work. This chapter will discuss the study's methodological approach. This encompasses the methodological approach, the data-gathering framework and the analytic framework. To allow sufficient discussion for each part it is divided into two parts. Part 1 – this chapter – will explain what single case study research advocates and what makes a good single case research design. I then describe how I used this approach with the ultimate goal of highlighting the contestability of a single model of ethical practice. Data was gathered through a combination of 'textwork' and ethnographic 'fieldwork' (see: McWilliam et al, 1997) at a 'patch-based', inner city youth club in Nottingham. The chapter provides a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the methodological approaches – in relation to data gathering – applied in this study. As part of this I consider the arguments for and against single case study research, the difficulties associated with ethnographic approaches and the importance of reflexivity and researcher-researched relationships. The chapter will also provide an outline of the fieldwork site – Urban Youth – and pen portraits of the youth workers there.

The analytic model for exploring the data gathered will be outlined fully in Part 2.

Single case study research

Principally this project followed a single case study research methodology. Data gathered through ethnographic textwork and fieldwork in the context of informal youth work was used to test the validity of the theoretical propositions and research questions. The central proposition of case study research is that

'context-dependent knowledge' is as – if not more – valuable as 'context-independent' (theoretical) knowledge (see: Flyvbjerg, 2006). It is this knowledge which, according to Flyvbjerg (2001; 2006), allows researchers to develop from "rule based beginners to virtuoso experts" (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 221). By engaging with case study research, scholars can develop the intimate knowledge necessary to become 'true human experts' (see: Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986). The implication here is that while theoretical information is useful for understanding the basic aspects of a phenomenon the acquisition of specialist knowledge is dependent on in-depth examination of the 'lived experience' of that phenomenon.

In practice case study research as Creswell (2007) outlines "involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e. a setting, a context)" (Creswell, 2007: 73). The term 'case' in this instance can mean "a spatially delimited phenomenon" (Gerring, 2009: 19), a particular activity (Stake, 1995) or a particular issue or concept (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Through in-depth analysis either over a long period of time (for a single case) or in a series of different contexts (for multiple cases) researchers attempt to understand the dynamics of a particular phenomenon, test a theory, explore causal relationships or evaluate the outcomes and processes of a particular programme or intervention (see: Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995; Gerring, 2009). Case study research can be both qualitative (focusing on 'how' and 'why' questions) and quantitative (focusing on frequencies and correlations). While both are legitimate approaches for testing the accuracy of particular theoretical propositions or learning from 'lived' interactions, Baxter and Jack (2008) provide four conditions which can necessitate the use of qualitative case study research:

- (a) The focus of the study is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions;
- (b) You cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study;

- (c) You want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or
- (d) The boundaries between the phenomenon and context

(Baxter and Jack, 2008: 545)

Given that the focus of this study was to answer 'how' and 'why' questions – how the ethical subject could be produced - a qualitative case study approach was selected as the most appropriate methodology.

Having selected case study as the primary method, the second stage in conducting this study was the research design. As in any empirical investigation, the validity of the thesis depended significantly on a solid research design. This, as Yin explains, constitutes:

A logical plan for getting from here to there, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions (Yin, 2009: 26)

In case study research, Yin (2009), considered a one of the key methodologists in this field, identifies five essential components of a solid research design. These are:

- (a) A study's questions;
- (b) Its propositions, if any;
- (c) Its unit(s) of analysis;
- (d) The logic linking the data to the propositions; and
- (e) The criteria for interpreting the findings

(Yin, 2009: 27)

The key research questions and propositions have already been identified in the preceding chapter and reiterated above. Further, as Yin admits, the latter two components are more connected with *data analysis* (Yin, 2009:33-34) as they principally relate to how the propositions and research questions can be – and will be within the confines of the study in question – fully explored and assessed using case study data. As a result these can be left to one side for now although I will return to them in Chapter 3 Part 2. Here what I want to focus on is my primary methodological approach – single case study – and the limitations of this.

While scholarship on case study research argues that one or more case studies can be used, single case study research has still be described as an “intellectually ambitious inquiry” (Barzelay, 1993: 305) or even having “such a total absence of control as to be of almost no scientific value” (Campbell and Stanley, 1966: 6). Yin (2009) summarizes these concerns stating that “single case designs are vulnerable if only because you will have to put ‘all your eggs in one basket’” (Yin, 2009: 61). Regardless of how careful the researcher has been in their case study selection and how closely the study adheres to the criteria for judging the quality of research design, the single case study approach still carries the risk of the conclusions not being generalizable or robust enough.

The key argument against a single case study approach is the limited degree to which evidence generated from a single case may be ‘generalizable’ to all other cases. As theorists such as Giddens (1984) argue, it is only through carrying out multiple observations in a range of different contexts that generalizable conclusions can be drawn (Giddens, 1984; cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006: 225). Methodologists such as Barzelay (1993), Flyvbjerg (2006) and Eckstein (1975), however, have all rejected this complaint on the basis it that it does not accurately reflect the role of single case studies play in research. According to Eckstein, the principle role of case studies – single or multiple – is theory-testing rather than producing generalizable theories (Eckstein, 1975). A single case

study automatically provides an exemplar for either supporting or falsifying theoretical propositions. To support this argument, Flyvbjerg (2006) uses Karl Popper's (1934) discussion of the 'black swan' whereby a single observation (a black swan) could completely overturn a generally accepted position (all swans are white) (see: Flyvbjerg, 2006). The key point here is that a single, well deployed example can be as if not more useful for furthering scientific investigation as a range of examples which produce generalizable knowledge if sufficient in-depth information is provided. This point is missed by critiques of single case study research. As Flyvbjerg states, "formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated" (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 228).

While emphasising the potential limitations of a single case design, Yin (2009) provides a number of arguments supporting this approach. Like, Eckstein (1975), Yin argues that the validity of a single case study depends on its purpose. With this in mind, Yin provides five instances where a single case study can be as – if not more – useful than multiple cases. These are:

- *Theory testing, building or critical analysis*

Here a single case can confirm, challenge, or extend the theoretical propositions. This follows Eckstein's (1975) conceptualisation of the purpose of single case study research which promotes this approach as a means of strengthening or furthering conceptual debates through providing in-depth information on the 'lived dynamics' of these concepts.

- *Unique or extreme cases:*

This is especially pertinent for clinical studies where a new or very rare condition emerges. In these circumstances an in-depth single patient analysis can provide vital information that is not available elsewhere.

- *Representative or typical case studies/programme evaluations:*

Here the object is to provide further information about the dynamics of a specific programme/intervention or typical phenomenon (usually amongst a range of other programmes). In this instance in-depth evidence of the dynamics of the programme/phenomenon are more useful than broader, less in-depth information. As such a single case study may be required.

- *Revelatory studies:*

This is more common in sociological or anthropological studies. Revelatory studies focus on situations that were previously inaccessible to social science and thus under-researched. A well-executed, in-depth single case study can provide the descriptive informational content required to stimulate further research and, potentially, policy interventions. Yin cites Whyte's (1945; 1955) *Street Corner Society* and Liebow's (1967) *Tally's Corner* as examples of this. Walcott's (2002) writing on 'Sneaky Kid' and Thomson's (2002) *Schooling the Rustbelt Kids* also represent revelatory single case studies

- *Longitudinal research:*

The final instance of where a single case study is appropriate outlined by Yin is in longitudinal studies where the predominant concern is change over a specified period of time. To minimise the differential effects which may undermine longitudinal analysis a single case study is better than multiple cases.

(see: Yin, 2009: 47-50)

Overall the discussion above indicates that a single case study, while problematic, is most useful and best executed when the predominant concern is generating in-depth knowledge to extend or challenge particular theoretical propositions. Yin rationalisations for using single case study research, in particular, are important in the context of this thesis as they again illustrate why a single case design is justified. Given that this study is principally concerned

with furthering conceptual understandings as well as understanding the dynamics of a particular relationship an in-depth single case study is an appropriate research approach.

However there are steps within the application of this methodology which need to be taken to ensure that a single case study approach does not vindicate critics' complaints that it is not rigorous or scientific enough. Yin (2009) identifies these as: construct validity; internal validity; external validity; and reliability. A summary of these tests, alongside a way that the issues they present can be resolved is provided in Table 1. The remainder of this chapter will outline how I met these conditions. Specifically I want to describe how evidence was gathered and where it was gathered from (Chapter 3 Part 1) and the analytic frames used to connect the empirical analysis with the theoretical arguments (Chapter 3 Part 2). This discussion will illustrate how the research design meets the criteria for construct and internal validity while still noting the practical and conceptual problems connected with this research approach. Before this, however, I want to provide a brief overview of my case study.

Test	Challenge	Resolution strategy
<i>Construct validity</i>	Identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use multiple sources of evidence - Establish chain of evidence
<i>Internal validity</i> (for explanatory or causal studies)	Seeking to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pattern matching - Explanation building - Address rival explanations - Use logic models
<i>External validity</i>	Defining the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use theory in single case studies - Use replication logic in multiple case studies
<i>Reliability</i>	Demonstrating that the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures – can be repeated, with the same results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use case study protocol

Table 1: Criteria for judging quality of research designs (see: Yin, 2009: 41; Kidder and Judd, 1986: 26-29)

Why Urban Youth?

The preliminary stage in a single case study is selecting the unit of analysis from which information is to be drawn. Unlike other approaches, single case design uses *purposeful/purposive* rather than *random* or *probable* sampling. What distinguishes these sampling approaches is the direct selection of an *information-rich case* (Patton, 2002: 46) rather than selecting a broad range of cases without any selection criteria (random sampling) or selecting a number of cases which are – based on statistical probability – likely to provide information relevant to the research propositions. Whereas the difference between random and purposeful sampling is relatively obvious, the distinction between probable and purposeful sampling is less so. Certainly there are overlaps between the two approaches; both select cases likely to provide information relevant to the research propositions or where they demonstrate the characteristics of the phenomenon or issue under investigation. A useful characterisation of the differences between these two approaches is provided by Patton (2002) who explains:

The logic and power of probability sampling
derive from its purpose: generalization. The
logic and power of purposeful sampling derive
from the emphasis on in-depth understanding.
(Patton, 2002: 46)

That said the research questions themselves could potentially have directed me towards probable or purposeful sampling. However, although I was trying to provide a robust indication of what aspects of youth work discourse indicated that it was ethical, through this case study, my ultimate aim was not to unearth generalizable results or knowledge. In approaching this topic, I was fully aware that the conditions and possibilities I recorded may not manifest in the same way in all youth work organisations. As I have already noted in the introduction,

given the definitional difficulties, it would be – at best – naïve to believe that I could produce a robust enough framework to cover all cases. The immense diversity of youth work rendered probable sampling virtually defunct as the probability of the findings being generalizable to every organisation was limited. Given this problem, I instead decided to focus on the dynamics of ethical practice in a specific context. While the results may not be fully generalizable they would provide in-depth knowledge and scope for extending a specific conceptual debate here and in future research. By focussing on a purposeful sample I would be able to draw sufficient information to produce a possible explanation for what aspects of youth work discourse made it ethical.

Having outlined my research design and sampling approach I want to explain the logic behind the selection of my own unit of analysis: Urban Youth. My selection here was informed by the need to study an organisation where the parameters (both structurally and in terms of the organisations' purpose) were loose. This would allow me to test the theoretical arguments regarding the interplay between ambiguous discourses and the production of an ethical subject. For this reason, I targeted what Williamson (1995) describes as "patch-based" youth work organisations. As Williamson explains:

[patch-based organisations] are geographically or socially defined, not *clearly* defined in terms of a common experience or a current common concern. Of course, many members of such a group may have similar backgrounds and characteristics (such as 'broken homes', educational underachievement, or criminal records), but their interests may be quite disparate and their commitment to a youth work project less to do with any shared

structural condition and more to do with their
leisure or recreational interests (Williamson,
1995: 7)

Given my interest in exploring whether discursive ambiguities were what made youth work ethical then a patch-based organisation where the discursive boundaries (what its service user population was, what role it was trying to play in young people's lives) were relatively malleable, I felt, would provide the necessary information to conduct this analysis. The discursive ambiguities manifest – and their explanatory power in terms of what makes youth work ethical – in the discourse of Urban Youth will be discussed in much more detail later in this thesis. At this juncture I now want to explain how I maintained construct validity and discuss the methodological basis of my data collection approach (textwork and fieldwork) in more depth.

Construct validity and ethnography

The primary test for a good research design identified in the table above is construct validity. According to Yin (2009) construct validity relates to specific case study (the 'unit of analysis') used, the way in which data is collected from this case study and how well this connects to the phenomenon under investigation. I have already explained my decision to use youth work as a case study. What I now want to outline is my data collection techniques. This will indicate the 'chain of evidence' – where evidence came from. Within this discussion I will also connect this evidence to the research propositions and theoretical framework. This project combined theory- and policy-oriented 'textwork' and embedded ethnographic 'fieldwork'. The majority of the evidence was gathered through participant observation at a patch-based youth club – Urban Youth – over a six month period. In its entirety the observational part of the data collection totalled approximately 300 hours (12 hours per week) which was recorded in reflective fieldnotes (an example is provided in Annex A). This

was then combined with evidence from a series of youth work policy documents (the textwork element). The research findings – analysed using the framework outlined in the following chapter – were also triangulated with existing research and writing on youth work.

The combination of textwork and fieldwork mirror the theoretical framework as they encompass both the linguistic and material manifestations of discourse. Moreover as, from a Foucauldian perspective, the interactions between subjects are produced by the subjectivities and power relations embedded within discourse then basing the thesis' discussion on an analysis of youth worker-youth interactions resonates with this theoretical position. The appropriateness of using texts and fieldwork as a means of understanding discourse is reinforced by Fairclough (2000) who argues that the actions and descriptions of subjects are representative of the "naturalized implicit propositions of an ideological character [...] pervasive in discourse" (Fairclough, 2000: 23). Using Foucault's terminology, the subjectivities and power relations embedded within discourse are thus manifested through subject-actions and descriptions of subjects (in texts) and, as such, through analysing these actions and descriptions these subjectivities and power relations can be "denaturalized" (Fairclough, 2000: 20) and made visible. Given that this is a core aim of this thesis then the combined textwork-fieldwork approach provides the most useful form of evidence.

Textwork

Textwork – particularly in relation to policy – was used to frame and support fieldwork data. In summary this involved a systematic analysis of key policy developments relating to youth work – specifically those conceptualising the purpose of the practice – since its inception. This was supported by a historical review of the evolution of youth work from the mid-18th century to present. The purpose of this 'textwork' was to identify key debates within youth work and explore the continuities and discontinuities in the discourse. The textwork aspect

of the study also provided information for 'triangulation' with fieldwork data, serving as an additional source to evidence. As Yin (2009) notes, multiple data sources are vital in reinforcing the construct and internal validity of single case studies.

Textual data was approached from a discourse analysis perspective. Unlike content or conversation analysis, discourse analysis understands text and language as producers of 'social reality' (Burnham et al, 2008: 250). 'Social reality' in this case is interpreted as embodied through social relations and interactions between subjects. Discourse analysis theorists argue that:

Discourses [...] frame and constrain given courses of action, some of which are promoted as sensible, moral and legitimate [...] whilst others are discouraged as stupid, immoral and illegitimate. [...] It is one of the functions of discourse analysis to reveal the bases of these common assumptions (Burnham et al, 2008: 25).

In terms of this thesis discourse analysis is appropriate as it focuses on the assumptions and understandings which produce – and are produced by – social interactions and the positioning of subjects relative to one another i.e. as immoral beings or moral archetypes. This concern is most explicit in Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2000). This brand of discourse analysis argues that discourse – embodied through language, texts and practices – is employed as a means of naturalising particular relations of power and ideological positions as Fairclough (2000) describes:

[Critical Discourse Analysis] claims that the naturalised implicit propositions of an

ideological character are pervasive in discourse,
contributing to the positioning of people as
social subjects (Fairclough, 2000: 23)

This has clear resonances with Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse and the dynamics of subjectivities and power relations.

Practically, as I will outline in the depth later on, I identified contradictory models of ethical social relations in youth work and applied them to policy documents. This helped illustrate that the discourse of youth work – represented by text – was embedded with differing relations of power and subjectivities and ambiguous in the overarching model of 'good' practice it advocates. Connecting back to Chapter 2, identifying this demonstrated how youth work exhibited the necessary conditions for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject. Texts were chosen based on how well they represent the discourse of youth work. Such purposeful selection meant that I was able to build an in-depth explanation using "information rich" (Patton, 2002) sources. Policy documents and submissions by reviewing committees were selected as they provided a synthesised representation of how 'good' or ethical youth work was understood. The decision to use these documents also resonated with the theoretical frameworks as, analysed in combination with fieldwork evidence, they illustrated how policy – like practice – was a manifestation of discourse. To locate these policies in the wider discourse I connected them to the wider historical moment. As a result the textwork met the standards of internal validity identified by Yin (2003) who argues that good textwork needs to pay attention to the conditions in which the text was produced. Textual evidence will be presented and analysed in Chapter 4.

Ethnography and fieldwork

To compliment the textwork, fieldwork evidence was also included in the analysis. This study used an ethnographic approach to data collection. Ethnography is a methodology focused on the 'lived experience' of a phenomenon, organisation or culture (see: Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Atkinson et al, 2001). Fundamentally this method is "grounded in a commitment to first-hand experience" (Atkinson et al, 2001: 4) in an attempt to locate the analysis and study of social interaction and – originally – culture in the lived experience. The decision to use ethnography was, like the selection of case study, heavily influenced by the theoretical framework and research propositions. Given that my primary interest was on what interactions between practitioners and service users could tell us about the dimensions of ethics then it was important to select a methodology which principally focuses on interactions rather than accounts. To reinforce this link fully it is important to briefly outline the emergence of ethnography. This will also help identify the issues that arise when using this form of data collection.

Originally primarily a methodology of anthropologists (see: Mead, 1928; Malinowski, 1922) and sociologists (Park and Burgess, 1925) ethnography was conceived as a way of investigating social interactions within a particular culture from the inside. The main tool for achieving this was participant observation. Anthropologists would spend at least six months – with some, such as Mead (1928), spending up to ten years – observing the daily lives of their subjects in order to understand the meanings and understandings which informed their cultural and social experience. Malinowski (1922), an early advocate of the methodology in anthropology, conceptualised ethnography as representative of an anthropological commitment to 'holism' and the insistence that "social practices be analysed within their overall social context" (MacDonald, in Atkinson et al, 2001: 62). As Malinowski argued, the culture and dynamics of societies

were best understood by describing them "in all their social aspects" (Malinowski, 1922: 11).

Ethnography was proposed by Malinowski as a part of critique of data collection techniques such as surveys or experiments. Hammersley (1992) summarizes the criticisms of these methods under five main points:

1. That the structured character of the data collection process involves the imposition of the researcher's assumptions about the social world and consequently reduces the chances of discovering evidence discrepant with those assumptions
2. That making claims about what happens in 'natural' settings on the basis of data produced in settings that have been specially set up by the researcher – whether experiment or formal interview – is to engage in a largely implicit and highly questionable form of generalization
3. That to rely on what people say about what they believe and do, without also observing what they do, is to neglect the complex relationship between attitudes and behaviour; just as to rely on observation without also talking with people in order to understand their perspectives is to risk misinterpreting their actions
4. That quantitative analysis reifies social phenomena by treating them as more clearly defined and distinct than they are, and by neglecting the processes by which they develop and change
5. That quantitative analysis assumes that people's actions are the mechanical products of psychological and social factors, thereby neglecting the creative role of individual cognition and group interaction

(Hammersley, 1992: 11-12)

Malinowski wasn't the only one advocating this approach. Contemporaneously to his writing on the need for anthropologists to research cultures first hand rather

than through secondary writing, sociologists from the University of Chicago were advocating the use of *urban ethnography* to generate sociological theory. Similar to Malinowski and the anthropologists, sociologists of the Chicago School - whose members included John Dewey, W.E.B. DuBois and Robert Park - rejected the notion that social interactions could be understood either in abstraction (through solely theoretical debates) or through structured quantitative analysis. However, whereas anthropologists oriented themselves predominantly towards far flung cultures, the Chicago School's primary interest was the dynamics of Western society, particularly urban communities. Urban ethnography was embedded within the broader sociological projects at the Chicago School principally symbolic interactionism - which explored the meanings and understandings conveyed by particular symbols or signs - and social reform. This latter project is most obviously visible in the work of Robert Park whose investigations of communities (for example his 1925 work *The City*) were underscored by an attempt to better inform social improvement strategies.

It is important however not to interpret the different foci and conceptualisation of anthropological (as building an understanding of far flung societies) and sociological ethnography (as investigating urban communities) as indicative of a distinct disciplinary split. As Atkinson et al write, the 'two traditions' "are irrevocably enmeshed and juxtaposed" (Atkinson et al, 2001: 2). Fundamentally theorists from both schools were advocating a qualitative methodology rooted in the 'lived experience' where data was collected through 'being there'. This approach was marketed as bringing together *emic* - contextually and cultural embedded - and *etic* - conceptual and 'scientific' - knowledge (see: Pike, 1954). The first form, Pike argues, can only be recognised and understood from social insiders (i.e. members of communities, participants); the second can only be judged by outsiders (i.e. scientists, researchers).

In terms of the practice of fieldwork, there are two key issues here: the location of the researcher ‘in the field’ and the recording of fieldnotes. Brief overviews of the different models relating to each are given in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Researcher positions in fieldwork

Stance	Definition	Position
Complete Observer	No participation/engagement in social events in fieldwork setting	Overt
Participant as Observer	Researcher has role within fieldwork setting but is known by participants to be studying them	Overt
Observer as Participant	Researcher spends less time in fieldwork setting to interview individuals in their own setting	Overt
Complete Participant	Researcher does not reveal their position to subjects of enquiry	Covert

(Gold, 1958; cf. Preissle and Grant, in DeMarrais and Lapan (eds.), 2004: 163)

Table 3: Strategies in note-taking

Approach to Note-Taking	Definition
The Salience Hierarchy	Ethnographers start by describing what struck them as the most noteworthy, most important or most telling. What makes an observation salient is highly subjective and depends on a research context.
Comprehensive Note-Taking	Ethnographers systematically and comprehensively describe everything that happened during a particular period of time. A list of generalized concerns (i.e. who is he? What does he do? What happens after _____?) could be used as a starting point.
Sequential Note-Taking	Ethnographers start at the beginning and end at the end. Many social settings have their own unique time-tables and these can facilitate note-taking by serving as outlines. This method of note-taking also has the advantage of forcing an ethnographer to recreate events in the order they really happened. This can aid in recall of details that might otherwise have been forgotten.

Emerson et al, 1995: 48

The benefits of the different stances the fieldworker may take has been subject to some debate. Some researchers (Geer, 1964; Becker, 1971) have argued that too much familiarity with the field can result in ethnographers becoming ‘naturalized’ to its dynamics and, eventually, failing to recognise them as noteworthy. This dilemma was noted by Geer (1964) in her reflections on the difficulties of conducting fieldwork in everyday settings. In these Geer argued that “to an ‘untrained’, or over-familiar, observer ‘nothing’ may be going on and

worth noting down in a hospital ward or school classroom" (cf. Coffey, 1999: 21). In this instance, by becoming an embedded participant, fieldworkers risk their ability to recognise everything going on around them and draw out meanings and analyses beyond everyday assumptions about what is happening. This difficulty is described by Becker (1971) who states:

It takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing things that are conventionally 'there' to be seen. I have talked to a couple of teams of research people who have sat around in classrooms trying to observe and it is like pulling teeth to get them to see or write anything beyond what 'everyone' knows (Becker, 1971: 10)

Interestingly, here Geer and Becker both criticise the participant observer position – as overly familiar – and highlight the difficulty in breaking free of a naturalized, less alert observational position.

At the same time there are strong counter arguments to Becker and Geer's position. Chief amongst these is the argument that it is almost impossible to be part of a context and not be a participant and the negative impact such practice assumptions can have on ethnographic evidence. The first of these arguments is explored by Pollner and Emerson (2003; in Pogrebin (ed.)) whose work outlines the difficulty in remaining a non-participant observer given that:

Some form of immediate presence is the sine qua non of ethnography; some degree of participation is unavoidable in order to

establish a place and identity for oneself – and one's research activities – in the local setting or community. Ethnographers must create and maintain this presence in ongoing encounters and negotiations with the people who are both hosts for and objects of research activities (Pollner and Emerson, in Pogrebin (ed.), 2003: 28)

Fundamentally, while fieldworkers may try to retain distance between themselves and the objects of their observations through "vague or ambiguous responses" or avoiding overtures to participate by the observed (Pollner and Emerson, 2001; in Atkinson et al: 129; see also: Pollner and Emerson, 1988) their 'embodied presence' in the field (Pollner and Emerson, 2003) implicitly necessitates their participation.

Pollner and Emerson (2001; in Atkinson et al) expand this argument by describing how ethnographers who try to maintain a non-participant observer status may in fact have a negative impact on their research by distorting the reality of the social interactions and decision-making pathways of the 'observed'. As Pollner and Emerson write:

As an unattached observer who can move more or less freely in and around the local scene, the ethnographer experiences choice and decision, not constraint and necessity. (Pollner and Emerson, in Atkinson et al, 2001: 127)

Here the authors explicitly criticise the non-participant observer stance as detrimental to the research. This follows the arguments of Garfinkel (1967) who proposes that "the researcher who is not an active, adept and accredited participant will miss and distort central aspects and qualities of the lived order" (cf. Pollner and Emerson, in Atkinson et al, 2001: 127). The criticisms of Garfinkel (1967) and Pollner and Emerson (1988; 2001; 2003) stand in opposition to the notion that a 'good' fieldworker must remain at a distance from the researched. The result of imposing such an image is that the necessary – and unavoidable – relationships developed between researchers and researched and their impact on the evidence gathered is excluded from the analysis. As Coffey writes:

We should be cautious of accounts which uncritically render the ethnographer as stranger, or as marginal. These imply too stark a contrast between a culture (yet to be known or 'discovered') and an observer (yet to be enlightened). [...] The image of the heroic ethnographer confronting an alien culture is now untenable, and fails to reflect much of what ethnographers do (Coffey, 1999: 22)

According to these methodologists, the possibility and benefits of a non-participant observer approach in fieldwork are both questionable. In addition to questioning the possibility and benefit of being a non-participant observer, advocates of a participative fieldwork approach describe such 'conventional wisdom' as fuelling fieldwork practices which are acts of 'violence' towards the communities under observation. These violent acts are emblematised by the promotion of the knowledge of the researcher at a distance – the non-participant

- as more valid than the knowledge of those who have lived through the 'object' of study. This argument is made by Dauphinée (2007) who argues that fieldwork approaches which portray 'good' researcher-researched relationships as ones where the observer remains a 'stranger' (see: Coffey, 1999) or 'there but not there', render the ethnographer akin to an informed 'tourist' (Dauphinée, 2007: 40-1) who has a more nuanced understanding of the culture they are visiting than members of the culture themselves.

Given my theoretical concern with power relations between subjects and the embedded position occupied by the subject in discourse, the perspectives of Garfinkel (1967), Pollner and Emerson (1988; 2001) and Dauphinée (2007) resonated with my own arguments. For this reason my fieldwork appropriated a participant observation style where I - in agreement with the youth workers - volunteered as a youth worker at Acti8 Uth. Through this I was able to gain a critical perspective on the dynamics of the practice while still being aware of the constraints facing youth workers. The upshot of this was a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between youth workers and young people and awareness that certain approaches (such as placing young people in control of a particular project for example), while ethical in the sense that they destabilise unequal relations of power, are impractical. I will outline this in more depth in the two fieldwork-oriented chapters.

In addition to the difficulties that 'going native' pose for the researcher, critics of a more 'open' relationship in fieldwork have argued that the more overt the researcher is, the closer their relationship with the subjects of study, the greater the risk of the researched changing their behaviours. This is a more extreme argument to Geer and Becker's critiques. It is based on a phenomenon known as the Hawthorne Effect (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) first recorded in workplace experiments in the Hawthorne factory in Chicago in the

1920s and 1930s. The purpose of these experiments was to identify positive effects on worker productivity. In order to mitigate the risk of resistance by subjects of study – who were asked to move from their ordinary place of work to a testing facility – the investigators put great effort into endearing themselves to participants through awarding special privileges and showing great interest in them personally. Although productivity did increase during the experiment, “the investigators were forced to conclude that it may well have been these unintentional manipulations which caused the subjects to improve their overall productivity” (Wickström and Bendix, 2000: 364). Conceptually the Hawthorne Effect proposes that “subjects’ knowledge that they are in an experiment modifies their behaviour from what it would have been without that knowledge” (Adair, 1984: 334). From this perspective more open researcher-researched relationships undermine the validity of the observations as the researched may perform to what they believe is more “socially desirable” behaviour (ibid) rather than ‘act naturally’.

For this project, while remaining aware of these problems, I aligned myself with an embedded fieldwork approach. As well as the theoretical factors – noted above – there were also practical reasons for this. To gain entrance to my fieldwork site, I was told by my ‘gatekeepers’ – the youth workers – I would have to register as a volunteer. ‘Gatekeepers’ are identified by Hammersley (2007) as study participants who facilitate the researcher’s entry into the field². Sam, the lead youth worker, was gatekeeper for this study. We initially met at

² Gatekeepers play a significant – and complex – role in field research. The provision of an entrance to the field by them involves both managerial and social actions. For instance, the process of facilitating my entering into Urban Youth involved both asking for consent from the other youth workers, alerting the community centre management to the role I was playing and finding a way for me to be present in the club without breaching health and safety regulations (managerial steps) as well as reassuring the other youth workers, explaining the procedures of the club to me and answering any questions I might have (social actions). The important role played by gatekeepers in securing access and facilitating entry to the field is discussed by methodologists such as Hammersley (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994).

the end of July 2010 following a brief email exchange. During this discussion, I explained the basic premise of the study – to learn more about the practices of youth workers through observing their interactions – as well as reassuring her that my intention was principally to learn rather than judge and that if at any point she or the other youth workers were uncomfortable with my presence I would withdraw. I also stated that I was happy to answer any questions they might have on my project during the fieldwork and, if they would like, I would provide them with a copy of my thesis once I had finished.

After this meeting, Sam agreed to allow me observe the youth workers, so long as the other members of her team did not object. She stated that she would have to talk to the team (in a meeting I was not party to) and that she would contact me as soon as possible. Once she had got confirmation of their agreement – although one youth worker, Sarah, had initially been less keen – Sam told me that for health and safety reasons it was best that I registered as a volunteer with the understanding that I was principally there as part of my doctoral research. As a result of this, although when asked I explained that I had signed up as a volunteer for the purposes of my degree, I effectively became a participant who observes.

In addition to the health and safety concerns and inclination to be as open as possible, my decision to 'go native' in this way was also informed by my scepticism regarding the 'problem' behavioural change presented. While the arguments it proposes are compelling, there has been some criticism of the validity of the Hawthorne Effect hypothesis. Although the Hawthorne Effect has been pervasive concern within social science research – particularly in relation to psychology and health (see for example: McCarney et al, 2007; Campbell et al, 1995) – methodologists such as Adair (1984) have questioned both (i) the idea that a closer researcher-researched relationship can bring about change in

subjects' behaviours and (ii) whether this invalidates observational research. Adair argues that the number of variables at play in behavioural research – subjects understandings, their views of their practices, their comfortableness with being participants – places a question mark over whether the single act of observation can significantly alter behaviour. Moreover, Adair also posits that even if behaviour has altered, this provides an insight into what subjects' believe to be a "good subject" (Adair, 1984: 342). This observation rendered the Hawthorne Effect less of a concern for this study as, if youth workers' were to alter their behaviour to what they believed was more "socially desirable" or 'better practice', then this would in fact add a further nuance to the findings. Behavioural changes in response to me would provide an insight into what youth workers viewed as best practice.

Another reason why the impact of the Hawthorne Effect on this study is questionable is its sustained nature. The behavioural change invoked by the Hawthorne studies was noted in an experimental setting where workers were observed for a very short amount of time. Unlike Hawthorne, this study is based on fieldwork data from approximately 300 hours of participant-observation. Without overstating my own ability to get researcher subjects to forget I was observing them, it is unlikely that they would have been able to sustain a profound shift in their ordinary practices for this length of time given the other circumstances – location, activities and young people – did not change. This resonates with Adair's (1984) critique of the idea that participation in Hawthorne may have brought about sustained behavioural change. According to Adair, any lasting changes were more likely to have been influenced by changes based on the recommendations of the study rather than the process of the study.

Additionally, the problem the Hawthorne Effect and 'going native' pose for fieldwork data's validity is partly resolved by reflexivity. Reflexivity, according to Mason (1996):

Means that the researcher should constantly
take stock of their actions and their role in the
research process and subject these to the
same critical scrutiny as the rest of their "data"
(Mason, 1996: 6)

Essentially reflexivity argues that the researcher must include themselves in fieldwork rather than denying their presence in the generation of this information. By critically assessing my own role – in terms of my interactions with youth workers, my assumptions before entering the field, and my ownership of the 'privileged gaze' (see below) – and outlining fully how I analysed and understood the information recorded, I would be able to be recognise the value (and limitations) of the information I present.

So what was my position? As I have already noted, I signed up as a volunteer in order to conduct this research. More than that I personally feel that youth work organisations play a key role in supporting young people at risk of becoming marginalised (NYA, 2010; Davies, 1986; Davies, 2009; Williamson, 1995) and engaging those young people who might be otherwise, to use Williamson's phrase, "rotting away at home" (Williamson, 1997: 7). After the fieldwork period had officially ended I remained at the club as a volunteer. Admittedly I favour a more critical youth work, oriented towards 'politicising' young people, such as that outlined by O'Donoghue et al (2006) and Akom et al (2009). Nevertheless, did this belief in the practice's merits create an irreconcilable barrier to my capacity to critically reflect on the limitations of the practice? More than that,

through sustained contact with the youth workers we developed something approximating a friendship. Would I be able to divorce the personal relationships I was constructing from my position as an observer? How honest would I be able to be? How fair are my criticisms and am I leaving important elements out for fear that they may damage my relationship with the youth workers or, worse, damage the club's reputation? Consciously I tried, as much as possible, to include everything and I feel that should another researcher spend the same amount of time at the club they would be at least some similarities between their fieldnotes and my own. Nevertheless, the potential for subconscious omission is a very real possibility. Without being too pithy, ethically and methodologically, I think I did the best I could but fully accept that some people might think I could have done better.

These issues are not unique to this research. The dilemmas which emerge in the recording of fieldnotes are discussed by Murray (2003). Based on her own fieldwork experience, Murray explores the professional and ethical dilemmas that arise as researchers shift between "front and back regions in the field". Drawing on Goffman (1959), Murray identifies 'regions' in fieldwork. In the front region is the fieldworker identity (and methodological notes); in the back region is the personal experience (and private reflections). To become immersed in the fieldwork site the researcher both develops a personal, trusting relationship and uses information from exchanges with participants based on this relationship as data to support academic hypotheses. As Murray outlines in her own fieldnotes:

Phone call from Char [union organizer]. I started to take notes on this phone call but I stopped half way through. Something about our relationship crossing the line into friendship makes me uncomfortable taking

notes. I also felt a twinge of this last night while talking to Sarah [another union organizer] but dismissed it and took notes anyway. It's not that I have a problem with keeping a record of what we talked about, it's the physical act of taking notes while she is talking to me – and her not knowing I'm taking notes and me not saying (Murray, 2003: 377)

For my purposes, there were two issues that Murray's comments raise: the notes I felt comfortable taking and analysing; and the awareness of the youth workers that I was taking notes. Initially Geer and Becker's arguments influenced my approach to fieldnote writing. To ensure I recorded everything that fell under my gaze, I adopted a 'sequential' style of note taking (see fieldnote sample in Annex A). To retain as much contextual detail as possible fieldnotes followed the sequence of events in sessions from point of entry. Fieldnotes recorded the session action-by-action (Pollner and Emerson, in Atkinson et al, 2001: 129). Describing as much as possible I attempted to offset the problems identified by Geer (1964) and Becker (1971). This resonates with Geertz's (1967) model of 'thick description' as well as Garfinkel et al's (1981) advocacy of fieldnote records which describe an event as it unfolds, thereby providing an in-sight into the real-time "lived orderliness" of the field (Garfinkel et al, 1981: 135). The result of using a sequential, description-heavy style is that fieldnotes a more comprehensive insight into the dynamics of the field. Moreover, from the perspective of the fieldworker, such an approach to note-taking is useful as it reminds the ethnographer of occurrences that they have otherwise missed³.

³ Nevertheless, there are practical difficulties associated with using this approach to note-taking. Predominantly, while an action-by-action account that focuses on the real-time

My approach, I initially felt, was a practical necessity (to get personal views I had to 'get personal') and there is an extent to which some of the insights – regarding Sarah's experience as a mother of a young person and the club (see Chapter 5) or Tommy's uncertainty regarding his role in the lives of young people (see Chapter 6) – which may have not emerged had a personal relationship not been developed. That said it was not entirely free of ethical concerns, chief amongst which were the blurring lines of consent. This issue is considered by Thorne (1980) who describes how, regardless of the statutory regulations on informed consent and ethical field research there is still a question mark over who decides what comes under allowable data – as Thorne states "are you still taking notes?" (Thorne, 1980: 284) Although the researched have the capacity to challenge the representation that emerges from the fieldworker's analysis, ultimately what is entered into fieldnotes is the decision of the researcher. Despite the emphasis on not committing *malfeasance* – an act of wrongdoing that breaches trust (Murphy and Dingwall, in Atkinson et al, 2001) – the border between this and reporting an instance or exchange which research subjects interpreted as 'off the record' is far from clear-cut.

According to Thorne, this is a particular problem in fieldwork where the researcher may hold multiple identities. In my case I was a volunteer youth worker and – towards the end of the fieldwork period – a friend. Moreover, like many of the other volunteers – six were in a similar situation – I was also a woman in her twenties and a student at the University of Nottingham. But I was

sequence of events rather than a specific end point is beneficial, it can be difficult to note down this sequencing while in the field. This is particularly the case for precise exchanges. During my own fieldwork I used trips to the bathroom and note-taking applications on my phone to retain a time-dated record of these. However there were times when this level of precision was not possible and potentially, as Geer and Becker suggest, within this gap information could have been lost. That said this is perhaps less of an argument against fieldwork and more of an argument for using multiple data sources – such as secondary literature, theoretical arguments and textwork primary data – as, like fieldwork, there are limitations in the comprehensiveness of all data collection tools.

also an observer. Thorne outlines this problem when he argues that the multiple identities of fieldworkers:

...also pose ambiguities. They make it easier for one's subjects to forget that they are subjects, to think of the researcher *only* as a friend, movement member or co-worker. This is especially true if one's social categories – age, sex, culture, ethnicity – don't visibly mark one as an outsider, as open note-taking or tape-recording tend to do. Fieldworkers often do not try to prevent this forgetting of the research purpose; the trust and acceptance feel good; information is more readily forthcoming. It is not a case of total deception because they indeed may be what they are taken to be – but they are also more (Thorne, 1980: 291).

Goode (1996) takes Thorne's observation regarding this ambiguity further by arguing that an accurate portrayal of 'the field' can *only* be generated through exploiting the intimacies that arise as subjects of research forget that the fieldworker is taking notes. According to Goode, "In *specific* social settings, some kinds of deception should be seen as entirely consistent with good ethics" (Goode, 1996: 11; emphasis in original). He defends this argument on the basis that:

Deception is experienced as offensive *specifically* because the researcher has

discovered – again, empirically accurate – facts
the subject does not wish to be conveyed to
the public [...]. The honest sociologist *must*
betray informants (Goode, 1996: 25)

Here Goode, potentially unintentionally, overstates the 'objective truth' contained in fieldnotes. That said, he does raise an important point regarding the blurring of consent and need to develop and use a researcher-researched relationship which extends beyond non-participant observation. From Goode's perspective an accurate picture of the dynamics of a particular social setting can only be gleaned through at least representing oneself as having 'gone native' and including as much as intimately generated information possible in fieldnotes.

For my own part, I have not – consciously at least – excluded information from fieldnotes on the basis that the youth workers may have believed that they were, in that moment, off the record. My decision to do this was based on concerns – similar to those alluded to by Becker (1971) – that such selective recording of data may lead to important caveats to the youth-youth workers relationship being missed. Moreover I did not wish, as Goode (1996) describes, to fall into the 'dishonesty of intimacy' where I would doctor my findings so the negative aspects of youth work were not represented. However, I was a little more discerning in my analysis and write-up. I wished to allow the youth workers the opportunity to ask for information they believed to be 'off the record' to be excluded. Further, I was reticent – following the critiques of scholars such as Dauphinée (2007) – to assume the 'privileged gaze' of the researcher (I explain this concept below).

Practically my strategy included providing Sam with draft chapters and giving the youth workers the opportunity to comment on my representation of the club.

I had suggested this during my initial discussion with Sam regarding the possibility of using Urban Youth as a fieldwork site and repeated this offer during discussions about how my research was going while at the club. When providing Sam with the chapters I did not direct her towards any particular parts – for fear that this would influence her interpretation of what was private and what wasn't – but gave her the opportunity to make up her own mind. Although this was quite a risky tactic – she could have potentially opposed my conclusions and requested that I not include Urban Youth in the thesis – it is also a technique suggested by Yin (2009) as a strategy for reinforcing the validity of single case study research findings and by Thorne (1980) as a means of 'updating' informed consent. Thorne argues that consent should be renewed on the basis that "relationships between observer and observed emerge and change over time" (Thorne, 1980: 290). Ultimately, Sam was quite happy with my representation of Urban Youth – largely on the basis that it was one perspective rather than a definitive, unquestionable explanation.

Another tactic to ensure that youth workers were reminded of the purpose of my presence at the club – and thus make them aware that I was recording what went on – was to mention my thesis and how work was going. Thorne (1980) suggests this as a means of subtly reinforcing that the principal intentions of the fieldworker are to observe, record and understand. Interestingly this encouraged the youth workers to ask how things were going and what I was learning (from them and from 'textwork'). This also opened up some interesting discussions during which the youth workers reflected on the practice as a whole and on their own positions within it. Whether it served to prevent them from revealing too much or forgetting that I was more than a friend and co-worker is impossible for me to know completely but, based on Thorne's suggestions, the steps I took meant that informed consent was renewed as the relationship developed.

There are a number of other methodological issues with using an ethnographic approach. These challenges have been made most explicit by writing on ethnography since the 1960s which has "given way to a series of intellectual crises and a destabilization of the orthodoxy" (Atkinson et al, 2001: 2-3). The central argument within what has since been called "the turn" in ethnography revolves around the legitimacy of the ethnographic text as a representation of social reality. Unlike their predecessors, contemporary ethnographers have reconceptualised 'ethnography' as the combined process of data collection ('doing ethnography') and production of ethnographies or 'notes from the field' (see: Van Maanen, 1988). Critical analysis on the dynamics of data collection and production has opened a broader discussion on the dimensions of 'the field'. Thinkers such as Geertz challenged the idea of entering a distinguishable 'field' as a "masculinist", "penetrative" enterprise (Geertz, 1973) and argued that, when exploring a culture through fieldwork, "you put yourself in its way and it bodies forth and enmeshes you" (Geertz, 1973; cf. Behar, 1995: 5). The field is thus produced through becoming enveloped by a particular culture or society rather than entered into. Atkinson (1992) explains this conception of the field further stating that:

The field is produced (not discovered) through the social transactions engaged in by the ethnographer. The boundaries of the field are not 'given'. They are the outcome of what the ethnographer may encompass in his or her gaze; what he or she may negotiate with hosts and informants; and what the ethnographer omits and overlooks as much as what the ethnographer writes (Atkinson, 1992: 9)

By examining the field as a socio-spatial phenomenon (see: Emerson et al, in Atkinson et al, 2001: 354) contemporary ethnographers began to unsettle the notion of the ethnographer as an investigator of an existent social world – Park's model – or an explorer of a particular area – the traditional anthropological model. Rather the ethnographer was producing a particular world which would ultimately provide an insight into social relations which was partial and incomplete. As such the researcher's 'gaze' should not be privileged but viewed as one interpretation of a particular 'moment'. This is not to say that the researcher's gaze is irrelevant but that a fuller understanding will be gained from combining observations with other evidence. This is something I have taken account of in this project through combining field observations with statements by youth workers and other research.

These critiques connect to the debates regarding 'notes from the field' and the representativeness of fieldwork evidence. Starting with the publication of Clifford and Marcus' *Writing Culture* (1967), ethnographers have challenged the notion of the ethnographic text as the quintessential, indisputable representation of a particular 'lived experience'. Clifford in particular was critical of the presentation of ethnographic texts as unfettered, authoritative accounts based on the fact that the information was gathered in the 'real world'. Such an acceptance meant the 'researcher's gaze' was inherently privileged. As Clifford (1980) states:

If ethnography produces cultural interpretations through intense research experience, how is such unruly experience transformed into an authoritative written account? How, precisely, is a garrulous, overdetermined, cross-cultural encounter shot

through with power relations and personal cross purposes circumscribed as an adequate version of a more-or-less discrete 'otherworld' composed by an individual author? (Clifford, 1980; cf. Van Maanen, 1988: 1)

More worryingly, as subsequent theorists – particular those influenced by post-colonialist and feminist theories (see for example: Dauphinée, 2007; Mohanty, 1991) – have noted this privileging of the researcher through ethnographic writing implicitly silences and excludes the voice of the researched. As Dauphinée (2007) argues in *The Ethics of Researching War* ethnographies which are not explicit in the fact that they represent the researcher more than the researched are inherently violent acts of silencing and exclusion. Within such ethnographies the voice and 'lived experience' of the researcher dominate and confer onto the fieldworker a gravitas of authenticity and a capacity to provide an objective account which the 'overly-familiar' subjects of the experience cannot. Dauphinée (2007) equates this to western tourism where the informed tourism industry is presented as expert knowledge. As Little (1991, in Howes (ed.)) elucidates, fieldwork and tourism "share the same visual 'episteme', the power/knowledge system centred on a logic of cultural 'spectacalization'" (Little, in Howes (ed.), 1991: 159). This is something I was very much aware of prior to commencing fieldwork and, as much as possible, I tried to take youth workers' perspectives on the accuracy of my description of them into account.

Clifford, Geertz and others argue that ethnographers should not claim to represent a particular lived experience in its entirety but should explore what interpretations can be drawn from the actions and interactions manifest in communities, cultures or organisations. Methodologically this has resulted in the emergence of a number of different approaches to ethnography including

interpretativist ethnography – which emphasises “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) and projects the ethnographic text as an interpretation of the field – and *feminist ethnography* – which advocates the personalisation of the ethnographic text and *heartfelt* or *auto-ethnography* – which builds theoretical understanding using self-reflection by the researcher⁴. Unlike earlier fieldworkers whose aim was reinforcing the scientific nature of fieldwork, contemporary ethnographers have been encouraged to include everything, including themselves, in their research accounts and to frame these accounts as interpretations of a particular experience. The result of this is that “it has become increasingly fashionable for individual research to ‘personalize’ their accounts of fieldwork [...]” (Coffey, 1999: 1).

In terms of my own methodological approach, this has more in common with the thinking of Geertz and feminist ethnographers such as Coffey and Behar than a more traditional anthropological approach. This is most obviously indicated by my use of the first person throughout, thereby very clearly reinforcing my own presence within the project. Such an approach resonates with the ethnographic approaches of Coffey - who criticises fieldwork accounts where the researcher is rendered invisible – and Behar (1995) who, in *The Vulnerable Observer*, states that being explicit about one’s presence in the field is central to ‘good’ ethnography. The connection between feminist ethnography and this thesis is also represented by my engagement with the researched – as I have already noted I became a youth work volunteer in order to conduct my research – and

⁴ Clearly these approaches are much more complex than my description of them here. Nevertheless, it is far beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full account of the debates in contemporary ethnography and interpretations of the methodology. The sheer scale and diversity of writing and research that is labelled ethnographic is such that commentators such as Lincoln and Denzin (1994) have labelled contemporary ethnography as “a messy moment [with] multiple voices, experimental texts, breaks, ruptures, crises of legitimation and representation, self-critique, new moral discourses, and technologies” (Lincoln and Denzin, 1994: 581). A more comprehensive account of this can be found in Atkinson et al (2001).

wariness of presenting fieldwork evidence as a comprehensive, indisputable insight into youth work. This resonates with the argument made by feminist ethnographers such as Dauphinée (2007) and Harding (1986) regarding the need for a participative relationship between researcher and researched – both in the field and during the writing process – in order to destabilise the power relations produced by ‘privileging’ the ethnographer’s gaze. An example of how I went about this was through consulting with participants – primarily the lead youth worker Sam – to reinforce the accuracy of my observations and providing them with draft chapters to review⁵.

Observing young people

At the same time, it would be wrong to say that I was entirely open about my ‘researcher’ identity to everyone I encountered in the field. While I went to some effort to ensure that the youth workers were aware of my purposes from the offset – my entry into Urban Youth was dependent on the consent of the youth workers – the majority of the young people were not made fully aware of my dual identity. While Sam consulted with the other youth workers before granting me entrance to the field, to my knowledge no such discussion took place with the young people. This could potentially put the ethical nature of the research into doubt. Arguably the fact that the young people at Urban Youth were potentially not made fully aware of my researcher status (or what this meant in terms of my relationship with them) positions the research as ‘covert’, a position which is, at the very least, unusual in the context of research with children and

⁵ I did not, however, provide Sam with ‘raw’ data from fieldnotes. This was principally due to the fact that these were a work in progress and had not been analysed. As my relationship with Urban Youth deepened, my understanding of the reality of their practices became more nuanced. Practices that I had initially recorded as unnecessary or problematic, I later evaluated as representative of the dynamics of discourse and the limitations on an ethical practice. As such I felt it was better to discuss the conclusions I had arrived at after analysing the fieldwork data as a whole rather than show the youth workers preliminary notes from a point when I had not fully understood - or fairly assessed - their actions.

young people. It is important then at this juncture to provide a justification for my approach and demonstrate why the young people's lack of explicit awareness does not mean that the research was unethical.

The main reason behind the exclusion of young people from initial discussions about my researcher identity was the nature of the research; my main focus was the actions and statements of youth workers. While young people featured in the descriptions of the sessions and interactions between young people and youth workers are a key aspect of the research, the purpose of fieldwork was to understand the world of the practitioner – their understandings and the discourses that shaped and were shaped by these understandings – not the young people. In terms of research ethics this put the project in a very different position to research directly focusing on children and young people which, as Skelton (2008) argues, must be as sensitive to young people's views as possible. While ethnography has been used by others, such as Emond (2002) and Alderson (1995), as a means of exploring children and young people's cultural worlds and experiences in depth, this was not my interest in this study. If anything, I wanted to move away from constructing an image of youth work practice from the perspective of the young person and instead analyse this discourse from the position of the youth worker. Fundamentally this was an ethnographic study of youth workers, not young people. As such the ethical norms of research with children and young people, as outlined by Alderson (1995) for example, which emphasise maintaining an 'overt' researcher identity, did not necessarily apply.

That said it was not possible to exclude young people from the gaze of the research entirely. As subsequent chapters will show young people do appear in the fieldnotes and interactions between young people and youth workers are an important element of the study. To a point then, my attempt to delineate

between my identity with regards to the youth workers (as a researcher) and my identity with regards to the young people (as a volunteer youth worker) was not as straightforward as I had initially thought and, at points, the young people were included in the observations. At the same time, as will become clear in the fieldwork chapters, although the young people were *present* in the observations they are to a significant degree *absent* from the analysis. What I mean by this is that, although the actions and behaviours of young people are described, they are not examined in any real depth. The youth workers reactions to young people's behaviours and statements are assessed and an attempt to explain them in terms of the subjectivities and discourses such reactions represent. However the same is not done with regard to the young people. Similarly, while I tried to grasp youth workers understandings of 'good' youth work through observing and speaking with them during fieldwork, this thesis does not present (nor does it claim to) the young people's understandings of 'good' youth work.

Including young people in description but excluding them from the real 'research' (in the sense of developing an understanding of the world from their perspective or critically examining the discursive underpinnings of their actions) created two main problems. First, to an extent, it limited the agency of young people within the parameters of the study and meant that their views of the discourse of the youth work could not be included. This, however, is more of a blank spot than a fatal flaw and is something that, on the back of this study, can be explored further. The second, more significant issue that not analysing the young people's views or motivations resulted in is the portrayal of the young people that emerged. Because the young people were not examined in any real depth, their form and identities within the thesis is somewhat superficial. By only describing how young people appear at specific points (usually during moments of tension) and not examining their views and perspectives in more depth, the picture of the young people who attend Urban Youth which emerges across the

thesis is very much a skin-deep portrayal and belies the complexity of their characters. I will outline how this impacted the image of young people at Urban Youth in more detail later on in this chapter.

Having given an outline of the practice of and debates within ethnographic fieldwork as well as my own methodological approach I now want to introduce my fieldwork site – Urban Youth – and the youth workers themselves.

Urban Youth

Urban Youth operated from a renovated Victorian public baths on a road joining an estate of council tower blocks with one of the main arterial routes from Nottingham city centre to the south west of the city. It was bordered by a primary school - which many of its members either were attending or had attended – on one side and a Tesco Metro on the other. The club had been given permission by the school to use their playground – basketball/football court, jungle gym and swings – and the yard provided a useful outdoor space. The club also had a backyard area although this was frequently used as a car park and there were on-going discussions regarding how it could be better used. Although an independent organisation, the club had offices in and shared premises with a larger community centre (with gym and pool) run by a social enterprise. This was occasionally a source of tension and there were infrequent clashes between the club and centre management over space and timetabling. The presence of up to fifty rowdy children and young people did not ease these managerial tensions, especially when activities (or clashes) within the club spilled over into the rest of the centre or when shared resources – like crash mats or kitchen items – were left in poor condition (by either party). That said, generally the working relationship between the social enterprise and Urban Youth was relatively harmonious and there was mutual recognition of the fact that both were experiencing similar problems such as financing and attracting users.

The neighbourhood surrounding the club was relatively ethnically diverse (although the two dominant ethnic groups were Asian-Muslim and White British). This was reflected in the club's attendance. As a patch-based organisation, Urban Youth's target audience was very broad. The only conditions for membership were being aged between 6 and 16 years and paying a 50p entrance fee (some of the older young people would avoid paying the entrance fee until they had checked who was there and what was going on). Usually the club ran four sessions per week on Mondays (5-7pm), Wednesdays (3.15-5pm), Thursdays (3.15-8pm) and Fridays (5-7pm). Staff began setting up sessions approximately half an hour before they started and clean up after the young people had gone home. The Wednesday and Thursday sessions strongly resembled each other. It also ran week- or fortnight-long Playschemes during school holidays – one week-long session during each mid-term break, one fortnight-long session at Easter and two fortnight-long sessions during the summer. Playschemes ran from Monday to Friday, 10am-6pm – divided into morning and afternoon sessions – although younger attendees (aged 6-8) were only allowed come for one session per day. The club also held an annual ACE Weekend activity trip in the Peak District for club members over 11 years old.

The club encompassed four main areas – the computer room, the arts and crafts/activities area (which was attached to the small kitchen), the hall and the playground. A rough floor plan is given in Annex C. Within these there were a number of 'hot spots' for exchanges between youth workers and young people. At the start of each session staff and volunteers were provided with walkie-talkies – which young people would frequently try to commandeer – and asked what room they would like to go into by the lead staff member for that evening. The availability of these hotspots depended on the session – the computer room was closed on Mondays and the arts and crafts area was usually left empty on Fridays.

In terms of staffing, Urban Youth had two full-time (Samantha and Dave) and two part-time youth workers (Tommy and Sarah). At least three members of staff were assigned to Wednesday and Thursday sessions – the busiest of the four – and at least two were assigned to the Monday and Friday sessions. Staff members were supported by a network of volunteers. Sam had signed the club up to the University of Nottingham's volunteering scheme so a significant proportion of the volunteer network came from there. Theoretically this could have been problematic as some of the older young people were already less than enamoured with the student population in their neighbourhood however the reality was that, because many of the volunteers came infrequently or once a week and left once the academic year ended, young people rarely developed a close relationship with them. This was something that the paid youth workers had had to work through and a bond between them and the young people only really emerged after sustained contact. As Dave commented early on in my fieldwork, for the first six months he worked there he was "hey you!" (fieldnote 13/09/2012). Urban Youth also had one 'young volunteer' – Alisha – who had previously been a member and was now volunteering as part of her college course in sports management.

The ratio of adults to young people was a constant issue at the club. In a perfect world, Dave joked, there would be three adults to every young person. The number of adults varied substantially depending on the time of year – many of the student volunteers would go home during the holidays or withdraw during exam season – and more than once an area of the club – usually the hall or the playground – had to be closed off as there were not enough adults to supervise it. The problem of insufficient numbers of adults was intertwined with the financial precariousness of the club. As an independent, non-statutory organisation Urban Youth relied predominantly on grants from independent funding bodies and

philanthropic organisations for its main revenue although funds were also generated through a tuck shop and entrance contributions.

As the focal point of my analysis was the relationships between young people and youth workers, the four staff members – who had developed a strong bond with the young people – became lynchpins of the study. They acted as gatekeepers – allowing me to enter – and key informants – providing me with the in-depth insights necessary to explore my research propositions fully. The centrality of gatekeepers and key informants to fieldwork is highlighted by Broadhead and Rist (1976) who note how, should a *negative* relationship with gatekeepers and informants develop gatekeepers can control, restrict and condition the eventual research findings. On the other hand, as Laurila (1997) and Atkinson and Hammersley (2001) note, key informants and gatekeepers can provide in-depth information that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. It was through asking youth workers questions about their approaches, talking to them about their views on youth work and ‘shadowing’ them during sessions that I gained an insight into the dynamics of the practice. It is therefore important to introduce the youth workers. By doing so, I will be able to give a sense of the different approaches and personalities at the club and the differing professional pathways into Urban Youth.

Samantha

Sam was the lead youth worker at Urban Youth and founder of the club. She had been involved in youth work – both in patch-based youth organisations like Urban Youth, detached youth work and sports’ clubs – for over a decade. She had originally come to youth work through football and was generally accepted by the young people as the best player “of the adults”. Sam was also clearly the leader of the club. She had a great reputation with the young people who attended. Her prowess both on the football pitch and on computer games meant that she was regularly described as “safe”.

Crucially, Sam was not seen as a walkover and – although this occasionally led to arguments between her and young people who were more resistant to “being told what to do” – would challenge behaviour that she felt was unacceptable or problematic. That said, Sam refused to be – in her words – “like school” and would try as much as possible not to exclude or suspend membership. To achieve this she would hold one-to-one sessions with young people who were at risk of exclusion – due to issues with aggression normally – and try to find a way to work with them. It was these one-to-one sessions and conversations that Sam felt were central to ‘good youth work’ to the extent that she was critical of youth workers who “spend all their time in the kitchen” (fieldnote 08/03/2011) rather than trying to develop these.

Sam was also very much interested in broadening her theoretical knowledge about working with young people, particularly in relation to learning. When we met she had recently completed a masters’ degree in youth and community work. As part of her degree Sam had had to conduct her own empirical study of youth and community work and, when I first approached her about taking part in the project, said that she was very aware of the problems of gathering evidence and would try to help me out as much as possible. Without this commitment it is likely that this thesis may not have been as successful as it was – or at least would have been a very different study – so I am personally grateful to her for empathising with my position. In this Sam fulfilled the role of ‘gatekeeper’ to the field.

Dave

The other full-time youth worker at Urban Youth was Dave. In his late twenties, Dave had first become involved in youth work while still in college through volunteering at a wildlife park in Norfolk (where he was from). As part of this he had established a ‘bat club’ for young people aged between 11 and 16. After studying Zoology at university, Dave returned to the practice as a full-time

youth worker with a detached youth work organisation in Nottingham for two years. His role in this group, Dave said, involved "driving around in a van, talking to young people". He had joined Urban Youth the year before my fieldwork after this project had lost funding and was, according to Sam, the "second in command" at the club (although according to Dave this amounted to "doing what Sam tells me!").

Dave preferred working with older young people, particular young men for whom he aimed, as much as possible, to be a "positive male role model" (I will return to this in later chapters). During sessions he could usually be found playing table tennis with one of the older group in the hall. Although Dave was by no means a walkover, he had a great tolerance for being mocked by the young people. Whereas Sam would challenge jokes that she felt were 'out of order', Dave was more inclined to banter with the young people. It was very difficult, he told me, to not laugh when a young person's response to being chastised was "mate, your breath stinks..." That said the line between banter and insults was always maintained and Dave would intervene if he felt things were going too far. However, in youth work, Dave felt, it was best to "pick your battles" and be more supportive than combative – his primary 'regulatory' tactics were to praise "good listening" and "walking away" from arguments. Interestingly Dave would also transfer the responsibility to regulate behaviour onto the young people themselves. For example he would tell young people that if they wanted to act out it was "their decision" but this decision would mean that they would have to leave the session. To me, what was most striking about Dave was that he was quite obviously cool and had the same taste in both music (drum and bass mostly) and style as many of the older group. This definitely stood to his benefit as a frequent put-down made by the older young people at the club was that someone's clothes looked "like they're from Primark".

While he was interested in learning about youth work and frequently – through pre- and post-session collective reflections and evaluation forms – thought about what approaches were ‘best’, Dave was a lot more opening critical of practice frameworks and policy guidelines. During one conversation about the ‘historical’ aspect of my research – which he was interested in finding out about and regularly asked if I had found any other “top facts” about youth work history – he criticised policy-makers who he said “had probably never spoken to any young people” (fieldnote 12/11/2010). He also disparagingly described some of the training courses he had attended which felt were too officious and concerned with health and safety. In Dave’s words these courses were “all like ‘you must hold your hands this far above the water’...ridiculous!” (fieldnote 12/11/2010)

Tommy

Tommy worked part-time at the club during my fieldwork. When we first met he said he was “still the new boy” at Urban Youth. From Sheffield, he had moved to Nottingham after completing his degree in Biochemistry the year before. Tommy had become involved in youth work after working at a YMCA summer camp in America for a summer. As I will discuss in later chapters, this experience – which was much more structured – influenced Tommy’s approach to youth work and framed his evaluation of his relationship with young people at Urban Youth. Tommy was a very laid-back guy. At Urban Youth this was both positive and negative. While on one hand it made him approachable and popular with many of the young people, on the other hand it made it difficult for him to assert himself and when he did challenge young people’s behaviours he was often ignored or dismissed.

Tommy said he preferred working with the 9-11 age groups particularly the “little naughty ones”. He was also very creative and during sessions could usually be found either playing chasing outside or at the arts and crafts table. Tommy was also accepted as the best table tennis player at the club – he had

played in a championship while at school. As the table tennis table was a key hotspot this earned him some respect with the older young people with whom he had a weaker relationship. Due to his age (early twenties) and appearance, many of this group assumed that Tommy was a student and, reflecting the tensions between the local community and the student population, some were quite distant with him.

Sarah

Sarah was the 'mother' of the club. Born and bred in Nottingham, Sarah was the only of the youth workers from the city. She had only recently started working as a paid member of staff at the club when I began my fieldwork. Before that she had been a volunteer at the club for a number of years. Sarah was also the only youth worker with children, initially becoming involved when her son – Michael – began attending. Amongst the young people, Sarah was the best known of the youth workers. This was due to the fact that she had lived in the neighbourhood since Michael was born. She had also worked as a dinner lady at the school next door and was a part-time swimming teacher at the club in the community centre. Before becoming a dinner lady Sarah had also intermittently worked as a teaching assistant. The result of this, Sarah commented in our first conversation, was that many of the young people had a different relationship with her depending on the setting and this "confuses some of them as one minute I'm Miss_____ and here I'm Sarah" (fieldnote, 10/9/2010, 6.05pm).

Perhaps reflecting the fact that she knew the young people outside of the club, Sarah was much more attuned to the different issues which framed interactions at the club than the other youth workers. This is a frequent theme in our conversations together as Sarah spoke about the different socio-economic backgrounds of the young people and how during the summer the club got a lot of young people coming from outside the neighbourhood – this is particularly interesting in terms of the dynamics of participation at Urban Youth and the

different understanding of the club's 'target audience' amongst youth workers (I return to this discussion in Chapter 6).

The main difference between Sarah and the other youth workers was her relationship with the young people. Unlike Sam, Dave and Tommy, Sarah had a pre-existing relationship with both the young people and their parents. The result of this is that whereas the other youth workers had to put in a lot of effort to develop a rapport with the young people, Sarah had already developed such a rapport with many of the local attendees before. This, combined with the fact that she was their neighbour, meant that Sarah did not receive the same complaints as Tommy – of being posh or different for example.

Sarah was also the least comfortable with the idea of being observed by me and had initially objected to this (although I only found this out three months after I had started fieldwork). At our first introduction Sarah self-deprecatingly said she wasn't sure if there was anything I could learn from her. The fact that we developed a relationship whereby she was happy to voice her opinions on the dynamics of Urban Youth – particularly the experiences of Michael, her son (see Chapter 5) – stand as a testament to fieldwork as a method of gathering information. Through sustained interaction and reassurances that I was there to help and learn rather than judge or evaluate, Sarah became much more open with me. Although I could not say definitively, I would question whether our discussions would have been as personal in a structured interview setting where this personal relationship was not developed.

Methodologically this resonates with Coffey's (1999) analysis of the ethnographic self and the fact that fieldwork is about building personal and emotional relationships. The ethnographer achieves this by representing their identity in a particular way. With Sarah, I went to great effort to project an image of myself

of someone who would support and help with sessions rather than watch and judge.

The young people – a warning note

At this stage it is important to consider how the young people at Urban Youth are presented in this thesis a little more deeply. While this is a study on a practice focused on working with young people, the main concern of the research is the actions and approaches of youth workers. Central to the study was the discourses and subjectivities youth workers' practices spoke to and the possibilities for and limitations on disrupting power relations they encountered. As part of this youth workers reactions or responses to young people were analysed. In particular I was interested in exploring how unequal relations of power were reinforced through interactions between young people and youth workers and identifying instances where the tensions between differing the discourses and subjectivities underlying the practice was apparent.

For the most part these instances emerged in situations where there was some degree of conflict or challenge. For example, where the young person and youth worker disagreed or where the behaviour of the young person was problematic. In these instances, as the analysis in fieldwork chapters will elucidate, the power relations between young people and youth workers and the possibilities for/limitations on disrupting these power relations were made most obvious.

However, in focusing on these exchanges, the thesis unintentionally paints quite a negative and at times superficial picture of the young people as obstinate, unwilling to compromise or even aggressive. This is an unintended consequence of trying to use clear examples of discursive tensions or illustrate how difficult it is for youth workers to achieve the type of critical disassembling that the Foucauldian ethical framework advocates using specific fieldnote examples. It is important to emphasis two things. First, as young people were not included in

the parameters of this study beyond youth workers reactions to them, they were not analysed or explored to any degree beyond the explanations of youth workers. In the absence of such an analysis the young people's actions and statements are recorded without any real consideration of the subjectivities they exhibit or their individuality outside of the power relations which, from a Foucauldian perspective, produce and facilitate their actions. The main focus was on how youth workers responded to these statements and actions and the discourse such responses represent. For this reason the young people may appear superficial in their emotions and actions or even as caricaturised.

Second, because of the (intentional) lack of attention paid to the young people's individuality and the focus on moments of tension and rupture, the thesis recounts more negative than positive behaviours by young people. It is important to note that this is an unfortunate side-effect rather than a complete picture of what the young people who attended Urban Youth were like or of their relationship with the youth workers and the club. While some of the young people's behaviours could be problematic and conflicts did arise, they were also frequently enthusiastic about what was going on at the club and the majority of sessions were positive. Ultimately the young people featured in the study came to each session of their own volition. They were frequently engaged and engaging, presenting ideas on how to improve the club or what else the club could do. The fact that the youth workers' pre- and post-session evaluation frequently began with youth workers discussing how well previous sessions had gone and how well some of the young people were engaging stands as a testament to the fact that, despite the tensions, relationships in the club were positive.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological foundations in relation to data collection of this study. By explaining the types of evidence used, the benefits

and limitations of this evidence and why they are appropriate for the thesis topic the chapter has reinforced the construct and internal validity of the study. The chapter has also introduced my case study, outlining the rationale behind it and specifying what specific branch of youth work I focus on and why. I have also introduced the key figures in the fieldwork stage and the ethical issues I encountered during data collection. Having engaged with this methodological discussion I now want to outline how I analysed data gathered. Principally I wish to show how I was able to identify that the conditions for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject exist in informal youth work.

Chapter 3 Part 2: Methodology - Analytic frames

Introduction

Having discussed construct validity I now want to illustrate how the evidence collected was analysed. A strong analytic model is a crucial element of a well designed single case study. The critical test for this is whether the data gathered is connected with the research questions and whether the analysis can be used to support the explanation and arguments proposed. In terms of this thesis, therefore, I required a framework which would allow me to demonstrate the ambiguous and discursive character of positive youth work practice as well as the impact of subjectivities and power relations on the production of the discourse of youth work. To do this I apply four potential interpretations – two to each dominant theme – of what youth work looks like and what it should attempt to achieve. This allowed me to illustrate four key messages from textwork and fieldwork data:

1. The discourse of youth work is the product of subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood;
2. The image of positive youth worker-youth relations it projects is dualistic and reflects a combination of very different models of youth-adult relations;
3. These models are not wholly positive or negative – an ethical youth work practice (which challenges power relations) will not be achieved by selecting one over the other;
4. As such what constitutes positive youth work is ambiguous – thus presenting possibilities for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject

The outcomes of this analysis will clearly illustrate the discursive nature of ethics and tensions and ambiguities embedded within youth work discourse. Relating to

the key research focus using this analytic frame to interrogate textwork and fieldwork data will help elucidate both whether a Foucauldian interpretation of what makes youth work ethical is appropriate and whether practitioners have the capacity to act ethically in a Foucauldian sense.

In terms of the structure of this analytic frame, there are two elements of this: first, I explore the existing interpretations of youth and adulthood (the subjectivities embedded in youth work discourse) and the power relations associated with these (represented by the youth-adult relations they promote); second, I select differing models⁶ of positive practice – relative to the themes in youth work discourse I am focusing on – that these subjectivities and power relations produced. These models will be applied to textwork and fieldwork data in subsequent chapters to illustrate the ambiguous nature of youth work discourse and the possibilities for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject (as well as the limitations on this) embedded in this discourse.

Subjectivities and power relations in youth work

Although youth is a highly contested field with any number of possible interpretations, existing attempts to conceptualise and define the youth identity generally fall into one of two camps: the youth as transition approach and the youth as subcultures model. These categorisations are, however, broad headings to organise the multifarious conceptualisations of youth and it is important to recognise the nuances encompassed by each. For example, the transitions model of youth includes both traditional literature on adolescence (see: Hall, 1904; Coleman, 1961) and contemporary writing on young or emerging adulthood (see: Williamson, 1997; 2001).

⁶ It is important to emphasise that the models I select are not the only sub-discourses in youth work. The overarching discourse of youth work is also embedded with sub-discourses relating to (for example) health, sexuality and gender. I merely use social education and participation as, as Chapter 4's analysis of policy will illustrate, they are the two most dominant discourses in youth work. For a more comprehensive insight into the sub-discourses within youth work see Jeffs and Smith (1987; 2010) and Davies (1986).

Historically, the 'youth as transition' approach pre-dates the 'youth as subcultures' argument substantially. It emerged during early discussions amongst academics regarding the differences between children, young people and adults. An early pioneer of this model was G. Stanley Hall (1904). Hall's work focused on the nature of 'adolescence'. He defined this as a 'period of storm and stress' (Hall, 1904) during which young people made the transition from childhood to adulthood. The locus of Hall's conception of youth was the combined physiological and emotional changes experienced during puberty. It was predominantly an age-based characterisation of youth underlined by an understanding of youth as a transitory stage rather than a social group in itself. Although recognising that adolescents had very different experiences to children or adults, Hall conceived these experiences as manifestations of the transition to adulthood rather than an independent social sphere.

A characterising feature of Hall's approach was that social problems are an innate element of adolescence. Hall's arguments provided the impetus behind a host of other 'youth as transition' theorists. These include Coleman (1961) whose work *The Adolescent Society* attempted to map the dimensions of the youth population in American high schools. Focusing on the potential deviancy embedded in the youth transition to adulthood Coleman characterised youth as a period where social attributes are developed (successfully or unsuccessfully). A key feature of the 'youth as transition' approach is that young people are a potential risk to social order should they not successfully complete the transition to adulthood. This point is made by Friedenberg (1969) who states that "the youth occupy a subordinate or probationary status while under tutelage for adult life" (Friedenberg, 1969: 67). The principle argument within the 'youth as transition' model is that youth is fundamentally a period of development. As such it is understood relative to normative expectations of what a 'successful' or

'unsuccessful' transition would look like. By implication young people are inherently 'less than' or 'becoming'.

Recent writing on youth has expanded the transitions model proposed by Hall and Friedenberg, highlighting that youth is characterised by a range of different transitions or 'pathways' to adulthood. These have been summarised by Coles (1995) as:

- The transition from full-time education and training to a full-time job in the labour market (the school-to-work transition);
- The transition from family of origin to family of destination (the domestic transition); and
- The transition from residence with parents (or surrogate parents) to living away from them (the housing transition)

(Coles, 1995: 8; see also: Barry, 2005)

Despite this recognition of differing transition pathways, the core message of this understanding of youth is the same. Youth is principally characterised by the movement to adulthood.

An alternative understanding of youth can be loosely identified as the 'youth as subcultures' model. This approach emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s in response to what some theorists saw as the problematisation of youth. These included Cohen (1980) who described how young people had been imagined in the public consciousness as a 'folk devil' who was inherently deviant. This fuelled and was fuelled by a moral panic about supposedly disorderly behaviour inherent to the young. An example of this comes from Coleman (1961) who portrays young people as:

...cut off, probably more than ever before,
from the adult society [...]. Consequently our
society has within its midst a small set of teen-

age societies, which focus teen-age interests and attitudes on things far removed from adult responsibilities, and which may develop standards that lead away from those goals established by the larger society (Coleman, 1961: 9)

The 'youth in transition' approach, according to subculture theorists, was a manifestation of this. This included deficit-oriented (see: MacDonald, 2001) understandings of youth propagated by Coleman (1961) and Friedenberg (1969). These theorists' approaches suggest that any youth 'culture' which develops must be viewed as a sign of deviation from adult society and emblematic of an 'unsuccessful' transition. The locus of the 'youth as subcultures' debate is the conflation of youth with delinquency, potential criminality, and the use of 'youth' as a foil for underlying social problems. Theorists from this field argue that the positioning of youth relative to its achievement of 'adult' status meant the youth "is largely defined in terms of what it is lacking; by what it is not rather than by what it is" (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 41). In a similar vein, Thomson et al (in Roche et al (eds.) [2004] 2009) note how "generally 'youth' tends to be seen as a problem: young people are beset by predominantly negative images, are seen as either a source of trouble or *in* trouble" (Thomson et al, in Roche et al (eds.), [2004] 2009: xiii, emphasis in original).

The essential argument of the 'youth as subcultures' model is that the 'cultural artifices' (see: Epstein (ed.), 1998) of young people have been pathologised as deviant by the interpretation of youth as a stage of 'becoming' or inherently disordered. As Garratt (1997, in Roche and Tucker (eds.)) notes:

What to the majority of young people is no more than a naive, stylistic expression of

impression of independence becomes [...] a problematic social phenomenon (Garratt, in Roche and Tucker (eds.), 1997: 146)

Moreover, 'youth as subcultures' theorists argue that the problematisation of youth and view of the problems young people face as endemic to 'being young' - and therefore in 'a period of storm and stress' (Hall, G.S., 1904) - lead to broader social divisions being subsumed under the heading of 'youth issues'. The essence of this argument is that notions of a homogeneous social group in transition flattens and excludes the different experiences and problems young people face. This point is made by Hall and Jefferson (1976) who argue that the vision of youth as an inherently problematic period of transition to an ultimately more stable adulthood leads to the social problems faced by particular young people becoming conflated with 'being young'. In opposition, subcultures theorists emphasise the differential impact of particular aspects of certain young people's social, cultural and economic circumstances on the movement to independence. Hall (1971) for example argues that issues related to class and race inequalities, seen through the frame of young people, have been incorrectly interpreted as part of a broad 'youth experience'.

Hall's argument epitomises another difference between the two models. The 'youth in transition' model, by identifying youth as a period of "storm and stress" and emphasising the need for young people to develop successfully, implies that the problems young people experience will be resolved once young people stop being young. It is their difference from adults which is problematic, not the diverse social problems they encounter. This point is outlined by Griffin ([2004] 2009, in Roche et al) who states how 'youth in transition' analyses:

...argued that [social] problems could be alleviated if those young people who are most

affected would only change their attitudes, appearance or behaviour. So, for example [...] young unemployed African-American men should alter their attitudes or behaviour in order to improve their employment prospects (Griffin, [2004] 2009, in Roche et al: 14; see also Freeman and Holzer, 1986)

Subcultures theorists such as Hall (1971) and Epstein (1998), on the other hand, argue that this fails to recognise that the various 'attitudes' and styles which transitions theorists highlight as in need of alteration, are representative of more entrenched social problems. Garratt (in Epstein (ed.), 1998), for example, explains the punk movement of the late 1970s as a stylistic reflection of young people's frustration with their economic and employment prospects. Young people who associated themselves with punk should not be viewed – as a transitions approach would – as experiencing the problematic transition to stable adulthood but as part of a counter-cultural resistance to existent class and employment structures. As such the primary concern should not be to improve young people's attitudes but to resolve the underlying problems of unemployment.

Crucially, subcultures approaches do not reject the 'transitional' element of young people's experiences. The statements of writers such as Hall and Garratt do not deny that a characterising feature of youth is the movement to independence. However, subcultures approaches argue that these transitions are inherently diverse and influenced by the broader circumstances of the individual young person. Writers such as Wyn and White (1997), for example, argue that young people do not experience a homogeneous, linear transition to adulthood. Rather "there are multiple routes along the continuum to adulthood, and no obvious point of arrival" (cf. Barry, 2005: 100). Moreover, the fractures and

difficulties some young people encounter in their move to adulthood are not merely symptomatic of the 'storm and stress' of adolescence but are representative of the inequalities and tensions embedded within society. In opposition to Coleman's (1961) description of youth culture as emblematic of young people cutting themselves off from adult society, subcultures perspectives view the different cultural representations of youth as reflections of social tensions and fissures.

Furthermore, the distinction between these two models is not characterised by solely the image of youth they propagate. Rather the difference is also rooted in the image of adulthood and of youth relations with adults that they project. This links back to the theoretical arguments presented in Chapter 2 as it resonates with Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse as manifested through subjectivities relating to and power relations – conceptualised as the modes of interaction - between subjects. Here what distinguishes the transitions model of youth from the subcultures model are the relations between subjects and understandings of other subjects each engenders.

Understandings of youth and understandings of adulthood are interconnected; there is a symbiotic relationship between what is understood as youth and what is understood as adulthood, if only by implication. For instance, inherent within the 'youth as transition' approach is an understanding of adulthood as a non-transitory, stable period. If young people are in a 'state of dereliction' then adults are not. Furthermore, the hierarchical relationships intertwined with social conditioning are built on an understanding of adults – whether teachers or youth workers – as 'knowers' and students or young people as 'learners'. Archetypal 'adults', so defined, are therefore more knowledgeable than young people. According to writing on the dynamics of adulthood this includes knowledge of how to act, of social order and of oneself.

As with youth, there is already a substantial body of literature considering the nature of adulthood. However what is interesting in the context of youth work is how much the definition or understanding of 'adulthood' is characterised by normative expectations of action and response. For instance, as I will show in later chapters, one of the things youth workers at Urban Youth emphasise as characteristic of 'maturity' is "setting an example" or "being a role model" to others. The understanding of adulthood propagated through these practices echoes the arguments of Arnett (2001) who describes adulthood as a "quality of character" (Arnett, 2001: 134). Focusing on the transitions between adolescence and adulthood, Arnett identifies "accepting responsibility for one's self" and "making independent decisions" as some of the "most prominent criteria" for being classed as an adult (ibid).

Conceptualising adulthood as a state of 'knowing' and being aware of one's role also resonates with the observations of Friedenberg (1969). Writing on the nature of adolescence, Friedenberg comments that "the crucial developmental task of adolescents is self-definition – establishing who they are and what they really feel" (Friedenberg, 1969: 4). The implication of Friedenberg's interpretation is that a fully 'developed' adult is someone who has "established who they are". Friedenberg expands this in terms of what the 'attitude' of someone who had completed adolescence should be – the "mature attitude" (Friedenberg, 1969: 244). This attitude is "towards life itself, rather than toward any given issue" (ibid). According to Friedenberg there are "four facets to maturity" (p. 245): awareness, objectivity, emotional responsiveness, and civility. Individually, Friedenberg defines awareness as "the power a person has to know what is going on around and within him, and to take conscious account of it" (p. 246); objectivity as "the capacity...to discern the properties of external reality without attributing it to the properties he would wish it to have" (p. 247); emotional responsiveness as "self-respect and empathy" (p. 248); and civility as

"the virtue which makes civic life endurable" through maintaining individual privacy and a distance between people (p. 251).

Such models of adulthood – in their focus on life-course and development of a 'mature attitude' – resonate with the transitions approach to youth. From these theorists perspective, 'good' adulthood is reflective of a successful youth transition and the development of a "quality of character" (Arnett, 2001) and capacity for independent thought and action. Given its primary concern with the development of "good form" (Booton, 1985: 14; cf. Davies, 2009) and move from dependence to independence, the transitions model of youth clearly compliments Friedenberg and Arnett's conceptualisation of adulthood. This connection between understandings of adulthood as 'complete' relative to adults is reinforced by transitions theorists 'deficit-oriented' (see: MacDonald, 2001) view of young people. By primarily conceptualising young people as being somehow 'deficient', this approach implicitly identifies adulthood – the end point of the youth transition – as characterised by completeness.

Importantly for this thesis, the image of the adult as 'complete' is also one sustained by young people. This is indicated by the findings of Thomson and Holland (2002) from interviews with a range of young people. While claiming that their findings contradicted the 'traditional' image of adulthood the key identifiers of 'being adult' – "feeling mature and autonomous", "responsibility" and "caring for others" (Barry, 2005: 100) – emphasised by research participants echoes the model of 'responsible adulthood' proposed by Friedenberg. This reaffirms the arguments of Foucault regarding the pervasiveness of subjectivities and the fact that these are both produced by and reproduced discourse. The young people in this study are reiterating an understanding of adult which, by implication, shapes the way they are understood within discourse.

In opposition to the clearly bounded definition of adulthood – as inherently ‘complete’ – explorations into the heterogeneous nature of youth by subcultures theorists have challenged the notion of an identifiable model of adulthood. Central to this challenge has been a critique of the notion of adulthood as “an ‘end point’ when specific rights and privileges are bestowed” (Barry, 2005: 100). Commentators such as Jones (2002) have criticised the notion of adulthood as clearly defined, an argument expanded by Wyn and White (1997) who assert that “in contemporary societies [...] the boundaries between youth and adulthood are blurred, employment is insecure and often temporary and the conventional markers of adulthood (for example, marriage or child rearing) and often purposefully delayed” (cf. Barry, 2005: 101).

The central distinction between a transitions approach to adulthood and a subcultures approach is the position of the individual. Within transitions approaches which conceptualise youth and adulthood in terms of specific standard markers or experiences, the individual young person’s feelings and interpretations are decentred. Within subcultures approaches, on the other hand, the predominant argument is that the experiences of young people are heterogeneous and distinct. As such the individual’s experience and situation become of critical importance. This different focus emerges in Barry’s (2005) critique of transitions literature which, she argues, has ignored the fact that many young people may “feel adult” long before they have achieved the traditional markers of ‘adulthood’ (Barry, 2005: 100-101). Such an approach emphasises the fluidity of the youth/adult boundary, arguing that the characteristics of adulthood within a transitions framework – responsibility for others for example – may be just as easily applied to particular groups of young people – young carers. From this perspective, the notion of a unique adult identity is questioned. Moreover, the range of different interpretations of what counts as ‘responsibility’ alongside the purposeful delaying of certain ‘rituals’ of

'adulthood' by young people (see: Wyn and White, 1997; James and Prout, 1997; Barry, 2005) disrupt the concept of a adulthood as a discrete life-stage (the understanding embedded in Arnett and Friedenberg's work).

In addition to the differing subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood, the transitions and subcultures approaches project particular power relations. As I will outline in the following section, the combination of these subjectivities and power relations produce the different interpretation of ethical youth work. The different subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood inform both the positioning of young people relative to adults within discourse and relations between young people and adults. This connects back to Foucault who conceptualises power in terms of the order of and relations between subjects in discourse.

Interestingly both transitions and subcultures project a similar model of youth-adult positions within discourse – with adults as dominant and youth as subordinate – although this is more explicit in the former approach. The definition of youth as essentially a period of 'tutelage to becoming adult' (see: Friedenberg, 1969) and a transitional pathway to adulthood (see: Coles, 1995) explicitly positions young people as 'less than' adults. However, despite rejecting transitions approaches, subcultures theory arguably implicitly reinforces this positioning. Garratt highlights this contradiction noting:

In its most common usages, the prefix sub has an inherent meaning: it implies a below-average worth or quality [...] because our expectations aren't being met, it follows that the sub-cultural group is 'substandard'. (Garratt, op cit.:147).

Moreover, some theorists have argued that subcultures focuses on atypical youth expressions (Williamson, 1997) to challenge the homogeneous, sequential, normative imagining of young people's trajectory from childhood. In response to the transitional claim that young people "have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship, position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows" (Turner, 1967: 98-99), subcultures theorists such as Hall emphasised the presence of particular cultural 'demarcations' as reflections of the social experience of a specific group – the Punk movement for example. The intention here was to illustrate that young people were not just incomplete adults they were a heterogeneous group of people whose fashions and habits were manifestations of the various social experiences they were encountering.

In doing so Hall attempted to challenge the positioning of youth as a generalised life-stage characterised by deviancy and being 'inadequate adults'. However in focusing overwhelmingly on particular groups of young people who were responding to their personal circumstances in more 'spectacular' ways, subcultures implicitly conflated youth subcultures with marginality and alienation from adult society – a view which resonates strongly with Coleman's description of the adolescent society as deviant and cut-off (Coleman, 1961). The impact of this subculturalist interpretation on the positioning of young people relative to adults is twofold: first, it reinforces their status as a minority, marginal group isolated from the dominant order; second, by overlooking the relatively "conventional" (Williamson, 1997: 7) experience of many young people, the emphasis on small groupings in subcultures excludes the experience of young people who are not demonstrating particular behaviours or who aren't marginalised by the dominant adult society from considerations of youth. Like transitions, subcultures thus positions adults as the dominant, oppressive social group relative to alienated, marginalised and fractured youth population.

That said, through challenging deficit-oriented interpretations of youth and the idea of an identifiable 'adult' persona, subcultures also attempts to disrupt traditional power relations associated with youth-adult subjectivities and interactions. Specifically, this approach critiques the notion – conveyed by transitions literature – of adults as more established and knowledgeable than young people. 'Subcultures' writing achieves this by highlighting the disjointed and fractured circumstances that those who have supposedly reached adulthood can experience. I have already summarised how commentators such as Barry (2005), Wyn and White (1997) and Jones (2002) unsettle the image of a universally stable adulthood. In terms of power relations, the impact of this debate is to raise a question mark over the transitions perspective of adult-youth relations as characterised by adults guiding and directing young people (this is illustrated by Friedenberg's description of the adult identity). As an alternative, subcultures literature underscores the importance of meaningful dialogue between different the social groups. For example Coleman et al (2004, in Roche et al (eds.)) argue that positive communication between young people and adults is of utmost importance in resolving social cleavages. Here the principle concern is not 'making young people adults' but sustaining a relationship where both 'adults' and young people feel they can talk and be listened to. The focus of relations between young people and adults from this perspective should be the collaborative resolution of social divisions through critical reflection on the wider context and challenges rather than guiding or training young people to meet a standardised 'end point'.

However, while such an interpretation of 'good' youth-adult relations appears more positive than a 'training' oriented relationship, it can also be problematic. Subcultures is inhabited by the tension between a differential understanding of young people's problems and an individualised interpretation of how best to interact with young people that borders on "a narcissism of minor differences"

(Williamson, 1997: 8) and risks romanticising the multiple exclusions associated with being part of the 'counterculture' (Williamson, 2001; in Harrison and Wise (eds.)). As Williamson (1997) writes:

As transition pathways have become more prolonged, fractured and uncertain, especially for more marginal and vulnerable groups of young people, such practice smacks more of malign indifference rather than benign neglect (Williamson, 1997: 6; see also: Drakeford and Williamson, 1997)

From this perspective, a youth-adult relationship focused predominantly on recognising the circumstances of the individual rather than providing 'tutelage', while well-intentioned, neglects the very real need for such tutelage amongst certain groups of young people. In this way, rather than challenging the power relations between young people and adults, subculture approaches risk reinforcing the boundaries that some young people may encounter through failing to provide them with certain information, favouring instead non-intervention. In terms of this thesis this is a critical point as it highlights how seemingly ethical relationships can reinforce discourses which are 'unethical' through not challenging the subjectivities and power relations embedded in these discourses fully. Moreover it illustrates how responding to young people's wishes and receiving a mandate directly from them can be problematic as it errs towards non-interventionist and, as I will discuss in later chapters, permissive and unchallenging relationships.

Having outlined the different understandings of youth and adulthood and the power relations between young people and youth workers these create I now want to explore the sub-discourses of positive youth work practice that these

subjectivities and power relations produce/are produced by. This discussion will be centred on four sub-discourses of youth work – from the position of what the intention of the practice is – two for each theme (social education and participation). For social education these are critical pedagogy and social conditioning; for participation developing agency and preventing exclusion. These sub-discourses propagate very different image of youth work, each of which can be seen as to an extent problematic. To outline this argument fully this section describes the specific relations and practices advocated by each frame – critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency and preventing exclusion – noting the different relationships between young people and adults they emphasise and the limitations to each. These will be reapplied in the following chapters to underline the ambiguities embedded in the overarching discourse of youth work.

A warning note on false binaries

To illustrate the multiple subjectivities and subject relations manifest in and formed through youth work practice, this thesis uses a four part matrix of some of the differing sub-discourses of 'good' youth work and positive youth worker-young person relations. These sub-discourses divide into two broad categories relating to pedagogy – situated knowledge and social conditioning – and participation – developing agency and preventing exclusion. As I will outline further below each of these sub-discourses varies in the subjectivities relating to young people and youth workers and the power relations between each they are produced by, facilitate and project. However, it is important to highlight that while these sub-discourses differ they should not be interpreted as entirely distinct or oppositional. Nor should they be seen as better/worse than each other. They are to be used as analytic tools to help identify the ambiguities and multiple subjectivities within the practice. The various sub-discourses are co-existent within the practice's discourse and each is productive and limiting to a

degree. As fieldwork data will show relations between youth workers and young people frequently reflect both the selected sub-discourses.

Ultimately in highlighting the fact that there are multiple sub-discourses of youth-adult relations embedded in youth work practice I am trying to illustrate the openings for an ethical practice wherein power relations between youth and adults are disrupted existent in the discourse of youth work. This connects back to the argument of Connolly (1993) outlined in Chapter 2. In summary, the thesis applies varying sub-discourses of youth worker-young person relations in order to illustrate that there are multiple subjectivities and power relations producing practitioners' actions at any given time. They are not applied in order to promote one approach over another – the intention is to identify each of the sub-discourses within the policy (in textwork analysis) and practice (in fieldwork analysis) of youth work rather than imply the practice should move towards one or the other.

Models of 'good' youth work practice

Theme 1: Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy directed at disrupting traditional interpretations of the relationship between teachers and learners. Importantly it is not just a practical approach or method of teaching, it is a resolutely *political* project focused on relations of power and control. Critical pedagogy challenges dominant understandings of knowledge and learning. It argues against a "banking concept of education" (Freire, 1972 in Darder et al, 2009: 52) where education is posited as the transferral of knowledge from teachers to students. Such a process has been heavily criticised by critical educationalists such as Illich (1971) who writes that "the pupil is [...] 'schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence

and fluency with the ability to say something new" (Illich, 1971: 1). Critical pedagogues view education as a process of equipping people to develop the skills to destabilise the unequal relations of power underpinning social interaction.

Moreover, and connected to this, critical pedagogy repudiates the division between 'theory' and 'action', between knowledge and application. Critical pedagogy thus refocuses education, placing the development of critical thinking, challenging accepted knowledges and disrupting subject positions – specifically those of 'teacher' and 'learner' – at the centre of the learning process. As Pericles (2000) states, critical pedagogy:

[...] challenges us to reflect upon and re-examine the logic and the boundaries of "thought" and "action", "theory" and "practice," and what comprises and displaces the opposition of these two entities [...]
(Pericles, 2000: xi)

Importantly however critical pedagogy is not a rejection of 'learning theory' or providing learners with knowledge. Rather it is a view that education should involve giving people the building blocks to develop their own understandings of the world (Freire, 1972). Advocates of critical pedagogical approaches argue that political action and the disruption of unequal relations of power will emerge through this process. Conceptually, critical pedagogy was first developed by Paulo Freire who saw the co-construction of useful knowledge as an act of social disruption and, eventually, political action. Connecting thought and reflexivity with political action Freire argued that a critical approach to learning and knowledge production would facilitate the development of a more critically aware politics. Freire's critical pedagogy rejects the image of knowledge and learning

as a de-politicised 'objective' process. It critiques accepted facts as part of a system of domination which silences and excludes people. Critical pedagogy explicitly accepts the existence of difference and Otherness (Darder et al, 2009) mobilising competing social narratives as a means to further understanding and ultimately destabilise systems of domination. As Ledwith (2001) states:

Critical thought leads to critical action. Thus, education is located at the interface of liberation and domestication. This is not a neutral space. The power of ideas has the possibility of either reducing us to objects in our own history or freeing us as subjects, curious, creative and engaged in our world (Ledwith, 2001: 177)

At the same time, despite a general assertion that education is a political act and that a 'banking' approach to learning represents a system of control, critical pedagogy is not a single philosophy. On the contrary, there are a number of distinct theoretical strands that come under the broad heading of critical pedagogy. I label these as: popular education; auto-didacticism; and situated knowledge. Whilst these categories overlap and each contains elements which mirror the other two, there are distinct differences between them. These differences become particular clear as they are practiced.

Popular education is perhaps the most well-known iteration of critical pedagogy. This follows the educational philosophies of Freire (1972) who positioned learning and knowledge generation as resolutely political act. This has already been outlined above. In practice a Freirean-informed view of critical pedagogy emphasises connecting knowledge and learning to political action, particularly resistance. Within the frame of critical youth work (Ginwright et al, 2006; Akom

et al, 2009) there a wide range of examples of popular education informed approaches. For example in her investigation on the potential of community-based youth organisations (CBYOs) in the US to encourage 'public efficacy' and resistance in urban youth, O'Donoghue (O'Donoghue, in Ginwright et al, 2006) writes that:

CBYOs may represent contexts within which urban youth can transform themselves into powerful public actors and effect change on the very social, political, and economic contexts that contribute to their marginalisation (O'Donoghue, in Ginwright et al, 2006: 230).

Based on empirical evidence from a range of urban youth projects in the San Francisco Bay Area, O'Donoghue outlines how these projects can facilitate young people's development as effective enactors of community change. CBYOs, O'Donoghue argues, act as "spaces where youth can develop a sense of agency, political power, and an understanding of themselves as public actors, both individually and collectively" (ibid). O'Donoghue's description suggests that CBYOs act partly as pedagogical spaces but ones which reject hierarchical forms of pedagogy (i.e. formal education) and facilitate political development.

Auto-didacticism, on the other hand, extends Freire's critiques regarding education as a manifestation of a distinct political project. This iteration of critical pedagogy is framed as a counter to the neoliberal system of learning which conflates "schooling" with "education" (Illich, 1971: 2). The result of this confusion is that the student is conditioned to adhere and not think outside of social norms. In opposition to this, advocates of auto-didacticism such as Illich (1971) and Rancière (1991) promote 'self-directed' learning as a form of "intellectual emancipation" (Rancière, 1991: 1). Unlike popular education, auto-

didacticism withdraws from the notion of 'providing building blocks' and overtly challenges the "necessity of explication" and the pedagogical assumption that "for comprehension to take place, one has to be given an explication, the words of the master must shatter the silence of taught material" (ibid: 4). A truly critical, emancipator pedagogy, according to auto-didacticism is one where no instruction or explication takes place. The role of the pedagogue in this model is to provide material and opportunity for students to absorb whatever understandings they want to in whatever way interests them. Whether they "learn" 'correct' knowledge or acquire 'adequate' information is irrelevant because the notion of any knowledge being objectively correct or adequate is challenged.

The third strand of critical pedagogical thinking focuses on 'situating' knowledge. While it has resonances with each, this approach is distinguished from both Freirean popular education and Illich and Rancière's auto-didacticism by the fact that it does not advocate either a wholesale rejection of formal education or principally explore the possibilities of mobilising pedagogy as a form of political resistance. Rather a 'situated knowledges' approach mainly deals with the exclusion of issues of class, race or gender (for example) from the classroom. Vocal advocates of a situated knowledge interpretation of critical pedagogy include Kohl (1964) and bell hooks (1994; 2000) whose work emphatically criticises liberal higher education for neutralising and silencing narratives of class and race. A more critical pedagogy would, from a situated knowledge perspective, relocate learning and knowledge within the position of the knower and the learner in the world.

Given its focus on the individual, critical pedagogy – specifically situated knowledges – draws most obviously from subcultures understandings of young people. The emphasis on the personal situations of learners as well as recognition the differential impact of particular social issues – race, class, gender

– on students' experience (this is most obvious in situated knowledge) echoes the conceptualisations of Hall, Epstein and others. Embedded within this discourse is an awareness of the fact that education pathways are influenced by and should take account of the characteristics and circumstances of individual learners. The work of bell hooks is a notable example of this view.

In terms of the relations between young people and youth workers situated knowledge – like subcultures – conceptualises dialogue between both parties and recognition of the wider issues that young people's behaviours and difficulties represent as emblematic of ethical practice. This is illustrated by hooks' insistence that a more impactful pedagogical relationship should facilitate open dialogue between participants which recognises issues of class, race and gender which may frame this dialogue (see: hooks, 1994; Darder et al, 2009). In youth work, this translates to a discourse of positive pedagogical practice which prioritises open reflection on the social problems affecting young people as well as constructing a space where "emotional outbursts" (hooks, 1994) are accepted rather than problematised.

Situated knowledge appears to meet the criteria of positive pedagogical interactions implicated by the subcultures model of youth-adult relations. It rejects the notion of 'established' knowledge and advocates a reorientation of pedagogy towards dialogue between participants and critical reflection on the broader social and political context. However, how positive this approach is can only be appreciated within a subcultures discourse of youth. Within the context of the transitions discourse, this framework for youth-youth worker relations is less positive. Principally, by advocating the inclusion of emotion and expression in the learning process, situated knowledge sustains more productive relationship between youth workers and young people who wish to express their emotions openly. Youth work presents a more accessible pedagogical relationship for young people who are, according to Williamson (1997) 'atypical'

and unlike “the monosyllabic and self-blaming young people [...] who [are] much more typical” (Williamson, 1997: 7).

Additionally, although including broader social problems and personal emotions in the classroom is theoretically – from a subcultures standpoint - a worthwhile enterprise, it does not provide the kind of support needed by young people at immediate risk of becoming victim to these social problems. As Helve and Brynner (1996) argue, some groups of young people “need dispassionate guidance, advice and support if they are to manage their lives effectively” (cf. Williamson, 1997: 6). While these theorists do not reject the need to include young people’s emotions, frustrations and the class-, race- and gender-based problems which prevent some groups of young people from “managing their lives”, their arguments indicate that they are less convinced on the benefits of a youth-youth worker pedagogy which emphasises the personal experience and dialogue. This indicates the extent to which the assessment of an approach as positive depends on the discourse of youth – transitions or subcultures – framing it. Connecting this back to arguments laid out in the Introduction and Chapter 2, this supports the critique of the positioning of youth work as ‘ethical’ due to the fact that they shape their approaches around service users. As Williamson’s (1997; 2007) observations highlight, even if the needs of service users are based at the centre of youth work, whether the procedures these engender are ethical depends on the subjectivities and discourse they are embedded in.

Social conditioning

The alternative model of positive pedagogy produced by the differing subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood I address as ‘social conditioning’. Although such an interpretation of pedagogy is embodied most clearly in formal schooling, as I will demonstrate through text and fieldwork analysis, it also emerges in youth work discourse. This is oriented towards, fundamentally, training young people on how to be adults. This interpretation of positive youth

work is characterised by the relationship between teachers and learners and the outcomes of learning it advocates. Whereas a critical pedagogy approach focuses on engendering a collaborative relationship between facilitators – rather than teachers – and participants, a social conditioning interpretation propagates a hierarchical relationship between more knowledgeable teachers and learners as a necessity. Interrelated with this is an assessment of pedagogical relationships in terms of the provision and accumulation of knowledge. As I will show below social conditioning follows a more traditional interpretation of the purpose of pedagogy key to which is a vision of education as principally aimed at imbuing students with knowledge and abilities necessary to enter into society.

Conceptually there are two strands to social conditioning. These focus on different outcomes of pedagogical projects: the conditioning of the individual's behaviour and conditioning or training to be part of the world. The first strand was one of the principal projects of early proponents of mass education. As Wright (2012, in Brockliss and Sheldon (eds.)) writes "moral reform through school, [educationalists] believed, would mould the citizens of the future" (Wright, 2012, in Brockliss and Sheldon (eds.): 21). Early educationalists emphasised the "socialising potential of the elementary school" (ibid) and promoted the explicit insertion of 'moral instruction' into pedagogy. This, according to commentators such as Altvater and Huisken (1978) and Brock-Utne (1988), forms the 'hidden curriculum' of education which is largely oriented towards teaching "conformity to rules, obedience and loyalty" (Brock-Utne, 1988: 91).

Changing the behaviour of the individual is also emphasised as a central project of the education system by Furedi (2009). A core aspect of formal schooling's philosophical and political project, according to Furedi, is 'socialisation' or "the process through which children are prepared for the world ahead of them" (Furedi, 2009: 7). In its broadest terms socialisation is interpreted as "the way

in which individuals are assisted in becoming members of one or more social groups" (Grusec and Hastings, 2006: 1). "Socialisation", according to Furedi, is increasingly being interpreted as intended to change and manage behaviours. As he describes:

Socialisation is increasingly perceived as a form of behaviour management. It is less about indoctrinating pupils into a way of life or familiarising them about a community's moral code than instructing them about how to manage their emotions, conduct relationships with others and training in so-called life-skills (Furedi, 2009: 17)

As an interpretation of what pedagogy should achieve, socialisation is principally oriented towards conditioning young people to become members of society. Grusec and Hastings (2006) identify the intended outcomes of socialisation as "the acquisition of rules, roles, and standards across the social, emotional, cognitive, and personal domains" (Grusec and Hastings, 2006: 1). In its most extreme form the centrality of socialisation to this interpretation of 'good pedagogy' is represented by the promotion of education as "an engine of social control" (Ross, 1901, cf. Ravitch, 2000: 80).

The second strand in a social conditioning interpretation is predominantly concerned with easing learners' transition into the world. Good pedagogical relationships are assessed in terms of training and skills development necessary to 'be adults'. Although there is some overlap with this and socialization, what distinguishes this strand is that its focus is not necessarily on behavioural control – although this is an issue – but on providing learners with the skills needed to act in a particular way. This is most obviously emblematised in the work of

Parsons (1957; 1959) who describes one of the central purposes of education as "the development in individuals of the [...] capacities which are essential pre-requisites of the future role performance" (Parsons, 1959: 297). Such capacities can be, according to Parsons, broken down into two parts:

The first competence of the skill to perform the tasks involved in the individual's roles, and the second being "role responsibility" or the capacity to live up to other people's expectations of the interpersonal behaviour appropriate to these roles (Parsons, 1959: 298)

Although there are differences in the shape and format of education, the central purpose of pedagogy under this interpretation is to condition the individual in order, as Mellin-Olsen (1987) observes, "to make a decent life as adults" (Mellin-Olsen, 1987: 8; see also: Altvater, 1974). The central aspect of this understanding of 'good pedagogy' is that it considers education as a process where "the child [is] shaped to adapt to the demands of society" (Furedi, 2009: 12).

Social conditioning presents a starkly different model of 'good pedagogy' to that of critical pedagogy. Whereas the predominant focus of the later is to challenge dominant social narratives and disrupt class-, race- and gender-based systems of power (see: Freire, 1972; Kohl, 1964; Altvater, 1974; bell hooks, 1994), social conditioning is implicitly targeted at reinforcing these systems. This is achieved through 'socialising' learners on particular forms of conduct or moral codes and instituting the education process as principally directed towards providing a skilled, obedient workforce. Whereas situated knowledge thinkers such as Kohl, hooks and Cummins promote a pedagogical approach which recognises the needs, difficulties and circumstances of the individual,

representatives of a social conditioning approach such as Durkheim (1956) argue that:

Education, far from having its unique or principle object the individual and his interest, is above all the means by which society recreates the conditions for its own existence (Durkheim, 1956: 123, cf. Furedi, 2009)

In addition to this difference, social conditioning promotes a very different understanding of the key stage in education. Critical pedagogy focuses on the process of developing knowledge, transformation and emancipation through learning. This is represented by the emphasis on the interrelationships between teacher and learner, the positioning of the learner's identity and knowledge in pedagogical spaces and the reconsideration of the exchanges that take place in education. Social conditioning on the other hand is principally an instrumentalist interpretation of pedagogy. It is ends-oriented and as such conceptualises the development and acquisition of – largely unquestioned – knowledge, characteristics and skills as the key stage in education (see: Gingell, 1999).

Associated with this difference is the distinction between the roles ascribed to the educator in critical pedagogy and social conditioning. Within the former interpretation, the position of the teacher as the provider of knowledge and the learner as recipient of information is explicitly challenged. This is a running theme through all three strands – popular education, situated knowledge and (in a more extreme form) auto-didacticism. However, with its overwhelming preoccupation with the acquisition of skills and socialisation, social conditioning implicitly promotes an instrumentalist model of teacher-learner relations where teachers "provide a framework that sets the line between what is and isn't acceptable" (Dunford, 2008, cf. Furedi, 2009: 21). This includes both what is

and isn't socially acceptable and acceptable knowledge. By prescribing this role to the teacher, social conditioning advocates a model in direct contradiction to critical pedagogy.

In addition to establishing social conditioning as counter to critical pedagogy, these factors indicate that social conditioning is predominantly a manifestation of the transitions discourse. The interpretation of pedagogy as principally targeted at facilitating the pathway to adulthood is informed by understandings of youth and adulthood similar to those of the transitions model. The vision of pedagogy as primarily intended to "mould the citizens of the future" (Wright, 2012, in Brockliss and Sheldon (eds.): 21) and ensure young people "make a decent life as adults" (Mellin-Olsen, 1987: 8) is implicitly informed by understandings of young people as being incomplete or inadequate relative to adults.

The connection between social conditioning and transitions is also represented by the attitude towards homogeneity. Thinkers such as Parsons (1957) and Durkheim (1956) argued that a characteristic of 'good pedagogy' was the development of commonalities (see: Parsons, 1957) and homogeneity across the population. The purpose of this was to prevent social fragmentation. As Durkheim (1956) writes:

Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity [...] education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands (Durkheim, 1956: 70)

This resonates with transitions in that it projects, like Friedenberg, an image of (adult) society as a homogeneous unlike a subcultures approach which emphasises the heterogeneity of society.

Given the unequal relations of power linked with transitions understandings, social conditioning could potentially be viewed as a wholly unethical practice. The positioning of pedagogy as ensuring young people meet normative imaginings of 'adulthood' produce a hierarchical model of youth-adult relations. Moreover – like the transitions model – they implicitly portray young people as 'inadequate' or 'incomplete', pathologise behaviours that are interpreted as deviating from 'being adult' and reduce the difficulties experienced by certain groups of young people as manifestations of the "storm and stress" of pathways to adulthood rather than reflective of deeper societal tensions. These problems are highlight by writers such as Barry (2005) and Garratt (in Epstein (ed.), 1998).

That said, like critical pedagogy, the extent to which this framework is a positive model youth-adult relations is dependent on the discourse framing it. Within the subcultures discourse (that problematises the treatment of youth-adult relations as predominantly focused on altering young people to fit into a homogeneous model of 'adulthood') a social conditioning oriented pedagogy is problematic. However, relative to a transitions interpretation of youth a social conditioning approach exemplifies a better pedagogical relationship than situated knowledges. Social conditioning provides a more useful approach for fulfilling the demands of transitions literature; the concern of this approach (like transitions) is assisting young people manage their 'pathways to adulthood' (see: Coles, 1995) successfully. The relationship between youth workers and young people it produces – with youth workers as directors, trainers and advisors – is more beneficial than a critical pedagogy relationship in which, while youth workers provide information, they do not direct young people towards a particular model

of behaviour. Within the context of transitions the latter relationship errs towards "benign neglect" (Drakeford and Williamson, 1997) and fails to recognise that young people's immediate pedagogical need is "dispassionate advice" (Helve and Brynner, 1996). This again illustrates how practices are shaped by subjectivities. The different models of 'good pedagogy' are manifestations of the different subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood and discourses of youth-adult relations. Whether these models are positive or not depends on these subjectivities and discourse. The procedures of youth workers are not automatically positive if they are shaped around understandings of young people as these understandings may be the product of discourses imbued with inherently unequal relations of power and problematic relations between young people and adults.

Theme 2: Participation

The second frame I use to illustrate the ambiguous and discursive nature of youth work practice is participation. Importantly here, following the work of Bragg (2007), Masschelein and Quaghebeur (2005), and Thomson (2009), I do not conceptualise participation in terms of a series of practices but as a particular discourse of youth-adult relations. According to O'Donoghue et al (2002), participation in relation to young people can be conceived in terms of "access to social, political, and economic spheres; decision making within organizations that influence one's life; and planning and involvement in public action" (O'Donoghue et al, 2002: 16). Reflecting on the growing interest of researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in questions of youth participation – how to engage young people in the political and social debates concerning them, how to involve young people in public decision-making, how to prevent youth marginalisation – O'Donoghue et al address youth participation as a process of "actively engaging young people as partners in organisational and public decision making" (O'Donoghue et al, 2002: 17). Youth participation, then,

is defined in relation to young people's position and actions. It is characterised by young people being able to express views on and, ideally, influence the structures framing and directing one's life. At the same time, O'Donoghue et al do not define youth participation in terms of a particular format. Indeed their analysis explicitly rejects this view, arguing that 'real' youth participation involves more than the presence of young people on management boards.

O'Donoghue et al's approach mirrors the definition of youth participation provided Unicef which states that:

Child participation involves encouraging and enabling children to make their views known on the issues that affect them [...] It ensures their freedom to express themselves and takes their views into account when coming to decisions that affect them. (Bellamy, 2002: 4)

Looking at these definitions highlights a crucial point in conceptualising what youth participation is. In both of these cases, youth participation is not as a particular thing. The emphasis in both O'Donoghue et al's and Bellamy's treatment of participation is what working with young people should do. They do not define participation as a specific practice or practices but as a label for how the relationship between young people and adults should be understood. O'Donoghue et al in particular go to some lengths to do this by condemning the "myth" of youth participation as embodied in a single practice, i.e. putting young people on management boards (O'Donoghue et al, 2002: 20). The format of youth participation is therefore irrelevant. In terms of this thesis such an understanding of youth participation is important for two reasons.

First it connects the shape of participation to relations between subjects thus reinforcing the connection between the analytic and theoretical frames. In both

Bellamy's and O'Donoghue et al's conceptualisations, youth participation is defined as a representation of relations between young people and adults. This distinction is made more obvious by Thomson (2009) and Bragg (2007) in their analyses of student participation programmes. Based on an evaluation of a single project – "Students As Researchers" – Bragg (2007) reads student participation programmes as a representation of how identities and images attached to students and teachers are ordered the education system. The shape of the programme is directed according to understandings of what a productive relationship between teachers and students should be and the enacting of these understandings. Underpinning this is a view of participation as a process not as a specific act⁷.

Second, the observations of O'Donoghue, Bragg and others illustrate the problems with conflating the attribution of control with disrupting power relations between young people and adults. This is represented by O'Donoghue's comments on the 'myth' that effective youth participation strategies involving solely placing young people on management boards (O'Donoghue, 2002: 20) and Thomson's (2009) critique of student participation strategies which simply place young people in charge. Framing the discussion of participation in this way allows us to once again move away from an understanding of ethics as embodied in particular practices to a discursive model of ethics. Additionally, this argument reinforces my earlier problematization of the positioning of youth work as ethical due to the fact that it is accountable to its members and receives direction from them.

That said, as I will outline in the textwork chapter, although participation is one of the key themes within youth work it can be interpreted as representative of

⁷ The distinction between treating participation as a specific act and as a process directed at achieving a particular relationship cannot be emphasised enough. As Smith (1980) notes, "a common mistake in youth work is to see participation as an end in itself" (Smith, 1980: 17).

very different discourses, subjectivities and relations between youth workers and young people. I group these understandings into two sub-discourses – developing agency and preventing exclusion – which I will now outline.

Developing agency

Conceptually there are a number of strands to a developing agency interpretation. The first is the focus on voice. In addition to be a central element of the poststructuralist/feminist interpretation of agency, it is also a key theme in much of the writing on 'good participation' in relation to youth. As Serido et al (2011) outline, "youth voice means that youth are respected for their ideas and opinions and feel free to state them within an organization or program" (Serido et al, 2011: 45; see also: Fredericks et al, 2001; Mueller et al, 2000). Developing agency rejects what Grace has dubbed the "ideology of immaturity" (Grace, 1995: 202) towards children and young people's voice. This ideology assumes that children and young people are unable to express themselves as their voice has not yet 'matured'. Critics of this position argue that this 'ideology of immaturity' ignores the fact that children and young people are already experiencing life (Lodge, 2005; Mayall, 2003) and as such should be afforded a say on the issues that affect them.

In addition to this, advocates of developing agency perspective argue that the successful establishment of a participation model which both elicits and responds to youth voice can have an immeasurably positive impact on young people's attitudes to involvement. As Serido et al (2011) summarize:

Having a voice may be particularly important for vulnerable youth who are often marginalized by society [...]. Engaging marginalized youth in program decision making and action has the potential to counter the

effects of these experiences, contributing to the competencies and confidence of the youth and a sense of belonging to the community (Serido et al, 2011: 46; see also: Zeldin, 2004; Zeldin et al, 2005)

Importantly the promotion of voice within developing agency does not just emphasise the position of young people as 'speaking subjects'. From this perspective, 'good participation' is characterised by both developing and sustaining youth voice but also hearing this voice. Developing agency proponents such as Fielding (2010) argue that a key feature of 'good participation' is that young people's voice is heard and what they are saying appreciated. Such an interpretation resonates with the arguments of theorists such as Verba et al (1995). Writing on the meaning of participation in the United States, Verba et al characterise an impactful participatory system as one where people are able to "exercise their voice and have their voice listened to" (Verba et al, 1995: 2). Moreover, developing agency recognises that youth voice is not homogeneous and that there are a diverse range of opinions and viewpoints that need to be listened to. Thus 'good participation' within developing agency is conceptualised as facilitating dialogue through speaking, listening and responding to (see: Fielding, 2010).

This second strand is premised on an understanding of young people as having the capacity to "effect change themselves" (Arches and Fleming, 2007: 35). In terms of a model of 'good participation' here developing agency follows the work of Freire (1972) who advocates a view of participants as "not as recipients, but as knowing subjects" (Freire, 1972: 93). According to Freire, participants are all active independent 'knowers' who have the potential to effect change. The purpose of participation is to elicit "conscientization" (Freire, 1972) or the development of a critical consciousness "both of [the] socio-cultural reality which

shapes their lives and their capacity to transform their reality" (Freire, 1972: 51). Similarly, the depiction of participation as characterised by facilitating young people's "self-realisation" of their own potential (Prout, 2000) and promotion of 'good participation' as providing a space for "child-initiated activities" (Hart, 1997) fall under a developing agency approach.

Notably here developing agency, while informed by a view of participants as autonomous and promoting their capacity to renegotiate their position within discourse, does not interpret this as meaning that they are separate. Rather such an approach "moves the experience of the individual, to the group, to the whole society" (Statham, 1978: 15). Thus a developing agency approach resonates strongly with a view of effective social practice as concerned with changing their situation rather than "adjusting" to their situation (Arches and Fleming, 2007: 35). This is identifiable in the work of Arches and Fleming (2007), Williamson (1995; 1997) and Ward and Mullender (1991) who argue that youth work is built on a recognition of young people's personal attributes and capacity to act independently. This capacity is usually "devalued by society" (Statham, 1978: 15) contributing to a situation in which "many young people have given up the ghost and 'tick along' in an environment characterised by alienation and fatalism" (Williamson, 1995: 8).

The third strand within a developing agency model of 'good participation' is the position of the adult. A clear representation of this strand emerges in Hart's critique of 'bad participation' – the lower end of Hart's ladder of children and young people's participation (Hart, 1995). 'Bad participation', Hart argues, is characterised by manipulation, decoration and tokenism. As Lodge (2005) outlines:

Examples of these forms are where children
are used to carry adults' messages (for

example, by providing pictures to decorate adult text or ideas) or where they have the appearance of a voice, but have been selected to promote a particular view (Lodge, 2005: 130)

From a developing agency perspective, 'good participation' should focus on achieving the upper levels of Hart's ladder through renegotiating the position of adults. Fielding (2010) also outlines this by arguing that to achieve 'good participation', adults need to challenge their assumptions about the "correctness of what we do now" (Fielding, 2010: 303). Thus a developing agency approach identifies 'good participation' as the implementation of a process through which adults renegotiate their position in order to promote the position, voice and capacity of young people. Developing agency emphasises "the importance of supportive [youth-adult] relationships characterized by genuine care and understanding, as well as honest feedback" (O'Donoghue and Strobel, 2006: 8).

The image of positive practice projected by developing agency therefore promotes three features of 'good participation' in youth-adult relations: hearing and engaging in dialogue, encouraging young people's self-realisation of their capacity to effect change, and renegotiating the position of adults. Placed against the different understandings of youth and adulthood, this model of 'good participation' appears to be informed by subjectivities which resonate with the subcultures interpretation. For example the emphasis placed on understanding youth voice(s) as distinct representations of the views and experiences of young people mirrors the arguments of thinkers such as Hall and Epstein. Moreover, the argument that adults need to support young people without seeking to control them (Fielding, 2010) reflects the image of good youth-adult relations promoted under subcultures. Furthermore, like subcultures, developing agency does not deny that some young people are in need of help or support. As Lind

notes, adults play an important role in guiding and supporting adolescents in youth-led projects (Lind, 2007). That said, echoing a subcultures interpretation of youth, developing agency argues that young people's need for support is not due to their abject inadequacy but because they haven't yet acquired a comprehensive knowledge of how to direct a particular initiative. It is an issue of current capacity rather than social 'incompleteness'.

At the same time, like the pedagogical frames, it is important not to consider a developing agency approach as objectively positive. The benefits of this interpretation of what youth work should do and what youth-adult relations should be needs to be assessed relative to the discourse and subjectivities it is framed by. While developing agency advocates argue that positive relationships between young people and adults requires adults to change their position, question what they believe to be the 'correct way of doing things' and avoid 'speaking for' young people (Fielding, 2010), youth work commentators such as Williamson (1997) and Williamson and Drakefield (1997) argue that this misunderstands the type of support needed by young people 'at risk' of socio-economic marginalisation. These theorists argue that what this group of young people principally need is dispassionate advice and direction. From this perspective, a youth-adult relationship within which adults are critical of their own views will not support young people's transition to economic independence sufficiently. As such, the image of developing agency as wholly positive should be taken with some trepidation.

Preventing exclusion

The interpretation of participation as preventing exclusion conveys a very different relationship between young people and youth workers. Unlike developing agency this relationship is acutely hierarchical and implicitly problematises young people by positing them as "outsiders" (Becker, 1963) who need to be brought in. However, despite the large body of writing addressing

issues characteristic of social exclusion, the term has been treated as something of a 'social aerosol' (Ward and Mullender, 1991); a catch-all term encompassing a diverse range of social problems. In the context of youth, for example, 'social exclusion' has been connected to problems with employment (Williamson, 1997; MacDonald, 2001), health, poverty, gender, housing and homelessness, class, race and education (Barry, 2005; MacDonald, 2001). Most obviously, the status of 'social exclusion' as an umbrella, social aerosol is due to the interconnectedness of social problems (Lister, 1998) and the prevalence of 'multiple needs' amongst vulnerable communities. Moreover, the application of such broad terminology is perhaps symptomatic of an interpretation of specific problems – unemployment or homeless for example – as the result of wider structural deficiencies and inadequacies.

At the same time, the application of the terminology of social exclusion could also be indicative of acute conceptual slippage – intentional⁸ or inferential – between specific circumstances and broader social inequalities or the "oversimplification of complex processes" (Ratcliffe, 1999: 1). The problems resulting from the use of 'social exclusion' are described by Ratcliffe (1999) who argues that such language conflates a "universalistic" and "particularistic" circumstance into a single narrative (Ratcliffe, 1999: 2). Social exclusion, has been defined in terms of "a *determinate, static social position* [...] a social location outside all (legitimate) institutional contexts" (ibid, emphasis in original). However it has also been used to account for "a state/location beyond the

⁸ I use 'intentional' conceptual slippage here to account for the debates surrounding 'New Public Welfarism' or 'workfarism' in social policy from the 1980s on (see for example: Clarke et al, 2000). Critiques of this perspective argue that the use of broad terminology such as 'social exclusion' has been part of a concerted effort to obscure issues of class or race (for example) within employment-oriented welfare management. By addressing a range of issues under a single heading, theorists such as Flint and Robinson (2008) argue, successive governments have been able to push more complex, structurally rooted problems (such as class inequalities) to the side-lines while positing 'individual' problems (specifically unemployment) as the central concern of social policy.

boundaries of certain institutions, for example, a state of 'exclusion' for education [...] [or] as the *result* of a denial of certain (social) citizenship rights" (ibid, emphasis in original). Similarly, commentators such as Reay (2004), Flint (2005) and Lister (1996; 2001) all emphasise the obfuscation of complex socio-political debates – about race, citizenship and public management - by the language of social exclusion. Without going too far into the nuances of this debate, it is sufficient to note that, as Ratcliffe's comments illustrate, the language of social exclusion embodies a range of complex theoretical debates (around citizenship and legitimacy for example) *and* specific social problems and circumstances.

Nevertheless, despite the problems with the application of exclusion raised by Ratcliffe, there are some basic elements which can be used to construct a working model of a preventing exclusion interpretation of participation. First, exclusion-oriented approaches are primarily concerned with location, specifically the relationship between being 'outside' and being 'inside'. This is described by Levitas (1998; 2005) in her analysis of the "inclusive society". According to Levitas:

Exclusion appears as an essentially peripheral problem, existing at the boundary of society [...]. The solution implied by a discourse of social exclusion is a minimalist one: a transition across the boundary to become an insider rather than an outsider... (Levitas, 1998; 2005: 7)

A concern with social exclusion then is characterised by an attention to boundaries, particularly the peculiar boundaries that render some "inside" and some "outside". This introduces the second basic element of social exclusion. A

social exclusion informed understanding of participation is the product and reproducer of particular subjectivities relating to "insideness" and "outsideness". Otherwise put – like developing agency - it is a manifestation of a particular discourse of 'good participation'. For instance, in the UK, social exclusion emerged most obviously in New Labour's 1997 manifesto. In this case social exclusion was characterised in terms of distance from the labour market and poverty (see: Blair, 1997; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Here social exclusion is projected as characterised by unemployment and poverty; participation in the labour market of a society where wealth is evenly distributed is the apostate of this.

According to Levitas the central concern of preventing exclusion is with promoting "insideness" and a less fragmented social sphere. That said, "being inside" is not a straightforward concept. Thus like developing agency, a social exclusion approach is characterised by a number of different conceptual strands. Levitas identifies three paradigms of "being inside" and a participatory space – a redistributionist interpretation; a 'moral underclass' or behaviouralist interpretation; and a social integrationist interpretation (Levitas, 1998; 2005: 7).

Within the context of participation, the redistributionist paradigm follows the critical social policy work of Townsend (1979) and Lister (1990; 2001) which emphasises the socio-economic barriers to "insideness". A participatory society was one in which the levels of consumption and availability of resources was equal. From Townsend's perspective, "there was a level of resources below which, rather than just a ruction in the scale of participation, there was a sudden withdrawal from the community's type of living: people 'drop out or are excluded'" (Levitas, 1998; 2005: 9; see: Townsend, 1979: 399). Similarly, Lister (1990) argues that participation – understood as being "inside" – is inseparable from poverty. Representing the Child Poverty Action Group, Lister (1990) describes the distinct correlation between the availability of and the opportunity

to access 'vehicles of participation' (specifically government and the legal system) and poverty. "Being inside" is therefore projected as a manifestation of equality in resources. Thus a preventing exclusion interpretation of 'good participation' emphasises equal access to resources and tackling poverty.

The second paradigm of "being inside" identified by Levitas is primarily concerned with the existence of a "moral underclass" (see: MacDonald (ed), 1997; Murray, 1989). This follows Becker's (1991 [1963]) arguments on the sociological dynamics of "outsideness". According to Becker, the projection of an "inside/outside" boundary is decidedly normative and is a manifestation of an understanding of being part of society in terms of assumed social rules and behaviours. As Becker notes:

All social groups make rules and attempt, at some times and under some circumstance, to enforce them. Social rules define situations and the kinds of behaviour appropriate to them, specifying some actions as "right" and forbidding others as "wrong." When a rule is enforced, the person who is supposed to have broken it may be seen as a special kind of person, one who cannot be trusted to live by the rules agreed on by the group. He is regarded as an *outsider* (Becker, 1991 [1963]:

1)

Crucially here "being inside" is understood as the antithesis of "being outside". Becker does not specify what the supposed "social rules", their origins or their dynamics are; rather he conceptualises 'being part of society' as embodied through the adherence to social rules and antonymic to being 'deviant' or an

'outsider'⁹. Furthermore, the existence of social exclusion or "being outside" is a result of individual actions. It is the result of individual pathology rather than structural inequality. Becker explains this by highlighting how investigations of "outsideness" focus on the actions/characteristics of the "outsider" rather than what renders them "outside" (see: Becker, 1963). Unlike a redistributionist approach, the moral underclass perspective is primarily concerned with the actions of outsiders rather than questioning the roots of the inside/outside divide. At its least extreme such an approach regards social exclusion as the result of an ultimately subjective image of 'acceptable behaviour' (see: Burney, 2005; Crawford, 2002; Becker, 1991). At its most extreme it interprets the socially excluded as innately, culturally and pathologically different from an acceptable 'mainstream'. As Levitas summarises, the main characteristics of a "moral underclass" approach to social exclusion are that:

- It presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from the 'mainstream'
- It focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole society
- Inequalities among the rest of society are ignored

(Levitas, 1998; 2005: 21)

⁹ Becker's characterisation of deviance here is important as it speaks to the core principle underpinning the insider/outsider division. According to Becker 'deviance' or what constitutes 'deviant behaviour' is "created by society" (Becker, 1963: 8) so that social groups may sustain their 'order'. The implication here is that the identification of certain behaviours as 'deviant' is, as Becker explains, "*not* a quality of the act[s] the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'" (Becker, 1963: 9). Transferring this to the 'moral underclass' model suggests that the identification of a specific person or group as socially excluded is not representative of an inherent, clearly defined concept of 'inclusion' but rather the result of the application by the dominant social group of normatively-defined criteria of 'inclusion'. The identification of someone as "being outside" is the outcome of comparing their status with an understanding of what it means to "be inside".

In terms of an interpretation of 'good participation', preventing exclusion is therefore predominantly concerned with ensuring that participants acquire and convey the behavioural traits of social 'insiders'. Unlike developing agency which advocates "challenging the correctness of how we do things now" (Fielding, 2010: 303), preventing exclusion unquestioningly accepts 'the way we do things now' as emblematic of 'being inside' and conceptualises 'good participation' as the assumption of these ways of doing things.

The third interpretation of social exclusion proposed by Levitas – the social integrationist paradigm – draws from both the redistributionist and the moral underclass models. Importantly for this thesis is also perhaps the most pervasive approach to social exclusion in writing on youth, youth work and youth policy (see: MacDonald (ed.), 2001; Williamson, 1997; France and Wiles, 1997). In summary social integrationism is primarily concerned with the specific circumstances that are categorised as indicative of and correlational to social exclusion in writing on social and public policy. For instance it conceives social exclusion as characterised by low employment, poor housing, low levels of educational attainment and opportunities, health problems, racial discrimination, and contact with the criminal justice system (Levitas, 1998; 2005: 23; see also: Blair, 1999; Social Exclusion Unit, 1999; European Commission, 1994; Pantazis et al (eds.), 2006; Flint and Robinson (eds.), 2008; France and Wiles, 1997; Colley and Hodgkinson, 2001; Williamson, 2001).

Social integrationism combines the preceding images of social exclusion. Like the redistributionist paradigm it considers social exclusion as inseparable from structural inequalities (around housing tenure or education for example); on the other hand, like the moral underclass approach it conceptualises "Insideness" in terms of the characteristics of "outsiders". A social integrationist explanation for social exclusion combines 'individual pathology' and 'social structure'. While undoubtedly structural in its critiques – its focus is inequality and discrimination

– its concern is the experience of the individual relative to norms of acceptable behaviour. For example, young people are rendered socially excluded by individual behaviours/circumstances – exclusion from school, unemployment – and structural inequalities – poor educational provision, discrimination in the labour market (see: Williamson, 1997; Pantazis et al (eds.), 2006). *Preventing social exclusion* thus involves both changing individual behaviours and challenging the structure of society. In relation to the understanding of 'good participation', preventing exclusion thus conceptualises achieving a participatory space in terms of both minimising specific social problems and tackling the positioning of people in particular circumstances as "outsiders".

Preventing exclusion presents a very different understanding of 'good participation' than developing agency. To become a "participant" one must both act like an "insider" and be allowed "inside". The overwhelming focus is the resources, circumstances and behaviour of potential participants rather than their capacity to exercise their voice. This supports a very particular model of what youth workers should do. Rather than collaborative working with young people, the focus of youth workers' attention under a preventing exclusion model should be minimising the markers of exclusion and rendering as many young people as possible inside. Within this discourse there is less of an imperative on adults to renegotiate their position and much more scope for adults to act as 'controllers' (Jefferies and Banks, 1999). Such an understanding resonates strongly with the transitions understanding of youth and adulthood. Preventing exclusion implicitly propagates the idea that there is a distinct model of social inclusion and that positive youth worker-youth relationships should be aimed at achieving the markers of this model. This mirrors the interpretation of youth as characterised by the completion of particular rituals (see: Barry, 2005; Tucker, 1967) embedded in the transitions model. Moreover the notion of clearly

defined 'insideness' mirrors the conceptualisation of a distinct model of adulthood by writers such as Friedenberg (1969).

That said it is important not to discount preventing exclusion as a negative interpretation of youth-adult relations. While it overtly reinforces the hierarchies embedded in transitions, there is significant justification for this. For example while a view of 'good' youth work as focused at ensuring as many young people as possible become 'insiders' might lend itself towards discriminating against signs of difference, given that many young people do suffer from very real states of exclusion it may be more reflective of an ethical response to young people's needs than developing agency. This point is made by Jeffs and Banks (1999) and Williamson (1997; 2007) who both criticise visions of 'good participation' approaches as targeted at facilitating youth voice and rescinding adult control as ignoring the fact that the young people who are really marginalised may either not take advantage of this opportunity or may take advantage of the lack of constraints. As Williamson (2007) writes in relation to the staunch defence of voluntarism as a nonnegotiable aspect of the discourse of participation in youth work by developing agency advocates:

We may have to bite the bullet and concede some value to the idea of 'semi-coercion'. Simply providing the option of choice to participate is likely to mean that the young people whom we believe would benefit from broader experiences and opportunities will not 'choose' to take part [...]. The result will be that our voluntary offer will be taken up much more by young people who are already doing quite well, and not by those who need it (Williamson, 2007: 33)

In this instance, the understanding of the central concern of youth-adult interactions as supporting young people's transition to adulthood means that ethical youth work is characterised by preventing the cycles of exclusion that some young people can fall into during this transition rather than "simple responding to young people's wants" (ibid). Clearly there is a question of extremes here. Williamson's primary critique is levelled at those who interpret 'good participation' as necessitating adults to act as "spectators" (Smith, 1980) to avoid the risk of controlling youth voice to any degree. That said it does serve to highlight the ethical limitations of developing agency-informed practices and why a preventing exclusion approach may be better.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined four different interpretations of positive youth work practice (manifest in four different sub-discourses of 'good' youth work). In summary it has illustrated the different ways that youth, adulthood and youth-adult relations can be understood. It has also shown how images of positive youth-adult relations are discursively produced; they are informed by – and inform – particular subjectivities and power relations between youth and adults. The chapter has also outlined how none of these frames are wholly positive; rather they are legitimised as such relative to the subjectivities they are informed by and each has its limitations. Taking these sub-discourses as analytic frames I now want to consider textwork and fieldwork data. Over the subsequent three chapters I will illustrate how each of these models are co-existent in youth work discourse – as indicated through the representation of youth work in policy and the practices of youth workers. However, my purpose in this is not to argue that youth workers should orient themselves towards one set of practices over another. Rather what I want to show is that the co-existence of these sub-discourses is an indication of the ethical potential of youth work as it sustains ambiguities in what youth work is principally trying to

achieve. These ambiguities open up an – admittedly limited – potential for the exercise of “care for the self”; the Foucauldian model of the production of an ethical subject.

Chapter 4: A Genealogy of Youth Work

Introduction

Having outlined the theoretical and empirical frames I now want to apply these arguments to youth work discourse. This will help critically assess the validity of my central hypothesis – that the discourse of youth work is ambiguous and as such there is (admittedly limited) scope for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject. This chapter outlines the 'textwork' aspect of this thesis. It draws on policy documents relating to youth work and statements by early pioneers of the practice. It is important to emphasise here that, consistent with my theoretical approach, I am applying a Foucauldian genealogical analysis to the chronology of youth work. This form of analysis, according to Foucault:

Deals with [the] formation of discourse: it attempts to grasp it in its power of affirmation, by which I do not mean a power opposed to that of negation, but the power of constituting a domain of objects, in relation to which one can affirm or deny true or false propositions (Foucault, 1970; reprinted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986: 105)

The focus of this is not to provide a complete history of youth work – this is provided elsewhere in youth work literature (Davies, 1986; Jeffs and Smith, 1981) – but to map the formation of the discourse of ethical youth work over time in an effort to illustrate how conflicting procedures and youth worker-youth relations were simultaneously legitimised as ethical through the inclusion of varying subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood. To do this I apply the four sub-discourses outlined in the preceding chapter. Each of these markets differing subjectivities and power relations between young people and adults. By

describing how these were produced in youth work policy I will be able to clearly indicate the tensions and ambiguities within this discourse.

Overall, this chapter will illustrate how this discourse was produced through power. Specifically it indicates the technologies of government through which the discourse of ethical youth work, the subjects within it and the relations between these subjects were formed in policy. Using policy documents and statements by youth work pioneers I demonstrate how the formation of the practice's discourse (and the subjects within it) was facilitated through the promotion of particular understandings of youth and adulthood and young people's position in society. These subjectivities and power relations were then embedded in youth work discourse through the establishing of certain operating formats which disciplined and controlled subjects within the practice.

At the same time the chapter will illustrate how this discourse is not unified but *ambiguous*. The varying understandings of youth (outlined in the preceding chapter) meant that the discourse of ethical youth work became embedded with varying sub-discourses (critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency and preventing exclusion). These sub-discourses promote differing subjectivities relating to the youth workers' role, what their relationship with young people should look like and what the practice should achieve. Importantly these sub-discourses, as will become apparent in textwork and the subsequent fieldwork chapters, are co-existent within the discourse of youth work. The educative project of youth work as laid out by youth work policy speaks to both a project of social conditioning and critical pedagogy. Connecting back to Foucault, the discourse of youth work formed through these policies should be considered as both controlling and *productive*. While the technologies of government within it – subjectivities, subject-positions and 'good' practice targets – control subjects, they are also produce subjects who actively engage in their own constitution (this follows Foucault's hypothesis on self-subjectification). This, combined with

the discursive ambiguities relating to subject-positions and subject-functions (as critical pedagogues, as 'controllers') opens up space for *critical* reflection. As Chapter 2 argued, the co-existence of multiple sub-discourses of 'good' youth work, is a key strength not a weakness.

The chapter therefore serves three purposes. First, to illustrate how the discourse of ethical youth work was formed and entrenched through the instituting of particular technologies of government; second, to demonstrate the linkages between this formation and subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood; and third, to indicate how the discourse of ethical youth work is ambiguous in the understandings of subject-positions, subject-functions and the role of the practice it promotes. To do this the chapter identifies the co-existence of the four differing sub-discourses within the overarching discourse of youth work (as reflected in youth work policy). These three questions will be considered through a chronological frame (i.e. according to the different periods/policies). Having provided this genealogy, I will then explore how these ambiguities create tensions in the lived practice of youth work as differing procedures and youth-youth worker relations are constructed as positive. Using this I will then show the openings for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject that these ambiguities produce as well as the limitations on practitioners' capacity to actualise these possibilities.

Crucially, within this genealogy, my intention is not to critique the 'success' of youth work nor to evaluate the benefits of one sub-discourse over the other. For this reason I do not explore the varying popularity of youth work over time or how 'successfully' it impacted the lives of young people. The aim is to show that youth work discourse is embedded with multiple sub-discourses and is ambiguous in the subject-positions and subject-functions of youth workers it promotes. Again, this is not a complete history but a map of the formation of youth work with the view to indicate how conflicting procedures and

relationships are rendered ethical and how youth workers are curtailed in their capacity to challenge discourses they may view as 'unequal'. This further reinforces my argument that what makes youth work ethical is not that its primary constituent is the young person (as their subjectivities can vary) or that its procedures are fairer (as they may be representative of unequal relations of power) but its *ambiguity*.

A short genealogy of youth work

Early years

Youth work as the practice of engaging young people in social activities outside of school or home is "the product of 'a long and honourable history' throughout which 'many distinguished men and women worked for social reform'" (Davies, 1986: 92; cf. Evans, 1965: 3-4). Predominantly a philanthropic enterprise in its early years initial forays into the practice include the Boys' Brigade and Girls Friendly Society of the mid-19th century and the Boy Scout and Woodcraft Folk Movements in the early-20th century. The central concern of pioneers of youth work was the emerging youth population. A relatively new social group youth instigated something of a moral panic at the time (see: Davies, 1985). As Rogers (2004, in Roche et al (eds.)) describes:

A campaign was afoot to turn out a morally upright and educated cohort of young workers, professionals and (in that very gendered world) wives and mothers. Youth people found themselves the target of a spectrum of moral entrepreneurs (Rogers, 2004, in Roche et al (eds.): 2)

However, notwithstanding the passion of its advocates and the success of certain organisations (such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides), youth work in its

early years had a mixed reception amongst many young people – particularly those from lower income groups. As Freeman (1914) commented, the young people that were least attracted to youth organisations were the very young people these organisations wished to reach the most:

[N]one of these agencies – not even the Boys Club, laying itself out merely for the boy's amusement – make an appeal to the mass of the boys of this [working] class. And the boys who come are precisely those who need the Club the least. (Freeman, 1914: 129)

This could potentially be due to the rhetoric of bettering deviant working class youth used by youth organisations, the interpretation of youth work as like school or the fact that they were competing against other, more popular pastimes such as sport and, in the words of one youth work sponsor, "dancing halls where girls went for a sixpenny hop" (Montagu, 1954: 78). Maintaining "a standard of discipline" (Russell and Rigby, 1908: 91) was also questioned as it seemed to deter the young people who viewed youth clubs as a place to meet their friends.

Moreover, youth work in its early years received little attention from the state. This was due to scepticism regarding the potential of leisure activities to evoke any real social improvement. The fact that youth organisations were voluntary compounded this, a situation which did not lend to garnering government support. As Davies (1986) notes:

By relying on young people's voluntary involvement, [youth work] was depending on an approach which schooling had just been forced to abandon. Even if youth work was

given the benefit of such doubts, it nonetheless seemed both safe and sufficient to leave its development to volunteer philanthropists.
(Davies, 1986: 94)

However, this position shifted following the First World War. Influenced by concerns about the lives of young people during wartime – particularly in terms of levels of ‘delinquency’ during this period¹⁰ - the National and Local Juvenile Organisations’ Committee was set up in 1916. The role of the Juvenile Organising Committee was to “concern themselves with physical and moral development of the young in time of war” (Rose, 1997: 2; on behalf of the Wales Youth Agency).

The increased government interest in youth work continued after the war “in order to combat a crime wave, drunkenness, vandalism and so on” (Jeffs, 1979: 11). Moves towards state intervention in youth work during this period are illustrated by the inclusion of empowering local authorities to give assistance to youth organisations in the 1918 Education Act (the Fisher Act). In 1921, local education authorities were given powers to provide funds to youth organisations and, if there were none in their area, to set up local authority-run youth organisations. Yet despite this initial post-World War I state interest in youth work, government support during the 1920s and 1930s was intermittent and youth organisations largely remained the concern of voluntary and philanthropic groups.

¹⁰ The effect of the war on juvenile delinquency was explored in Cecil Leeson’s 1917 pamphlet for the Howard Association (Leeson, C. 1917, *The Child and the War*, London: P.S. King & Son). According to Leeson’s the total number of child and young people charged with ‘punishable offences’ had risen by 34 per cent since 1914. The largest proportion of these offences were ‘larcenies’ and ‘felonies’ which Leeson defined as “orchard-raiding” and “steal[ing] a penny pie from an itinerant pieman” respectively. The majority of offences were committed by boys in groups or gangs “who were, individually, fairly harmless”. Leeson rooted the increase in offending in the absence of male role models noting that two out of five of fathers of juvenile offenders were serving in the Army or Navy.

The onset of World War II highlighted the deficiencies in state support for young people and the experience of increased juvenile delinquency during World War I. As the 1939 Board of Education circular *In the Service of Youth* (circular 1486) to local education authorities noted:

War emphasises [the] defect in our social services; today the black-out, the strain of war and the disorganisation of family life have created conditions which constitute a serious menace to youth. The Government are determined to prevent the recurrence during this war of the social problems which arose during the last. (Board of Education, 1939)

A comprehensive, well-managed service which combined 'social and physical recreation' was, according to the Board of Education, the best way to prevent the problems of youth during the previous war from repeating themselves. The first step towards this was for the Board of Education to "undertake direct responsibility for youth welfare" an approach culminating in a dedicated Youth Service (1939). The Youth Service was directed by the Board of Education under the advice of National Youth Committee. The Committee brought together voluntary agencies, educational authorities and the State. As *In the Service of Youth* described:

The Committee includes members of local education authorities and voluntary organisations and also others competent to speak on behalf of industry, medicine and physical training. The purpose of this Committee will be to provide central guidance

and leadership to the movement throughout
the country (Board of Education, 1939: para 2)

The period 1939 to 1945 saw a distinct recognition by the state of the potential of youth work and the importance of this practice. This was epitomised, as the 1960 Albemarle Report later wrote, by the 1944 McNair Report which "encouraged the public to think of youth leadership as a profession, which out to have proper conditions of training and service" (HMSO, 1960: para 12). Government intentions towards youth work as a state-led practice were also indicated by the 1944 Education Act which stated that:

[G]overnment intention is to become a full and
active partner in the provision of facilities for
youth work [...] no longer willing to entrust the
social education of the adolescent population
solely to existing voluntary organisations
staffed overwhelmingly by well meaning
amateurs. (HMSO, 1944)

At the same time, enthusiasm for a statutory youth service declined steadily after WWII. Despite the recommendations of the McNair Report and the pledges of the 1944 Education Act, limited government resources after the war and the immediate need to rebuild the country's infrastructure pushed youth work off the government's list of priorities. The declining attention paid to youth work continued for the remainder of the 1940s and 1950s. By the late 1950s the Youth Service which seemed so full of promise in 1945 (see: Davis, 1986) was judged to be "in an acute state of depression" by the Albemarle Committee (HMSO, 1960: para 2).

In terms of this thesis, this early period provides an important insight into the formation of the discourse of youth work and the subjectivities and power

relations within it. The predominant concerns of policy-maker and advocates of the practice during this period were the position of young people in society and young people's 'social education'. Baden-Powell (1909), for example, positioned the Scouting movement as "a school of citizenship through woodcraft" (Baden-Powell, 1909) whereas Russell and Rigby two early advocates of youth work commented:

[T]he first object [is] Recreation [...] the compelling force which brings members to the clubs [...] The second object we may call Education [...] The first object in itself leads to the second (Russell and Rigby, 1908: 19)

At the same time these overarching concerns did not produce a unified discourse and the relationship between youth work organisations and young people – its purpose and position within the discourse of youth-adult relations – was constructed very differently. Organisations such as Baden-Powell's "school of citizenship" were not conceived as part of a project of developing young people's voice and sense of agency. As the founders of St. Christopher's Working Boy's Club, a youth organisation set up in the early 1900s, stated, the focus of youth clubs was to develop "a better tone" and "good form" (Booton, 1985: 14; see also: Davies, 2009) In this the discourse of youth work appears formed according to the discourses of social conditioning and preventing exclusion rather than critical pedagogy or developing agency. This orientation is further sustained by the fact that, early pioneers of youth work such as William Smith, founder of the Boys' Brigade, who stated that the aim of his organisation was to promote "habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards true Christian manliness" (Davies and Gibson, 1967: 83; see also: Springhall, 1977). It was thus promoted not as a means of giving young people

a voice or engendering critical awareness but as part of a project of socialising young people.

Such a positioning of youth work has lead some, such as Bradford (in Roche et al, 2009) to observe that youth work was constituted within a discourse which aimed to render the working class "governable by reason" (Bradford, in Harrison and Wise, 2009: 58; cf. Donald, 1992: 23). Based on the statement of Russell and Rigby that central to youth work's project was bringing "public school spirit to the masses" (Russell and Rigby, 1908) this seems a fairly legitimate reading. As Schill (1935) writes, the focus of youth clubs was "those who had to spend their lives in the mean and squalid districts and slums" (Schill, 1935: 5). However, while the discourses of social conditioning and preventing exclusion (and their associated intentions to condition young people towards a particular social position) are clearly manifest in the discourse of ethical youth work during this period, they were not the only discourses of ethical youth work produced. Contemporaneously to Baden-Powell and Russell and Rigby, early youth workers such as Maud Stanley (a pioneer of girls' clubs) and the Woodcraft Folk Movement envisaged the practice as a means of developing young people's critical consciousness and located their learning to their position in the world. This links to a critical pedagogy discourse of youth work which assumes that the primary goal is developing young people's critical awareness and encouraging them to challenge their current social state. As Maud Stanley, stated:

[W]e shall [...] give the working girl an influence over her sweetheart, her husband, her sons which will sensibly improve and raise her generation to be something higher than mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. (cf. Booton, 1985: 51)

This points to a different dynamic to that identified by Bradford. Rather than being formed solely as another means of controlling 'deviant' working class youth, youth work was also produced as a means of emancipating particular groups of youth. Analysed discursively, this can be explained by the fact that the discourse of good youth work – the purpose of youth work it projected – was constituted by varying subjectivities relating to youth. In the case of youth workers such as Baden-Powell and Booth, youth were positioned as in need of being 'civilised' or taught the "all that tends towards true Christian manliness". This presents an understanding of young people as predominantly characterised by being, at best, socially inadequate and in need of further developing (the transitions view). On the other hand, youth work was positioned by commentators such as Maud Stanley, as a mechanism for reaching and supporting those young people who were marginalised in society develop the critical awareness and personal abilities necessary to change their position. This perspective indicates a more subcultures-oriented understanding of youth as a diverse social category who were sometimes marginalised by broader social problems (in Stanley's case a combination of gender-bias in formal education and class tensions).

Importantly for this thesis, the subjectivities relating to youth – how they were understood, their position in society – not only informed the discourse of youth work generally, it also informed the position of the subjects within this discourse and the relationship between them. From a Foucauldian perspective, this highlights again how 'technologies of government' (in this case the subjectivities and subject-positions of youth) can produce discourse. Informed by understandings of youth as in need of socialisation, Baden-Powell's organisations positioned youth workers as 'leaders' and the relationship between youth workers and young people within Scout troops as distinctly hierarchical. The

subject-position and subject-function of the youth worker in this setting was to direct and control young people.

Figures such as Brew, on the other hand, were informed by an understanding of young people as having their own ways of conversation which, while different to adults, were not illegitimate (see: Brew, 1943; 1947). As such the relationship between youth workers and young people should be characterised by dialogue and facilitation rather than lecturing or managing from above (a less hierarchical, more critical pedagogical relationship). In her work *In the Service of Youth* (Brew, 1943) – considered by Smith (2001) as “the first comprehensive statement on ‘modern’ youth work’s principles and practice”– Brew describes a model of educating young people which promotes a similar facilitative rather than instrumentalist style to that of critical pedagogues such as Freire. As Brew (1943) states:

Only by the slow and tactful method of inserting yourself unassumingly into the life of the club [...] by hanging about and learning from their conversation and occasionally, very occasionally, giving it that twist which leads it to your goal, is it possible to open up a new avenue of thought to them (Brew, 1943: 16)

Importantly here, the positioning of youth workers within the discourse of youth work was not just made possible through the subjectivities relating to youth but also through the subjectivities relating to adulthood and the divisions between the two subjects. The discourses of ‘good’ youth work within organisations such as the Scout movement were constituted through the subjectification of adults as much as through the subjectification of youth. Positioning the youth worker as a more knowledgeable, responsible leader was a reflection of the

understanding of adults as more responsible and the inclusion of directing and educating young people in their 'subject-function'.

Critically, as the nexus between discourse, subjectivities and power relations outlined by Foucault suggests, the positioning of youth workers within these discourses further reinforced the subjectivities relating youth and adulthood and youth-adult relations that produced this positioning. By occupying a position as 'leader' the youth work in Scouting, for example, facilitated the reproduction of a discourse wherein adults were positioned as 'in charge' relative to young people. Thus the subject-position of youth workers within youth work discourse was both produced by and reproduced a particular discourse of youth-adult relations (in this case one which resonates with the transitions model). Furthermore, this is not something that was imposed on young people from above without their consent. Young people participated in organisations such as the Boy Scouts voluntarily and, through their involvement in discourses of youth-adult relations which located adults as 'leaders' and young people as in transition, reinforced these discourses. Indeed, as Smith (1988) writes, "there were a number of instances where young men (and young women) came together and attempted to find an adult leader so that they might become an official Scout pack" (Smith, 1988: 24; see also: Springhall, 1977). In doing so such young people reconstituted the hierarchical youth-adult relations embedded in Scouting. As I noted in Chapter 2, Foucault explains this dynamic by explaining how power relations are produced in action rather than imposed from above. Through engaging in particular practices, young people reconstituted the discourses which rendered these practices ethical even where they were unequal and hierarchical.

This section has provided an insight into the discourse of youth work was produced in the practice's early period and how it was made possible through the understandings of youth and adulthood. It also illustrates how youth work

was fragmented in the discourse of positive youth work it advocated with differing interpretations of youth-adult relationships and understandings of youth work's goals simultaneously projected as exemplars of good practice. Taking these indications, I now want to explore how these discourses were further formed, entrenched and reproduced through policy. This will help show both the varying positions of youth workers and young people relative to one another, their subjectivities and subject-functions, and the understandings of positive youth work within youth work discourse and how these positions are reproduced through this discourse.

Albemarle

While the McNair Report and Education Act indicated that there was some government interest in youth work, the first substantial government-backed review relating to the practice did not emerge until 1960 after the Minister for Education appointed a committee headed by the Countess of Albemarle in 1958. The purpose of the Albemarle Committee was:

To review the contribution which the Youth Service of England and Wales can make in assisting young people to play their part in the life of the community, in the light of changing social and industrial conditions... (HMSO, 1960: para 1)

The Albemarle Committee believed that a well-funded Youth Service would play an invaluable role in tackling the social problems of – and with – the growing youth population. However, it also recognised that youth organisations would not be able to resolve the problems of young people. As paragraph 7 of the Albemarle Report stated:

[I]t is important not to encourage excessive hopes. The 'problems of youth' are deeply rooted in the soil of a disturbed modern world. To expect even the best Youth Service to solve these problems would be to regard it as some sort of hastily applied medicament. (HMSO, 1960: para 7)

Though assumed by some policy-makers as dedicated to finding better value for money or even for the state to withdraw from youth work entirely, believing that "the time had come simply to return this diffuse approach to young people's out-of-school socialisation to the voluntary sector" (Davies, 1986: 99), the Albemarle Report proposed the immediate inaction of sustained state intervention in youth work. For the Youth Service to achieve its full potential in improving the lives of young people, Albemarle advocated both Immediate act – which may require "emergency expenditure" – and the formation of a programme of long-term "nourishment". This was to be structured into two five-year plans supervised by a Development Council.

In many ways the Albemarle Report echoed previous moves towards state intervention in youth work, particularly with regard to professionalising the Youth Service and the provision of facilities for youth clubs by local authorities. These propositions had also been included in the 1944 McNair Report and the 1944 Education Act. What was different about the Albemarle Report, however, was that it signalled the start of the most systematic and sustained state intervention in youth work at any time since the practice began (see: Davis, 2005). Through increased investment, a national building programme, expanding the number of trained youth workers by 140 every year for ten years, and providing resources for youth organisations to employ more full- and part-time staff, the Albemarle Report developed the Youth Service more than ever

before. The Youth Services Development Council (YSDC) was also formed in the wake of Albemarle to manage the development of a more cohesive Youth Service. The YSDC conducted evaluations of the practice, provided grants to youth organisations and worked in partnership with local educational authorities to achieve the Albemarle Report's goals.

As in the earlier period, the discourse of youth work advocated by Albemarle was shaped through the subjectivities relating to youth, to society and to young people's position in society. For example, Albemarle argued that the need for young people to develop skills outside of those developed in formal education made Youth Service an absolute necessity. As the Report stated:

An adolescent today moves into [a world which is] at once formidably restricted and surprisingly permissive, and finds himself canvassed by many agencies which seek to alter his attitudes in many ways congenial to them. He needs to develop his capacity for making sound judgements. [...] This is to us the basis for the case for specific education and training within the Youth Service (HMSO, 1960: para 136)

Here, Albemarle constructed a discourse of youth work through presenting young people as characterised by lacking the capacity to make 'sound judgement' and as easily distracted or led astray. The role of youth work and the subject-functions (relating to youth workers and young people) within it were thus directed at providing "association of the right kind and training of the right kind" (para 137). The role of the youth worker was to provide this. The emphasis here resonates with the discourses of social conditioning and

preventing exclusion; young people needed to develop the skills to help them get the best out of life (echoing Mellin-Olsen's description of education's role) and a central function of the Youth Service was to:

Help towards ensuring that those tensions which are social accidents, often both fruitless and oppressive, shall not submerge the better possibilities for children during their adolescence (HMSO, 1960: para 135).

The formation towards a discourse of youth work characterised by social conditioning through Albemarle was also facilitated by the Report treatment of the role of youth workers. Arguing that "preparation for adult life" is a key function of youth work (para 202-203) the Report argued that a key function of youth workers was to support young people in this preparation. In doing so, Albemarle implicitly delineated between young people (who were potentially emotionally and psychologically ill-prepared for adult life) and youth workers (who suffered from no such frailties). Each of these subjectivities were made legitimate through a particular understanding of adulthood – which resonates with that proposed by Friedenberg (1969) outlined in the preceding chapter – and produced a discourse of youth worker-young person relations grounded on the understanding of youth workers as inherently emotionally stable and young people as in need of stabilising. This discourse of youth work resonates with both the transitions and the social conditioning frames discussed in the preceding chapter.

At the same time, it is important not to solely view Albemarle producing a discourse of youth work oriented entirely towards social conditioning and preventing exclusion. The subjectivities associated with and positioning of youth workers and young people relative to one another within youth work discourse

by Albemarle also produced a discourse of ethical youth work remnant of the critical pedagogy and developing agency sub-discourses. The Report's transformation of youth work discourse towards these sub-discourse (and the subjectivities and power relations they represent) is most clearly represented in the discussion of what constitutes 'effective' youth work. Albemarle, argued that the purpose of particular and education in youth work was more than training young people or preventing their social marginalisation, it was "to help [young people] in their search for values, values which can inform their lives and give them meaning" (HMSO, 1960: para 202).

While the nature of these 'values' remains relatively undefined within the Report, in positioning this as part of youth work's role, produced a discourse of ethical youth work resonant with critical pedagogy and developing agency. As I explained in the preceding chapter, within these sub-discourses the subject-functions and subject-positions of youth workers and young people are very different to in social conditioning and preventing exclusion. The links between these sub-discourses and the discourse of youth work produced through Albemarle are reinforced by the Report's discussion of the role of youth work which stated that:

The Youth Service cannot shirk its responsibility to help [young people] in their search for values. [...] This is one of the most difficult tasks the youth worker has to face, because he is conscious that if he touches religion, politics or industrial relations, he lays himself open to criticism, since these are all controversial subjects. We can understand his hesitation and his reasons for caution, but we

think this responsibility must be faced (HMSO,
1960: para 203)

In emphasising the need for youth workers to extend their discussions with young people outside what Williamson (2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.)) describes as "banter" and support young people develop awareness of "public affairs" (para 204) and "employment and industrial relations" (para 205), Albemarle was producing a discourse of youth work aligned with critical pedagogy and developing agency. Connecting back to Foucault's conceptualisations, this discourse was produced through promoting particular types of subjectivities relating to youth workers and dividing 'effective' from 'ineffective' youth work (i.e. through power relations).

The passages referenced above are important for a number of reasons. First they indicate that the discourse of youth work – the subject-relations it advocated and the goals it emphasised – being constructed during this period was ambiguous and reflected multiple sub-discourses. Youth work was positioned as both a form of critical pedagogy and a form of social conditioning simultaneously. Moreover, by rooting the necessity for each of these sub-discourses on the basis of the position of young people in society and the nature of adolescence (for example the need to prepare young people for 'adult life'), Albemarle also illustrates how particular approaches to youth work are made possible and marketed as positive through the subjectification of young people. Related to this, Albemarle also gives an indication into the differing manifestations of governmentality that emerged through policy, particularly relating to the production and control of youth worker-young person relationships in youth work discourse. The delineation between 'effective' and 'ineffective' youth work, acted as a further mechanism for orienting the discourse of youth work (and the associated subject-positions and subject-relations within it) towards a particular formation.

In terms of this thesis, the production of the discourse of youth work through Albemarle and the ambiguous nature of this discourse is important as it provides an insight into how differing sub-discourses of youth work were rendered possible and legible as equally positive through how youth, adults and good youth-adult relations within youth work were constituted.

Fairbairn-Milson

The next significant moment in the production of youth work discourse occurred in 1969 when two committees – one chaired by Andrew Fairbairn and one by Fred Milson – were convened by the Youth Services Development Council (established in the wake of Albemarle). The purpose of these committees was to evaluate the impact of Albemarle (collectively) and to review the relationship between youth work, schooling and further education and the relationship between youth work and the 'adult community' (separately). The reviews culminated in the publication of a joint report *Youth and Community Work in the 1970s* (Department of Education and Schools, 1969).

The Fairbairn-Milson Report recognised the valuable contribution made by the Albemarle Committee but argued that "there have been significant changes in our society since the Albemarle Report and the debate about the role of the [Youth] Service continues" (DES, 1969: para 15). This, according to Fairbairn-Milson was no bad thing, stating that:

The Youth Service must, by its very nature, be dynamic and responsive to changes in the society it serves; the search for new directions now going on is a healthy sign. (DES, 1969: para 15)

Central to Fairbairn-Milson was answering the question of why the level of intensive intervention experienced during the Albemarle period had not yielded

greater results in terms of the number of young people attending youth clubs. According to the Report, though the Youth Service had seen much improvement in the nine years following Albemarle, there were still significant tensions underlying the practice. Disagreements regarding the potential of youth work to attract the young people who needed it the most and the benefits of a universal Youth Service which was open to all over more targeted youth work for particular groups persisted through the 'Albemarle period'. The need for local authorities to make youth organisations accessible and responsive to young immigrants was raised in the 1967 Hunt Report on *Immigrants and the Youth Service* (YSDC, 1967) and specialised youth groups for young people with disabilities had already been set up by the time of the Fairbairn-Milson review.

Like Albemarle, the Fairbairn-Milson Committee saw the Youth Service as a means of providing young people with 'social education' and encouraging young people's participation by engaging with young people's needs outside a formal educational setting. However in a significant departure from the recommendation of Albemarle for a universal, centralised Youth Service, Fairbairn-Milson was critical of the potential of a broad-brush approach. It praised attempts by individual youth organisations to cater to the needs of particular groups – young immigrants, young people with disabilities – and argued against maintaining a Youth Service that tried to cater to all young people between 14- and 20-years-old. According to Fairbairn-Milson, the Youth Service was severely limiting its overall capacity to provide meaningful assistance to young people by adopting such a 'broad-brush' definition. Different groups had different needs and an understanding of youth work as something which should deal in common interests in order to bring different young people together ignored these needs. Such a universal approach, according to Fairbairn-Milson would make the aim of helping the individual impossible. As the Report stated:

No single agency – school, youth club, activity centre, adult organisation – can meet the young person's every need for learning experience, intellectual or social; nor is the young person always ready to benefit from an experience offered at a particular time. For some young people and for some aspects of learning, school or college may be the best, even the only agency; for others an agency with which he is in contact away from school or college may be more influential. (DES, 1969: para 175)

Recognising the diversity of youth and the need in to consider the differences between different groups of young people more fully, the Fairbairn-Milson Report outlined a framework for engaging young people at different stages. The 'philosophy of youth work' outlined in the Report was divided into three groups – the under-14s, the younger teenage group and young adults. The purpose of this was to provide targeted support and speak to young people on their level while still encouraging social mix. As well as this, Fairbairn-Milson advocated diversity in youth work, encouraging youth organisations and Youth Service partners to experiment in their practices in order to reach the greatest number of young people.

Fairbairn-Milson represents both a further expansion in the discourse of youth work and a continuation of the discourse of the earlier period. The subjectivities relating to youth worker-young person relations and how it discussed the primary concerns of the practice reinforced the sub-discourses of critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency and preventing exclusion within the overarching discourse of youth work. In terms of critical pedagogy,

this was embedded in the discourse of ethical youth work through the Report's – self-identified – break with the pre-existing vision of youth work. As the Report stated in its description the "concept of youth work":

We are not so much concerned today as in the past with basic education, or with economic needs, or with the communication of an agreed belief or value system; but we are concerned to help young people to create their place in a changing society and it is their critical involvement in the community which is the goal (DES, 1969: para 152)

While the extent to which this was a break with the pre-existing discourse of youth work is questionable – as I have already noted there had been elements of these aspirations in both the Albemarle Report and in the work of early youth workers such as Maud Stanley and Josephine Brew – its presence in Fairbairn-Milson served to reinforced the positioning of critical pedagogy and developing agency (as interpretations of social education and participation) at the centre of the discourse of youth work. In this instance the orientation of youth work discourse towards these sub-discourses was facilitated through the marketing of effective youth work as intended to help young people "create their place". By positioning young people as searching for such a 'place' – resonant with the subcultures and developing agency interpretations – Fairbairn-Milson facilitated the production of a discourse of youth work which promoted a particular understanding of youth, adulthood and youth-adult relations within the practice.

The orientation of the discourse of youth work towards these sub-discourses is also indicated through the type of 'scientific knowledge' drawn on by the Report to inform youth work discourse. As I indicated in Chapter 2, Foucault identifies

'scientific knowledge' (and the application of supposed 'facts') as one of the forms of governmentality which facilitate the production of a particular discourse/subject. Within Fairbairn-Milson, the Report's authors drew on writing on the 'non-directive approach' (Leaper, 1968) to support their positioning (resonant with that of Freirean popular education and hooks' situated knowledge approach) of the subjects of youth workers and young people within the discourse ethical youth work. As the Report described:

Through such a non-directive approach workers with [young people] stimulate people to think about their needs [and] feed in information about possible ways of meeting them. The theory underlying the approach is that people are far more likely to act on what they themselves have freely decided to do than on what a worker has tried to convince them they ought to do (DES, 1969: para 170)

Again it is important not to interpret this as a wholesale discursive turn. As I have already noted, Brew (1947; 1948) advocated a similar discourse of youth worker-young person relations within the discourse of social education. What is notable about Fairbairn-Milson in this instance is that it illustrates how a different form of governmentality was used to reinforce a pre-existing discourse through the application of 'scientific knowledge'. Furthermore it demonstrates how particular discourses of positive youth worker-young person relations within youth work discourse were produced through the subjectification of the youth worker (as a facilitator rather than an instrumentalist educator).

At the same time, it is important not to assume that Fairbairn-Milson signalled a complete shift in the discourse of youth work towards one set of sub-discourses

over another. While the subjectification of 'good' youth work as characterised by non-directive relationships and emphasis on supporting young people carve out a 'place' in society indicate a move towards critical pedagogy and developing agency discourses, the subjectivities associated with young people still convened undertones of social conditioning and preventing exclusion. For example, the Report's statement that the success of youth work should be judged by the emergence of "young people with wider interests freely chosen, young people with greater social confidence and poise who carry responsibility for themselves and – where appropriate – for others" (para 156) and assertion that the Youth Service needed to support young people at every stage of their transition through adolescence (emblematised by the Report's division of youth work according to different age categories) conveys similar subjectivities relating to young people as social conditioning and preventing exclusion.

Thus, while recognising the heterogeneity of youth and their social situation (a subcultures interpretation), through advocating a discourse of youth work principally judged in terms of how well it support young people in their transition to adulthood the Report implicitly reinforced the discourses produced by an understanding of youth as predominantly characterised as a transitional life-stage. As I noted in the preceding chapter, by envisaging young people in this way, the discourse of youth work manifest in Fairbairn-Milson was the product of and produced a very different discourse of youth-adult relations than that represented by, for example, the 'non-directive' approach. The result of this was that Fairbairn-Milson both reflected and produced a discourse of positive youth work which was ambiguous in the subject-positions of and subject-relations between young people and youth workers within the practice. Again Fairbairn-Milson promotes the four varying sub-discourses of youth work identified in the preceding chapter simultaneously; it produces a discourse of youth work informed by a variety of subjectivities rather than a single set of understandings.

Like Albemarle and the early youth work advocates, Fairbairn-Milson's thus provides an insight into how particular discourses of positive youth work (and the subject-relations and subject-positions within them) were produced and sustained through the promotion of particular discourses of 'good' practice. Moreover, through the differing sub-discourses of youth work's purpose and orientation, Fairbairn-Milson further contributed to the formation of youth work as an ambiguous discourse. As I will illustrate in further depth in the following chapters, the upshot of this for the 'lived practice' is the co-existence of varying discourses of 'good' youth work and the rendering of procedures which are seemingly representative of conflicting discourses as equally beneficial.

Thompson

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Fairbairn-Milson Committee to conceptualise a flexible best practice model for working with young people which did not place too much pressure on local authorities and provided 'value for money', many of its recommendations went unheeded by Government. As Alan Haselhurst, MP for Middleton and Prestwich commented to the House of Commons in 1974, "[Fairbairn-Milson] was not acted upon though it contained many good ideas" (Hansard HC 1974: vol. 868, col. 741)¹¹. As the Government tried to restrict public spending, supporting youth organisations and the Youth Service, lessened in importance. Within this atmosphere pressure was also put on youth

¹¹ This is not entirely true. Fairbairn-Milson's recommendation to treat the youth population as a diverse group with specific needs and ensure that youth work reflected this was taken on board though possibly not in the way the report had intended. Amidst the financial restrictions of the 1970s, the recommendation to move away from a 'universalist' approach to working with young people translated into a practice focussing almost entirely on disadvantaged groups. As Davies (1986: 109) records: "As early as 1971, Margaret Thatcher, then Secretary of State for Education [...] abandoned that Service's traditional commitment to a universalist approach by redefining its clientele in increasingly restrictive, and stigmatizing, terms. In line with the already key Conservative principle of greater selectivity generally in the provision of service, she announced that 'as far as national policy is concerned [...] the needs of the young school-leavers in deprived areas should have special attention'".

organisations to show demonstrable impact on the lives of young people. As Davies (1986) comments:

In effect, the Youth Service was being set a test: in these hard times, contribute effectively to the socialization and containment of the young or forfeit state endorsement and material support. (Davies, 1986: 110)

Amidst the efforts to cut spending in the public sector, the YSDC was dissolved in 1971 and – aside from the short-lived Youth Service Forum – no policy on youth work or the Youth Service was introduced. By the time the Thompson Committee reported in October 1982, the Youth Service of the 1970s – and youth work generally – was described as suffering from “a lack of direction in a colder climate” (DES, 1982: para 1.12).

The Thompson Report emphasised that the “Youth Service must not be taken to mean the system of clubs, recreational facilities, centres and other services provided for young people by local authorities and voluntary organisations” (DES, 1982: para (ii)) but to fully evaluate youth work, consideration needed to be given to the range of organisations outside of these agencies who worked with young people. Thus, rather than focusing solely on those organisations who self-identified as part of the Youth Service, the Thompson Report reviewed youth work in terms of the network of organisations (including those not formally part of the Youth Service) who provide support and assistance to young people. However, whereas Fairbairn-Milson, making a similar observation, had explained this proliferation of organisations and fragmentation within the parameters of ‘youth work’ as the natural result of the fact that no single agency could meet the needs of young people fully (see: DES, 1969), Thompson argued that this

"created uncertainty [...] about [the Youth Service's] scope, future, and especially its relationship with other bodies" (DES, 1982: para (ii)).

For the purposes of this thesis the combination of Fairbairn-Milson and Thompson is important as it illustrates how youth work discourse was constituted in terms of the relationship between young people and adults and the orientation of this relationship rather than towards a specific public agency. While, as I noted in the Introduction to this thesis, there are divergences between the different organisations which fall under the heading of youth work – informal youth organisations, youth clubs, detached youth work, after-school groups, faith based organisations, statutory Youth Services – in terms of the subjectivities relating to youth workers, young people and youth-adult relations this wide range of organisations can all be interpreted as representations of a shared discourse. A similar argument is also made by Sercombe (2010) and Williamson (1995) both of who emphasise that, despite the diversity within the practice of youth work, the different agencies which fall under this heading share a common discourse. Through including organisations which (nominally) fell outside the parameters of the Youth Service in their reviews, Thompson and Fairbairn-Milson reinforce this argument. To understand the dynamics of youth work, such inclusion implied, it was important to consider youth work as a particular discourse of youth-adult relations rather than a set of organisations.

Thompson's assessment of youth work as 'uncertain' also represents an important juncture in the production of youth work discourse. It illustrates very clearly the different ways that subjects are controlled through discourse in modernity. Under Thompson, it was not solely the division of subjects or subjectivities attributed to them which promoted a particular discourse of youth work. The recommendations regarding more effective management of organisations at a local and national level by the Report and criticisms regarding the practice's "lack of direction" also served to produce and control the shape

and orientation of youth work discourse. This connects to both Foucault's arguments regarding the government of the living (in his analyses of hospitals for example) and Rose's description of how discourse is produced and subject's disciplined through the 'control society' (see: Rose, 1999).

Importantly, these technologies were not, as in a structuralist interpretation, imposed from above or from outside. They were constituted and made possible through the discourse of youth work itself. Thompson's stated concern was not to police the Youth Service but to ensure that young people were successfully supported to adulthood. In this way the combination of the transitions-oriented subjectivities relating to youth and the positioning of youth work as essential to supporting these transitions, legitimised Thompson's interventions on the basis that, as the Report described, the current standard of support across youth work organisations was "patchy and incomplete" (DES, 1982: para 5.2 (3)) and their "potential [...] only partly being realised" (para 5.7). This illustrates how the discourse of youth work produced mechanisms which regulated youth work organisations and the subjects within them.

In terms of the discourse of youth work produced through Thompson, this held much in common with the earlier periods. Like Albemarle for example, Thompson identified employment as the central concern of young people and positioned supporting unemployed young people, their career development and providing them advice at the centre of the practice's discourse. As the Report stated in its recommendations:

The Youth Service has an essential role in helping to provide facilities and activities for unemployed young people; in sustaining their social confidence, skills and motivation; and in making a contribution, including the

sponsorship of courses, to the planning,
delivery and management of the Youth
Training Scheme (DES, 1982; paras 6.11-6.18)

That said, while the emphasis on employment was much stronger in Thompson than in earlier youth work policy, its inclusion in the discourse of youth work is also reflective of the fact that this discourse was produced through subjectivities relating to youth (as a social category) and young people's place in society. Thompson was produced during a period of high youth unemployment when a significant number of young people were leaving school with few qualifications and entering sustained unemployment. As Williamson (1981; 2004) discusses in his ethnography of a group of young men during the same period ("The Milltown Boys") to respond to the very real experiences of young people at that time youth work needed to provide employment-related support.

The inclusion of careers advice and training for employment in the discourse of youth work during this period is notable for a number of reasons. First, as I have alluded to above, it indicates how this discourse is produced by the subject-position of young people in society (as on the peripheries of the workforce). Second, and related to this, it illustrates how the youth worker-young person relationship is produced by the discursive orientation of youth work. By promoting the provision of employment-related assistance, the discourse of positive youth worker-young person relations shifted towards a more hierarchical, social conditioning structuring. Although, as Thompson noted, pastoral and holistic assistance were also important, the subject-function of the youth worker within this manifestation of youth work discourse was principally to provide "dispassionate advice and support" (see: Williamson, 1997; Drakeford and Williamson, 1997). The subject-position of young people within this discourse of youth work was predominantly a recipient rather than a controller.

The third reason why the orientation towards employment in youth work discourse is important is that it demonstrates how manifestations of youth-adult relations which are hierarchical and unequal in their organisation may be part of differing sub-discourses of youth work simultaneously. On the one hand, the formation of youth work as a provider careers advice resonates with a transitions discourse of youth and a social conditioning/preventing exclusion discourse of youth work. On the other, as this orientation was produced through recognition of the fact that the most pressing social issues impacting on young people at the time were unemployment and financial precariousness, then the inclusion of employment support in the discourse of youth work could equally be interpreted as indicative of a situated knowledges/developing agency discourse. This latter reading is further legitimised by the fact that Thompson advocated the inclusion of employment support based on reports from young people canvassed during the review (see: DES, 1982).

In terms of this thesis, this is of critical importance as it demonstrates the blurred boundaries between the sub-discourses embedded in youth work discourse. What makes these discourses distinct is the subjectivities, subject-positions and understandings of youth work's aim they project. Within this however the procedures they advocate may be the same and at any one time a specific practice can be underlined by multiple sub-discourses simultaneously. The absorption of employment support within the discourse of youth work during the Thompson period is an example of this. The formation of a youth worker-young person relationship based on providing careers advice and supporting into work represents a convergence of the varying sub-discourses (each of which advocate very different interpretations of what youth work should achieve) around a single procedure. It is the contention of this thesis that such overlaps should be viewed positively as they feed discursive ambiguity. As I will explore further in subsequent chapters, it is in instances such as this that opportunities

for critical reflection on the subjectivities and power relations (for instance whether youth workers should be careers advisors, whether the practice should support young people to economic independence or to 'being adult' and the difference between these two states) and the disruption of particular discourses of youth and adulthood emerge.

Additionally, the Thompson Report illustrates how the discourse of youth work was produced not just with young people in mind but also *by* young people. As I have already noted, young people's engagement in particular formations of youth-youth worker interactions (through become part of a Scout troop for example) served to reproduce the discourse that those formations represent. This I connected with Foucault's descriptions of how power relations reproduce discourse through interactions between subjects. However, within the Thompson Report the production of hierarchical youth-adult relations within youth work by young people was made more explicit. The emphasis on providing advice to out-of-work young people and associated discourses of youth worker-young person relations articulate in the Report were not imposed upon young people but were produced in response to young people's demands of youth workers. This is supported by the fact that Thompson had based their recommendations on "the views of young people themselves as represented to us in the written submissions [...] and through meetings and conversations with young people and by commissioning an opinion survey of young people's attitudes" (DES, 1982: para (iii)).

From a Foucauldian perspective Thompson is important as it illustrates the way in which mechanisms of control which prevent practitioners' from changing the orientation of their relationships with service users – if it is deemed 'unequal' for example or if the interests of service users shift – can be built into a practice's discourse through the introduction of particular management structures (for example performance targets). In terms of the genealogy of youth work, the

Thompson Report also illustrates how the sub-discourses of critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency and preventing exclusion (and the associated subjectivities relating to youth, adulthood and youth-adult relations) became further embedded in the overarching, ambiguous discourse of positive youth work. Moreover it shows the blurred boundaries between these sub-discourses. For example the inclusion of employment support in the discourse of youth work during the Thompson period could be interpreted as representative of multiple, differing discourses of 'good' youth work.

Connexions and Transforming Youth Work (TYW)

Despite the recommendations for structural changes in the Youth Service and legislative reform, the Thompson Report was produced within a political context which favoured the greatest results with minimal state input. Notwithstanding the recognition of youth work's problems with resources and recommendation for targeted funding increases in the Thompson Report, the Department for Education and Science encouraged local education authorities (LEAs) to cut back on youth work spending. In a 1985 department circular the DES "reminded [LEAs] of the need 'for the future, to continue to appraise carefully their funding for the Youth Service relative to other claims on their expenditure'" (Davis, 1986: 112). Within this context, regardless of Thompson's advocacy of further legislation and more structured strategy of state involvement, the Youth Service and youth work saw the steady withdrawal of state intervention. As Davies (1986) recounts:

...as the radical right strove to implement a more coherent and focused national youth policy, youth work did not merit [...] planned intervention. Its irrelevance – indeed its actual unreliability – meant that, for the radical right,

atrophy was by far the best policy... (Davies,
1986: 113-4)

This attitude towards state support of youth work – and indeed other sectors with strong voluntary elements – led to youth work once again being pushed from the Government's list of concerns for the remainder of the Conservative's time in power. However, with the ascension of New Labour in 1997, the 'problems of youth' were once again highlighted as a key political issue. As a result of this further consideration was once again given to the role of youth work organisations as a means of tackling the 'youth problem'. This period saw the introduction of a statutory youth work agency through the foundation of the Connexions Service in 2000 and a series of policies relating to quality assurance and structural reform.

The Connexions Service has been described as "the muscle behind Labour's rhetorical assault on the drop-out generation" (Prasad, 2001). The aims and shape of Connexions was first outlined in the DfEE's 2001 paper *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*, though the Government's intention to introduce a statutory model for youth work had already been made known in the 1999 DfEE statement *Learning to Succeed: A new framework for post-16 learning*. The impetus behind Connexions according to statements at the time came from willingness to provide "the best possible support in the transition from adolescence to adulthood" (Blair, 2000: 4). As part of this, Connexions was set up to "overcome the fragmentation of much of the current services" (DfEE, 2000: 9), providing instead a "modern public service" (DfEE, 2001: 5).

The Connexions Service was rolled-out nationally between 2001 and 2003. According to the DfEE "the key aim of the Service [is] to enable all young people to participate effectively in appropriate learning [...] by raising their aspirations so that they reach their full potential" (DfEE, 2001: 5). Connexions was

structured along eight key principles: raising aspirations; meeting individual needs; taking account of the views of young people; inclusion; partnership; community involvement and neighbourhood renewal; extending opportunity and equality of opportunity; and evidence based practice (ibid). Though this appears to move away from some of the narratives of youth work – for example ‘teaching good form’ – identified above, the discourse of the Connexions framework tells a different story. For example, the focus on “keeping young people in mainstream education and training and preventing them moving to the margins of their community” and “raising participation and achievement levels for all young people” (DfEE, 2001: 5) resonates strongly with the discourse of positive youth work conveyed by Thompson, Fairbairn-Milson and Albemarle.

The second stage of New Labour’s “reinvigoration” of the Youth Service was embodied in two Transforming Youth Work reports released by the Department for Education and Employment and Department for Education and Skills between 2001 and 2002: *Transforming Youth Work – developing youth services for young people* (DfEE, 2001) and *Transforming Youth Work – resourcing excellent youth services* (DfES, 2002). These documents have been viewed by some commentators as indicative of a significant change in youth work discourse. They represent an attempt to impose on a supposedly “polyvalent and multifaceted practice” (Coussée, 2009: 6) which had remained “an ambiguous set of practices, pushed in different directions at different times by different interests” (Bradford, in Roche et al, 2009: 58; see also: Malin, 2000; Department for Education and Science, 1982) something new – a structured quality standard. While there had been earlier attempts to establish a statutory framework for youth work, as Davies (2009) writes:

For youth work, TYW represents something of
a landmark document – a threshold crossed.
For one thing, it set quality standards for the

delivery of youth work [...]. Secondly it provided a statement of values, [...]. TYW for the first time also set local youth work providers "hard" statistical targets. (Davies, 2009: 71)

Within the TYW framework, youth work was seen as a vehicle for achieving positive outcomes through helping young people "participate fully in society" (DfEE, 2001: 3). The combination of voluntary youth work and statutory services was viewed as having "the experience and potential to make a lasting difference to young people" (ibid). The rationale behind these reforms came from a view that youth work practice needed to be updated to meet the needs of the current generation of young people effectively. Like previous reports on youth work policy, TYW rationalised increased state intervention in youth work through 'new' problems facing young people. Though the reality of such 'newness' is questionable (substance misuse, unemployment, discrimination and crime were all raised as concerns in the Albemarle, Fairbairn-Milson and Thompson Reports) the imperative to resolve these 'new problems' was used by policy-makers to legitimise further Institutionalisation of a particular discourse of positive youth work – one which was predominantly transitions focused - under TYW.

The scale of this institutionalisation is illustrated by the imposition of specific performance targets relating to young people's transition to adulthood on youth organisations by TYW. Although producing demonstrable results had been discussed under previous Governments – the Thatcher administration was particular strong on this – the TYW period saw the first attempt to formalise a national performance measure of youth work agencies. This performance scale is outlined in Section 4 of TYW in the "curriculum for youth work" and "standards of youth work provision". These standards demand that local authorities (who support youth work agencies):

- aim to reach 25% of [13-19 year olds] in any given year of operation (and similar proportions for different ethnic groups);
- maintain a balanced range of provision delivered through a variety of outlets;
- deploys appropriately trained and qualified staff;
- has sufficient resource to invest in provision including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and to provide capital investment in existing and future building stock;
- has a sufficient balance of well trained managers to qualified youth workers;
- has a continuous professional development programme for all staff, voluntary or paid; and
- has a clearly defined quality assurance process

(DfES, 2002: 11)

These quality standards go further than previous attempts to introduce a national model for 'best practice' in youth work by imposing specific targets. They also make assessment of whether youth work is meeting the local authority's quality standard – through a clearly defined quality assurance process - a key element of youth work provision.

The introduction of quality standards of youth work was not merely an empty gesture by Government. TYW also introduced monitoring frameworks to ensure that the youth work quality standard was maintained across local authorities. As Section 3 of TYW makes clear:

Where a local authority fails to carry out its duty properly, the Secretary of State will intervene and direct the authority to make such provision. In certain circumstances the

Secretary of State will issue a direction that the youth service be operated by another agency other than the local authority. (DfES, 2002: 9)

The emphasis placed on standards of practice and assessment was also demonstrated by the introduction of Youth Service Performance Measures and Performance Indicators. The introduction of 'hard' statistical targets made TYW both a progression of and distinct from previous state interventions in youth work. Previously, though there were expected targets - particularly under the Thompson Report - the threat of intervention if demonstrable results were not produced was not there.

TYW was part of a range of policies for reform of children and youth services. Most notably amongst these was the Government's *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda for improving the lives of children and young people launched in 2003. Part of New Labour's anti-poverty strategy, ECM introduced five key categories for positive outcomes of effective support of children and young people's needs. The categories identified by the ECM framework (DfES, 2003) are presented as the core indicators of a person's quality of life. These are: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. Through reform of children and youth service's the Government pledged to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate child poverty by 2020. A significant element of the ECM agenda focused on new ways to achieve the positive outcomes identified, including youth work.

TYW was also introduced as part of the OFSTED Inspection Framework for Youth Work, a subsection of the Government's programme of evaluating public services. According to OFSTED (2007):

Inspection of youth work is an integral part of the Joint Area Review (JAR) which covers publicly funded services for children and young people in the local area. This framework represents a refinement of the 2004 framework for the inspection of local authority youth services. (OFSTED, 2007: para 1)

This statement implies that the emphasis of TYW was on the measurement of the impact of youth work rather than on finding new ways to achieve 'positive outcomes' for young people or encouraging young people to take control of youth organisations. The purpose of youth work, according to this framework, is to assist in young people's "personal and social development", offer "quality support to young people [...] which helps young people achieve and progress" (DfES, 2002: 4) and prevent young people from engaging in crime and anti-social behaviour.

In terms of the discourse of youth work, TYW and Connexions represent the same sub-discourses and differing understandings of subjects with youth work discourse as the other policies. For example, there are also strong echoes of the work of hooks, Kohl and other advocates of situated knowledges within the youth work policy discourse produced in the TYW period. Specifically the emphasis on "starting where young people are at" (DfEE, 2001; see also: Spence et al, 2006) and recognition that social experience affects personal development and learning resonates strongly with the situated knowledges pedagogy advocated by bell hooks and others (see: hooks, 1994; Kohl, 1964; Cummins, 2001). The presence of this discourse in youth work policy is reflected in *Aiming High*, for example, which, like hooks and others, underscores the correlation between young people's personal development and their social experiences. As this policy document states:

Young people's experience shape their personal characteristics, attitudes and aspirations, which can determine how they respond to the choices, opportunities and challenges they face both in adolescence and adulthood (DfCSF, 2007: 3, para 1.6)

Moreover the understandings of youth and youth worker advocated by youth work policy resonate with the conceptualisations of learner and teacher in critical pedagogy. For example, the description of positive youth-youth worker relationships as characterised by "starting where young people are at" and being "actively responsive" by TYW (DfES, 2002: 20) while still challenging young people (see: DfEE, 2001; DfES, 2002) resonates with the positioning of the teacher as someone who recognises that learners are subjects in the world (Kohl, 1964) and challenges their assumptions (see: hooks, 1994). Similarly, the references to young people as a diverse social group who are subject to particular challenges reflects the treatment of learners as being subjects in the world by situated knowledge theorists. Here the image of a good youth worker and of young people in policy mirrors the image of the critical pedagogue and the learner.

At the same time, the TYW period also reproduces a discourse of youth work resonant with social conditioning. This is reflected in references to the need to facilitate young people's transition to adult life present in this period of youth work policy. TYW addresses social education in youth work in terms of young people's social development and progression. As the DfEE 2001 summary states:

Good youth work [...] allows development and progression for young people. It demonstrates

clear objectives, a learning process and clear outcomes for young people. (DfEE 2001: 8)

The social conditioning orientation in the period is further illustrated by the emphasis on preparing young people for the workforce. As I have outlined in the preceding chapter and in discussions of earlier youth work policy, the future success of young people in employment is a key feature of this discourse. The promotion of organisations such as Connexions as representation of 'good' youth work within this period illustrates how the sub-discourse of social conditioning became produced and was produced by the discourse of positive youth work. The inclusion of career-oriented understandings of the focus of youth work not only illustrates how social conditioning acts a filter for forming the discourse of youth work but also indicates a production of subjectivities relating to youth workers embedded in a discourse of social conditioning by youth work policy.

The framing of youth work as focused on developing young people's capacity to enact change within youth work discourse is also reflected in TYW. TYW and the YTAP market the development of young people's ability to direct activities in youth clubs and in their communities as central features of youth work's participation project. In the context of TYW developing agency is reflected most clearly in the examples of 'best practice' provided. For instance one youth organisation in West Sussex which has "particular strengths [...] in enabling young people to develop initiative and assume responsibility" (DfEE, 2001: 9) is used as a 'best practice' model. The image of a 'participative' or 'active' youth work process presented here is one which partly transfers responsibility for running the organisation to young people. This resonates with the vision of participation as intended to develop agency outlined in the preceding chapter.

Equally, TYW also projects a discourse of youth work predominantly concerned with preventing exclusion. As TYW states youth work "has as its primary purpose

the personal and social development of young people" (DfES, 2002: 6). Similarly, *Aiming High* promotes the role of youth organisations in supporting young people's successful transition to adulthood (DfCSF, 2007). The implication here is that the principal project of youth work is to support young people in becoming part of adult society. Comparing with the outlines provided in the preceding chapter this resonates with Lister (2001) and Macdonald et al's (1999) characterisations of preventing exclusion. The central focus of youth work's participation strategy is to prevent young people from experiencing future exclusion from adult society. Within this discourse the subject-positions of young people and youth workers relative to one another and the subject-function of youth workers is differs from those of a developing agency discourse. The principal role of youth workers is to include the greatest number of young people rather than facilitate the development of young people's voice. The relationship between young people and adults within this space should thus oriented towards ensuring young people remain 'inside' rather than challenging young people's perceptions. The nuances of this distinction are explained by Williamson (2007; 2009) in his critique of approaches to youth work which emphasise keeping young people inside over challenging young people's perceptions.

Furthermore TYW again indicates how particular sub-discourses of youth work are made possible through the positioning of young people and the association of particular subjectivities to them in discourse. For instance, the positioning of young people as "either a source *of* trouble or *in* trouble" (Thomson et al, in Roche et al (eds.) 2004: xiii) by political discourse outside of youth work policy, promoted youth-youth worker relations which focused on socialising young people as indicative of 'good practice'. The connection between the position of young people in society and the discourse of youth work produced with TYW is most obviously represented by the emphasis on preventing anti-social behaviour as part of youth work's role. As MacDonald (2001) and Barry (2005) have noted,

young people in contemporary society are increasingly addressed as a "dangerous other" (MacDonald, 2001) and seemingly synonymous with anti-social behaviour. Within such a discourse of youth in society, the positioning of youth work as a mechanism for promoting more 'social' behaviours and neutralising potential criminality is relatively unsurprising.

Additionally, like Thompson, TYW also illustrates how youth workers are controlled within discourse by the introduction of performance targets and more 'individualised' practices. In discursive terms the inclusion of "quality standards for the delivery of youth work" (Davies, 2009: 71) means that the capacity of youth workers to move outside of discourse is curtailed through the embedding of mechanisms which promote self-regulation (Rose, 1999 and Crawford, 2004 discuss this further). These mechanisms included the promotion of self-evaluation and reflection in order to ensure practice standards were maintained (DfEE, 2001; DfES, 2002). In terms of this thesis this is of critical importance as it raises a question mark over whether self-reflection is an ethical practice (in a Foucauldian sense) or another technology for controlling subjects in discourse.

This argument is raised by Amsler (2011) in her discussion of the problem of evaluating social reformist-oriented pedagogies in education as indicative of a critical pedagogy. As Amsler outlines, notwithstanding the use of the language of critically engaging in society and Freirean *conscientization* or critical consciousness in educational narratives, it is still possible to interpret "the utopia as self-realization [as] the skilful adaptation to the existing order of things" (Amsler, 2011: 53). From this perspective the promotion of self-reflection within youth work could be considered as either indicative of the production of discourse of critical pedagogy or as a further mechanism for constraining practitioners to a particular discourse. I will return to this when I consider the limitations on interpreting opportunities for critical reflection as emblematic of the production of an ethical self through the lived practice of youth work.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide a brief genealogy of youth work. Using key policy documents relating to the practice, the chapter has illustrated how the discourse of youth work and the subjects within it have been produced through power relations. Specifically it has shown how subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood and the position of young people in society have been applied to propel the discourse towards a particular orientation (for example towards social conditioning or developing agency). Moreover it has shown how certain discourses of youth work have both produced (and been further reinforced through) managerial frameworks which discipline and restrict youth workers. At the same time, drawing on the four sub-discourses outlined in Chapter 3, this chapter has also indicated the ambiguities within the discourse of youth work and how this discourse is fragmented in the subjectivities relating to youth, youth workers and 'good' youth-youth worker relations it projects. By reviewing the various policies it has shown the co-existence of the varying subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood and sub-discourses of youth work within the overarching discourse of the practice.

In terms of the thesis's key arguments this provides an important insight into the production of the discourse of youth work practice and the ambiguities within it. Taking this genealogy further I now want to explore how these differences within the discourse of youth work manifest in the 'lived practice'. I will then illustrate how the co-existence of differing understandings of positive youth work open up opportunities for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject. To provide as deep an insight as possible this analysis will be divided into two chapters, each focusing the divergent discourses within the two selected themes (social education and participation).

Chapter 5: "We're not like school"

Introduction

Thus far this thesis has highlighted the ambiguous nature of youth work discourse. I have shown that this is reflected in a policy discourse which is targeted at, for example, conditioning and enabling young people simultaneously. In the preceding chapter I explored the ambiguities and tensions embedded in youth work discourse through analysing policy frameworks and history. Focusing on two dominant themes within youth work history and policy – social education and participation – I illustrated how, although presenting itself as a unified discourse, youth work policy actually advocated relationships between youth workers and young people that spoke to vastly different sub-discourses of positive youth work (outlined in Chapter 3 Part 2). This, I argued, was reflective of the fact that youth work discourse was produced by different power relations and subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood. As a result the precise dimensions of positive youth work – i.e. what counts as good practice – is unclear. On the one hand this is characterised by a youth-youth work relationship which conditions young people's behaviour to fit them into society; on the other it is epitomised by facilitating critical reflection on young people's social condition and disrupting society.

However, I do not want to leave this argument here. Rather, following Foucault, I would like to conceptualise the ambiguities and tensions as actually presenting possibilities for the production of an ethical practice by compelling the youth worker – as the subject – to reflect on their practices – to exert "care for the self" (Foucault, 1984) – in order to achieve a productive, impactful relationship. Because of the ambiguous nature of what a positive practice looks like, youth workers are better able to engage with the "field of possibilities" within discourse. Lack of clarity on their own subjectivities affords them the capacity to question

and challenge the assumptions and relationships embedded in youth work practice. Although this is ultimately a diagnostic process (see: Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986) it opens up the possibility for challenging subjectivities and disrupting discourse. Connecting back to the Introduction, this reinforces the argument that the Third Sector can be seen as providing openings for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject.

Having laid this groundwork through text analysis, I now want to explore the dynamics of this argument in more depth using fieldwork evidence at an inner-city patch-based youth club (Urban Youth). As I stated in Chapter 3 the combination of textwork and fieldwork (see: McWilliam et al, 1997) evidence reflects a Foucauldian understanding of discourse as material and linguistic – i.e. both policy and practice are representations of discourse. There are three stages to this analysis. First I want to show how the contradictory interpretations of social education – situated knowledges and social conditioning – are represented, exercised in and produced by youth workers at Urban Youth. Second, I will demonstrate that these manifestations are not differences in taste but representations of the differing, competing subjectivities and power relations. The enacting of these competing subjectivities and power relations through youth workers pedagogical approaches serves to reproduce a dichotomous, tension-ridden discourse of social education. Third, combining these elements, I assess the limitations and possibilities for constructing an ethical subject – an anti-oppressive, ethical youth work. Overall the analysis presented in this chapter will further support the key research proposition presented in the Introduction and Chapter 2 – youth work discourse presents possibilities for the production of a Foucauldian ethical subject - using the methodological approaches outlined in Chapter 3.

Social conditioning and Urban Youth

What struck me quite early on in my fieldwork were the resonances between the discourse of social conditioning and the discourse of Urban Youth. Although the term was never mentioned explicitly, social conditioning was ubiquitous within the youth workers' practices and statements. This manifested in a promotion of developing 'life skills', an attempt to change behaviours towards more 'acceptable' ones, and a reduction of socially-influenced difficulties to individual problems. The concern with 'life skills' arose more obviously during a conversation with Dave, one of the two full-time staff members. He and I had been playing table-tennis in the hall of the club before the young people had arrived. Quiet spells at the club where I could have a one-to-one discussion with the youth workers' were rare so I took the opportunity to ask Dave about his views on youth work. Dave's statement provides an interesting insight into the pedagogical discourse in youth work:

So when do you think youth work is done best? Like what's an ideal type of youth work?

Well youth work's about developing life skills. Good youth work is meant to equip young people with the ability to make good decisions. It's different to teaching...better...I wanted to go into teaching but youth work is more fun [laughs]. You have to do what the young people want to do.

Conversation with Dave; fieldnote 6/10/10, 3.30pm (researcher's question in bold)

While, as I will outline further down, elements of Dave's description of youth work in this discussion resonate with more critical pedagogical philosophies, the

emphasis on 'life skills' here suggests a social conditioning orientation¹². This link is explained by Davies (1979) who describes life skills principal concern as training young people for society. As Davies states "the personalised needs and demands of those who ultimately receive the 'service' [...] increasingly become secondary considerations" (Davies, 1979: 6). According to Davies:

Social and life skills training gives primary attention to **coping** rather than developing, to **surviving** rather than responding creatively and to **getting by** rather than moving on (Davies, 1979: 6)

Davies argues that the discourse of life skills training reflect a predominant concern with conditioning young people. In practice this translates into an approach "aimed at changing [young people's] attitudes, their values, their habits, even perhaps their view of themselves" (Davies, 1979: 5). This description of youth work resonates with the social conditioning interpretation outlined in the preceding chapter. For example, the theme of 'preparing young people for the world' that Davies identifies in life skills echoes the 'socialisation' model of education – a characterising feature of the social conditioning discourse – explored by Furedi (2009). At Urban Youth, Dave's conceptualisation of youth work's primary pedagogical goal as rooted in providing young people with the skills to cope with the social challenges they may encounter echoes the conditioning-oriented model outlined in Davies's critique and Furedi's work. For instance, Dave's statement that good youth work helps young people develop the capacity to make good decisions in response to the social challenges they may face is almost a direct replication of Furedi's description of pedagogy as a

¹² It is worth noting though that both social conditioning and critical pedagogy are reflected in Dave's description of youth work. This again illustrates the co-existence of the sub-discourses.

process wherein “the child [is] shaped to adapt to the demands of society” (Furedi, 2009: 12).

A social conditioning interpretation of ‘good pedagogy’ also emerged in youth workers’ exchanges with young people. For instance, one exchange between Samantha (the lead youth worker at Urban Youth) and Alisha (the young volunteer) was dedicated at encouraging Alisha to connect her past experiences with her current situation. Alisha was the only ‘young volunteer’ at Urban Youth. She had been involved with the club for over seven years both as a participant and, lately, as a volunteer on placement for her college course in sports coaching. Although at college during my fieldwork, Alisha had previously had difficulty with school. She had been at another college the year before but had dropped out before she had completed her A-levels. When I first began my fieldwork, Sam introduced me to Alisha as one of their “success stories”. Sam was clearly very proud of what Alisha had achieved, particularly Alisha’s intention to go into youth work herself.

Nevertheless, although the two had developed a very close bond – Alisha later told me that if she ever became pregnant without planning to Sam would be the only person she’d tell – elements of their relationship suggest a distinct social conditioning-informed concern with ensuring Alisha “make a decent life as [an] adult” (Mellin-Olsen, 1987: 8). This is highlighted in one exchange between the two:

Computer room. Sam and Elijah are playing on the Playstation while Alisha plays on her phone beside them. It is after 7 and the club is a lot quieter as many of the young people are under-11 and have to go home at 7pm. Alisha dropped out of school the year before but is now enrolled on a college course in being a sports instructor/coach. She is officially volunteering at the youth club as part of the course.

Between playing the game, Sam is taking the opportunity to chat to Alisha about her placement at the youth club. Sam asks whether, now that Alisha's moved past what happened last year and is enjoying her course, she had reflected on last year and how she would respond if her problems repeated themselves without dropping out of college. Throughout this discussion Sam stresses how positive Alisha's current situation is. "The reason I'm asking," Sam says, "Is because I think what you're doing now [her college course] is really great and it's something you could turn into a career. So how do you think you can make sure that what happened last year doesn't happen again?"

Conversation between Sam and Alisha; fieldnotes 23/09/2010, 7.30pm

As the statements by Sam below indicate, the primary focus is on Alisha as an individual and how to ensure she progresses not the social problems that her experience represents.

*"Have **you** thought about what happened last year?"*

*"So how do you think **you** can make sure that what happened last year doesn't happen again?"*

In this instance while the personal counselling that Sam was ultimately well-intentioned, by focusing primarily on Alisha's experiences she was implicitly constructing a manifestation of underlying societal issues – incongruities between personal dilemmas and standardised education practice for example – into an individual problem. In terms of the understanding of ethical youth work this represents, such an approach connects strongly with a social conditioning interpretation. While Sam shows concern in helping Alisha resolve her personal problems, the predominant pedagogical focus resonates with the views of social conditioning advocates such as Durkheim (1956) and Parsons (1959) (see

Chapter 3). Sam's attempt to encourage Alisha to think about how to avoid the problems she previously experienced echo Parson's social conditioning-oriented description of 'good' pedagogy as targeted at "the development in individuals of the [...] capacities which are essential pre-requisites of the future role performance" (Parsons, 1959: 297).

Moreover, following the model social conditioning outlined in the preceding chapter, the pedagogical narrative constructed at Urban Youth could be understood as an education on how to be social. One example of this could be the discussions about homosexuality and homophobia at Urban Youth. This emerged during one exchange between Dave and Mahabur (an 11-year-old Asian-Muslim boy). Mahabur had used the word "gay" as a term of abuse against Dave. To challenge this Dave had responded "what if I am gay? What difference does that make?" (fieldnote 4/10/10) However, rather than destabilising Mahabur's viewpoint, Mahabur took it as a joke and laughed before shouting back "yuck! You're a faggot! You're going to bum me!" This led to quite a long discussion between Dave, Mahabur and the other young people in the hall at the time (three Asian-Muslim boys, one White British boy and one Afro-Caribbean boy, all between 11 and 14-years old) about homosexuality, framed according to Dave's own sexual orientation.

Such an approach to challenging of young people's use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term could be viewed as critical pedagogy informed attempt to disrupt young people's understandings (in this case of homosexuality as negative). However, such questioning could equally be viewed as an example of how particular social norms – in this instance against homophobia – are re-established by youth workers. While Dave's reaction to the use of the word gay as a term of abuse may be intended to challenge young people's perceptions of homosexuality, it is also aimed at making them see that this form of

discrimination is socially unacceptable¹³. This echoes the social conditioning model of the good pedagogue whose principal aim is to “provide a framework that sets the line between what is and isn’t acceptable” (Dunford, 2008, cf. Furedi, 2009: 21).

A similar situation is found in other areas of social policy so it is worth using these to illustrate the dynamics of social conditioning. For example Robinson (2008; 2009) and Flint’s (2007) arguments regarding the discourse of responsibility and socially acceptable action within the community cohesion agenda¹⁴. Robinson and Flint are specifically concerned with housing and urban policy. According to these authors the promotion of particular groups or behaviours as problematic conveyed an image of them being somehow representative of a social defect which needed to be treated or disciplined. In housing policy this translated to programmes aimed at changing behaviour to co-align with a normative interpretation of the ‘responsible tenant’ (Flint, 2004: 2). Flint’s analysis connects the notions of ‘making tenants responsible’ for the problems they face which inform contemporary engagement between housing managers and social housing tenants are underpinned by an effort to control tenants’ actions. Regarding the introduction of new vehicles for housing managers to intervene in tenants’ lives, Flint states:

Such interventions reveal a more intensive
disciplinary management of tenants’ behaviour,
framed within policy rationales of dependency

¹³ It should be noted here that homophobia or the use of homosexuality as a term of abuse is or is not acceptable relative to the social context surrounding the acts. Some of the youth workers see the young people’s reactions to homosexuality as a manifestation of heteronormativity within their communities (particularly the Asian-Muslim community). According to Sarah, homophobia is something that the young people have ‘picked up at home’ where it is acceptable.

¹⁴ Robinson and Flint primary focus in the community cohesion and social exclusion agendas developed under New Labour. The impetus behind this was a political narrative of people living “parallel lives” (Cantle, 2001) and declining social capital (see: Putnam, 2000). The result of this situation, it was argued, was increasing social distance, conflict and augmented social problems (for instance poverty). Programmes under the heading of community cohesion and social exclusion were purportedly targeted at reducing cleavages between different social groups and thus resolve the social problems which were interpreted as manifestations of these cleavages. See for example: Worley, 2005, Lister, 1998

and moral deficiency and negatively based on
interventions to prevent or punish
unacceptable behaviour (Flint, 2004: 4-5)

Flint's arguments can be transposed to the context of Urban Youth. The drive towards intensive interactions between young people and youth workers are directed by a similar attempt to alter young people's behaviours. This emerged in the situations where youth workers would challenge young people's actions by asking "would [the young person] like it if [the youth worker] did it to [them]?" and "what if [the youth worker] was gay?" These exchanges could lead to very intensive conversations between the youth workers and the young people about their positionality, about their views and their feelings. Whilst from a critical pedagogy perspective (as I will outline later in this chapter) such exchanges were very productive, following Flint's observations they were also underpinned by disciplinary intentions. Youth workers at Urban Youth were ultimately trying to change the young people's behaviours in a particular direction. Dave's aim was not to challenge young people's perspectives but to prevent them from engaging in a particular form of discrimination. This again supports the interpretation of social education as a form of social conditioning or control.

An interpretation of social education as social conditioning is also supported by the treatment of aggression at Urban Youth. Aggressive behaviour was one of the key issues facing youth workers at Urban Youth. Although the majority of the young people were not aggressive, a small number – five – of the boys were very aggressive and, occasionally, violent towards other young people or quite destructive. To respond to this youth workers would have one-to-one sessions with those whose behaviours got 'out of control'. These sessions took place in private, at a time when there were no club activities, and involved encouraging young people to reflect on their emotions and their actions. Although on one level this can be seen as recognition of the importance of critically reflecting on

emotions – something bell hooks deems central to critical pedagogy and education – the practices of Urban Youth designated anger management as an individual problem rather than a collective experience – the antithesis of hooks' approach. Youth workers were thus individualising social problems and restricting collective critical reflection rather than facilitating it. Furthermore, the intention of youth workers was not to encourage young people to channel their frustrations towards other concerns or discuss other potential ways to respond to a situation other than violently, it was – like Dave's challenging of homophobia – targeted at altering young people's behaviour towards a more acceptable form. At the same time, it is important to note that restricting violent behaviour in this way should not be considered as completely negative. This again links to the arguments put forward in Chapter 3 regarding the blurred boundary between positive and negative practices and the overarching conceptual arguments in Chapter 2 regarding the discursive nature of 'good' practice.

Looking at the statements and practices of youth workers in this way suggests an underlying interpretation of 'good' pedagogy which mirrors a social conditioning discourse. That said it would be remiss of me to argue that this was the only interpretation of 'good' pedagogy which emerged in youth work discourse. By exploring the alternative interpretation of 'good' pedagogy visible in youth worker's practices – critical pedagogy – I will also be able to demonstrate the multifarious subjectivities and power relations embedded within it. As I will discuss further in the final stage of this chapter, the co-existence of the different pedagogical discourses within youth work discourse introduces possibilities for producing a Foucauldian ethical subject through critical reflection and exploring the boundaries of discourse.

Critical pedagogy and Urban Youth

As I have outlined in Chapter 3, classical Freirean critical pedagogy is ultimately designed as a form of political resistance. Through acquiring 'building blocks', learners are collectivised and encouraged to destabilise a society which oppresses and marginalises them – the title *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is an obvious indicator of this purpose. Although some commentators such as Williamson (1995) and O'Donoghue (2006) voice similar Intentions for youth work, the practices of youth workers at Urban Youth do not speak to this aim. The pedagogical project of youth work at the club is not conceptualised by Dave as a means of building solidarity or engendering resistance – as popular educators such as Freire advocate – but of supporting young people 'get on' in the world. As the preceding section and the Chapter 3 indicate, this resonates most strongly with a social conditioning model of pedagogy.

However, the disparity between the project of Freire and others (see for example: Giroux, 2001; Mayo, 1999) and Urban Youth does not exclude the practice from the umbrella of critical pedagogy. Youth work practice's emphasis (embodied in Urban Youth) on locating learning in life experience and recognising that young people frequently face difficult social choices resonates with the arguments of educational theorists such as Kohl (1964), bell hooks (1994; 2000) and Cummins (2003, in Trifonas (ed.)). These commentators orientate their complaints against traditional pedagogical methodologies around the exclusion of personal experience and expression from 'formal learning'. Within the context of higher education, hooks (1994) describes how students outside the dominant, bourgeois order of the discourse of learning are silenced and excluded. Speaking from her own experience at Stanford University, hooks describes how emotional expressions or personal experience were implicitly classed as inappropriate or illegitimate within this institutional context:

Loudness, anger, emotional outbursts, and even something as seemingly innocent as unrestrained laughter were deemed unacceptable, vulgar disruptions of classroom social order (hooks, 1994: 177)

Hooks complains that even education institutions that purport to embrace criticality, by sustaining an image of learnedness as white and middle-class, tacitly oppress and pathologise the personal experience of those from other backgrounds. As hooks reflects on her experience at Stanford:

It was assumed that any student coming from a poor or working-class background would willingly surrender all values and habits of being associated with this background (hooks, 1994: 179)

Hooks' complaints resonate with youth workers at Urban Youth's critiques of formal education. Like advocates of such critical pedagogical approaches, the youth workers were also very critical of formal education. Youth workers were particularly critical of the treatment received by young people with complex needs or who required a different approach to learning in formal education. Dave, for instance, considered schools' approaches to be at a remove from the needs of certain young people. Describing his own experience as a Learning Support Officer, Dave outlined how the formal education system can problematise – and fail – young people who do not follow the accepted model of schooling:

Like the young person who I worked closest with had real problems with school. All he wanted to do was go into the army and the school weren't happy with that but I told him it was really good...for him to know what he wanted to be when lots [of young people] his age

wouldn't. So I tried to do things differently, like take him out of class and spend time working off of his interest in the army. Try and help him learn that way...

Conversation with Dave; fieldnote 12/1/11, 3.45pm

The essence of Dave's complaint here is the blanket promotion of certain types of learning or particular actions by students over others. In the case of the young person Dave worked with, although within the classroom space the young person's behaviours were problematic and disruptive, Dave saw the attitudes of the school and teachers as equally difficult. In Dave's view the fact that the boy's awareness of what he wanted to do in life was unrecognised – or even treated with fear by teachers – was a manifestation of a systemic inequality between different types of knowledge. Dave felt that making young people aware of who they were and what they were capable of was as if not more important than providing them with information through formal schooling.

What makes this example critical pedagogy is the 'open-ended' learning it encourages. Dave's understanding of 'good' education conveys a critique of pedagogical approaches where, as Coussée et al (2010) describes "the goals are set from within a formal educational horizon" (Coussée et al, 2010: 798). In opposition to this Dave emphasises the importance of remaining open to what the young people themselves want to do and supporting them in realising their aspirations. The aim is not for young people to "learn" 'correct' knowledge (see: Rancière, 1991) or to 'socialise' young people but to support young people identify what they want to do. Dave's perspective here resonates with the identification of community based youth organisations (CBYOs) as arenas of critical pedagogy by O'Donoghue (2006, in Ginwright et al). These, according to O'Donoghue, act as "spaces where youth can develop a sense of agency,

political power, and an understanding of themselves as public actors, both individually and collectively" (O'Donoghue, 2006, in Ginwright et al: 230).

Importantly this also provides an alternative reading of 'life skills' to the social conditioning interpretation presented above. While Dave discussed life skills in terms of having the capacity to cope with social challenges, he also, in his description of his approach as a Learning Assistant, emphasised the creativity that Davies (1979) states is absent from life skills discourse. Dave outlined how he felt that it was better to try and encourage young people to respond creatively to the dilemmas they are confronted with – through connecting their education with their broader life aspirations for example – than conditioning them to 'survive' (see: Davies, 1979). In criticising the view that the young person he worked with should be curtailed to fit into a particular ideal, Dave implicitly rejected the view that youth worker-young person relationships – or teacher-learner relationships – should be intended to help young people 'get by'. This is something I will return to later on in this section.

A similar critique of formal education, albeit from a slightly different perspective, is voiced by Sarah, one of the two part-time paid youth workers. Sarah is a mother and her twelve-year old son, Michael, also attends Urban Youth. As the only paid youth worker to have children, and the only one from the local area, she frequently has a different perspective to the others. Whereas Dave, Sam and Tommy's views are informed by previous work with young people in youth clubs or in school, Sarah draws more on her experiences with her children and her knowledge of the neighbourhood. That is not to say that there is division or opposition between Sarah's viewpoint and the others. What is distinct is that her critiques of formal education, for example, are accompanied of a more intimate knowledge of what happens to young people who are ill-served by school. This is due to the fact that she feels Michael – who is excluded from his second school during my fieldwork – is one of those young people.

Sarah's interpretation of Michael's experiences with education is a clear example of the criticisms levelled at formal education by youth workers. She describes how Michael was excluded from his first school – which, interestingly, the youth club shares a playground with – for behavioural problems which she roots in his difficulties at home:

"Me and his Dad had just split up and we were in a shelter. And the school never recognised...they never saw that that was the reason for [Michael's] problems. They never helped him."

Conversation with Sarah; fieldnote 8/10/10, 6.15pm (approx)

Sarah neither denies nor excuses Michael's behaviour. She does not claim that Michael was labelled as problematic unjustifiably by his school. What she criticises his primary school for is reacting to this behaviour without recognising the roots of it. In her view they made little or no attempt to tackle the underlying personal and social problems – complex family difficulties and class-based issues such as unstable housing and financial precariousness – that Michael's actions represented. Her statement indicates that, like Dave, she feels that formal schooling overlooks the needs of the individual, problematising and excluding those young people who do not meet normative expectations without exploring the reasons behind young people's actions. By failing to engage with his needs adequately, she feels that Michael's school left him frustrated and marginalised. This, she implies, contributed to his subsequent problems at other schools. Formal education in this instance favoured standardisation and order – through pathologisation and individualisation of broader social issues – over recognising and engaging with personal experience or needs.

Sarah and Michael's story is also important as it highlights an issue central to the brand of critical pedagogy propagated by hooks and others: the recognition of class differences in learning. Michael and Sarah's housing situation when he

first started school – they were living in a shelter – placed him in an extremely emotionally precarious position. Sarah feels that the impact this had on Michael's behaviour was ignored by his school which instead focused on his actions rather than his circumstances. This echoes the criticisms of Cummins (2003). Like hooks, Cummins (2003) also notes the silencing of personal experience – be it in terms of race, class, or, as in Michael's case, family relations and financial precariousness (the family were in a shelter when he started school) – endemic within formal educational settings. Cummins frames this argument in the context of the colonialism underlying notions of academic proficiency or underachievement. According to Cummins current definitions of proficiency or achievement in education solely in terms of literacy or numeracy, for example, overlook the impact of background or social context on children and young people's development. The net result of this is the projection of an image of the ideal student as one whose actions are either divorced from or unaffected by their social context and the pathologisation and individualisation of social problems. As Cummins (ibid) states:

...when we frame the universal discourse about underachievement primarily in terms of children's deficits in some area of psychological or linguistic functioning, we expel culture, language, identity, intellect, and imagination from our image of the child (Cummins, in Trifonas (ed.), 2003: 40)

The critiques of formal education brought by Dave and Sarah echo these arguments. They condemn formal educational settings, arguing that understandings of order, success and the ideal student manifest within these settings preclude the inclusion of or engagement with alternative experiences by students. Dave describes how the intentions of the young person he worked with

- to go into the army - was received very negatively by teachers as it did not conform to their expectations. The result of this was that an already marginalised young person was further excluded and silenced. Sarah also recounts how Michael was chastised and eventually expelled from his school for behaviours that were partly a manifestation of his vulnerability and complex family life. In both cases, like hooks, the youth workers describe how formal education expected the young people to 'surrender' their own experiences in order to conform to norms of order. Each views youth work as an alternative to this. They emphasise the importance of engaging and recognising how the personal circumstances of the young person are socially situated and not merely the result of individual failings within pedagogical practice. This again illustrates the potential for connecting youth workers' approaches with a situated knowledge approach¹⁵.

The connection between situated knowledge and patch-based youth work projects like Urban Youth is supported when placed against research in similar organisations. For example, in their review of the 'voices' of front-line staff in a youth club in Durham, Spence et al (2006) argue that the pedagogical approach of this brand of youth work organisation is:

...underpinned by a commitment to working
with an open, potentiality model of young
people, beginning from their present
experiences, responding to their present needs
and enthusiasms, and building upon this to

¹⁵ It is worth pointing out here that critiques of formal education within youth work can also be very problematic. For instance, as Williamson (2005; 2006; 2007; 2009, in Harrison and Wise) has discussed, such virulent oppositions to schooling can contribute to youth workers denying the presence of any form of pedagogy in the practice. Although such a rejection is clearly misleading given the discourse of 'life skills' and personal development embedded within youth work it can equally contribute to youth workers down-scaling their efforts, favouring "cursory and fleeting banter" over "serious conversation and discussion" (Williamson, 2005, in Harrison and Wise: 77).

situate their learning within a wider social context (Spence et al, 2006: 2)

As in Urban Youth and hooks' critical pedagogical model, the authors here conceptualise the social education as a discourse of situated knowledge, which starts from where young people are at and emphasises supporting young people develop the capacity to deal with the social challenges they may face in the future.

There are two important points which suggest a link between Urban Youth and critical pedagogy. The first relates to the transition from abstract knowledge to concrete experience. Both Sam's conversation with Alisha and Dave's debate with Mahabur and other young men at Urban Youth regarding homosexuality demonstrated an intention to locate learning and development in social experience. In Sam's case she is trying to mobilise Alisha's personal experience – or rather encourage Alisha to do this – as a pedagogical tool. Sam's focus throughout the conversation were the "personal problems [Alisha] had told [Sam] about" and whether Alisha had had a chance to consider what she would do if these problems re-emerged (fieldnote 23/09/2010). Through statements such as "I think you could do really well at this" (Sam, *ibid*) Sam emphasises that Alisha's problems at school are not due to lack of skill but rooted in emotional and personal crises. As Sam continues:

I'm wondering if, now that you've moved past what happened last year and you're enjoying your course, you'd thought about how, if a similar situation arose, you would deal with it.

Conversation between Sam and Alisha; fieldnotes 23/09/2010, 7.35pm

Although, as I have already highlighted, Sam's pedagogical approach here resonates clearly with a social conditioning discourse – her ultimate aim is to

ensure Alisha stays in formal education - this is not the only educational discourse that emerges in Sam and Alisha's exchange. In particular the focus on Alisha's emotional and personal circumstances as presenting a barrier to her progression in formal education resonate with bell hooks' request to include the personal and emotional in the classroom and Cummins' arguments that the educational experience of young people should not be divorced from their social context.

In Dave's case he is trying to reframe a social bias ultimately rooted in abstract misperceptions into a concrete situation in order to challenge it. Such a pedagogical approach moves away from a social conditioning model - which does not view rooting learning in personal experience as necessary - to a critical pedagogical approach where the dominant understanding is that learning begins when young people are recognised as part of a particular social, historical and political narrative. As Kohl states:

Students live in a historical situation, in a social, political and economic moment. Those things have to be part of what we teach (Kohl, 1964; cf. Darder et al, 2009: 1)

While it is important to remember that this exchange could equally be read as oriented towards a social conditioning approach - and not to conflate 'methods' with discourse - Dave's effort to facilitate critical reflection on homosexuality through suggesting that he is gay is at odds with the social conditioning model's insistence on teachers remaining at a remove from learners (see: Furedi, 2009). This is important as it indicates that the same procedures by youth workers can be read as representative of different discourses.

Similarly, the second point worth recognising when trying to link these examples from the lived experience of youth work and critical pedagogy is the use of

disrupting positionality as a pedagogical tool. This refers to the process whereby the positions of subjects are disrupted in order to facilitate learning. In the case of the exchange between Dave and Mahabur, Dave tried to challenge Mahabur's homophobia by suggesting that he (Dave) was gay. Such an approach was an attempt to disturb Dave's position as a white, heterosexual male and thus disrupt the young men's assumptions about homosexuals. This disruption was also introduced in a number of different contexts. For instance, one tactic used by Dave – and indeed by the other youth workers – to find a resolution to conflict was to challenge the young people to put themselves in the position of the other person. Questions like "how would you like it if I said that to you?" and "how would you feel if you were treated like that?" were deployed as a means of facilitating understanding through dislocation.

Moreover, as the exchange between Dave and Mahabur illustrates, the youth workers did not exempt their own positions from this process of dislocation. An integral element of youth workers' practices at Urban Youth was to destabilise young peoples' understandings of where youth workers 'fit'. This is a highly complex and on-going process. At the most basic level it involved encouraging young people to view youth workers as friends or peers rather than a figure of authority (i.e. a teacher). The first step towards this was requesting that young people use youth workers' first names rather than address them as 'Miss' or 'Sir'. While this may seem a small gesture, given that many of the young people's primary contact with adults who were not relatives was through formal education, requesting that they be addressed by their first names was in reality a significant step. The scale of this disruption was partly reflected in the fact that some of the young people either explicitly or implicitly rejected it. The younger groups (under-11) had particular difficulty, often drifting back into calling the youth workers' 'Miss' or 'Sir'.

The combined use of youth people's personal experiences as a learning tool and recognition that young people lived within a particular "history, social and political moment" (Kohl, 1964) embedded within youth workers' practices point to an interpretation of social education informed by the situated knowledges strand of critical pedagogy. This suggests that while interpreting the pedagogical project manifest in Urban Youth as oriented towards social conditioning is legitimate, there are also elements of the discourse of youth worker-young people relations within the practice which speak to an understanding of 'good' pedagogy similar to a critical pedagogy model. In terms of this thesis this supports the argument that the dimensions of ethical youth work conveyed through youth workers practices are ambiguous and can be interpreted as representative of very different discourses.

Subjectivities, power relations and social education

Analysing the practices of youth workers at Urban Youth shows that the ambiguities within youth work policy also manifest in youth work practice. The sub-discourses of situated knowledge and social conditioning are simultaneously reflected in the overarching discourse of youth work. This supports one of the central arguments of this thesis: that the discourse of positive youth work conveyed through youth workers' practices is ambiguous in the power relations it advocates. What I want to now highlight is that these tensions are more than a matter of practitioners' malpractices or policy logics; they are reflective of the co-existence of competing subjectivities in the discourse of youth-adult relations. The potential for interpreting 'good' pedagogical practice according to both a social conditioning and critical pedagogy model is representative of the co-existence of differing narratives of 'youth work done best'. Following Foucault these narratives produce, are produced in, and are reproduced through subjectivities and interactions between subjects.

This is not only important in identifying the role of subjectivities in producing the discourse of social education – how discourse is produced through subjectivities and produces those subjectivities - but also in moving the analysis from specific practices or methods to the discursive relations of power which inform youth work. Ethical youth work is not characterised, this argument suggests, by particular acts but by the positioning of subjects relative to one another within discourse. In terms of the production of an ethical practice, the primary concern needs to be the possibilities for and limitations of challenging subject positions and subject understandings through new forms of interaction.

This follows Foucauldian logic; discourse should not be understood in terms of particular mechanisms but in terms of the subjectivities and power relations embedded within it (see: Foucault, 1972). Such a framework emphasises the interaction between subject understandings, subject positions and subject actions. Subjectivities serve to support, produce and inform particular power relations between subjects based on where they are located within discourse. For example, understandings of youth as a transitional period implicitly positions young people as incomplete relative to adults. This produces a pedagogical relationship between young people and adults based on the need to 'complete' young people (see: Friedenberg, 1969; Arnett, 2001). On the other hand, the youth as subcultures model describes young people as a 'complete' albeit heterogeneous social group (see: Hall, 1970). Youth workers are at a remove from young people and need to understand the multifarious situations that different groups of young people can experience – to start from where young people are at (Spence et al, 2006). The pedagogical project of youth work is to embed the development of knowledge in young people's individual, emotional and social experiences.

Within the confines of Urban Youth there is a clear connection between subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood and the discourse of youth work

practice, particularly in terms of the pedagogical role of youth workers. Youth workers dealings with young people and reflections on their practices are underwritten by the assumption that they need to teach young people how to be adults. For example during a discussion between Sarah and Dave regarding two of the young people (a boy aged 14 and a girl aged 12) who are having a "tough time at home". Sarah tells Dave that their parents are in the process of separating and Jack (the boy) has a particularly problematic relationship with his step-father, who is "blaming" Jack for the separation (fieldnote 20/09/2010). Dave's response to this is that Jack will need a "positive male role model" to support him. 'Adulthood' from this perspective – echoing the writing of Friedenberg and Arnett outlined earlier in this chapter – is thus characterised normatively, as a "role model" who is respectful and behaves responsibly.

This characterisation of 'adulthood' as a normative 'role model' also comes across in other exchanges between the youth workers and the young people. One example is an argument between a 14-year-old boy (Isaiah) and an eight-year-old girl (Laura) over who won a table-tennis match. Isaiah won the match but Laura starts crying and says he cheated by playing too well. Dave (one of the full-time youth workers) intervenes and tells Isaiah he is "almost a man" and should "know better". The implication here is that Isaiah, as an 'almost adult', should be knowledgeable enough to temper his emotions and be aware that he needs to "go easier" of those younger than him. Dave's comment tacitly characterises an adult as being more skilful, self-aware, self-regulatory and more responsible than young people.

Hall. Isaiah and Dave are playing table tennis. Aged 14, Isaiah is one of the best table tennis players at the club. Dave has previously told me that it is the only game Isaiah really gets involved in. Sarah, one of the younger children who has mild Asperger's syndrome and is known for being – as Dave describes – "a black hole of attention",

enters the hall and says she wants to play. After Dave and Isaiah finish their rally Dave passes the bat to her. Sarah hates losing and her frequent retort when things don't go her way is "you have to let me win, I'm only little". She is completely indiscriminate in her view and will use it against anyone, even children younger than her. To stop Isaiah winning, Sarah grabs the ball and demands they restart. Isaiah complains that she is cheating and Sarah starts to throw a tantrum. Dave, who has been overseeing the game, tells Isaiah to "go easy on her". When Isaiah protests Dave responds "Isaiah, what are you doing mate? You're almost a man. You should know better".

Table tennis game between Sarah, Isaiah and Dave; fieldnote 17/1/11, 5.20pm

The implication here is that adults should curtail demonstrations of their frustrations and emotional outbursts and dumb down their abilities in order to let younger opponents win. Within this discourse Isaiah's actions and emotions are controlled (this mirrors Freidenberg's (1969) model of adulthood). Importantly, these comments not only project particular understandings of adulthood, they also implicitly support an understanding of youth mirroring the youth as transition model. Dave's chastisement of Isaiah echoes Coleman's (1961) conceptualisation of youth as characterised by emotional instability. Equally, Dave and Sarah's discussion regarding Jack's welfare and need for a 'positive male role model' project implies that Jack is currently in a stage of psychological flux and needs guidance and direction. This resonates with Hall's (1904) model of adolescence as a period of "storm and stress" as children make the transition from dependence to independence.

At the same time, while in these instances the pedagogical project of youth work appears informed by a vision of youth as a transitory stage, there are other instances where the social education discourse reflects understandings of youth and adulthood as distinct, heterogeneous social groups – the youth as

subcultures model. This is predominantly reflected in the promotion of pedagogy in youth work as a process of starting from where young people are at (see: Spence et al, 2006) and recognising that there is no single youth experience. At Urban Youth the emphasis on recognising the precise circumstances of young people and using these as a starting point for opening up broader educational discussions resonates with the youth as subcultures model.

The similarities between subcultures approaches and youth workers' views are clear in Dave's comments regarding the difference between his preferred pedagogical approach and those of formal education in the case of the boy he worked with who wanted to join the army. Mirroring critiques of commentators like Garratt (1997) and Griffin (2004) Dave opposes the treatment of young people as potentially deviant. He criticises the school for "being afraid" of the boy for wanting to enter the army, echoing Thompson's (2009) arguments regarding the tendency to pathologise young people whose interests did not meet normative expectations of acceptability. The emphasis placed on viewing young people as individuals and starting from where they are at conveyed through youth workers' behaviours and attitudes mirrors the youth as subcultures model rather than a youth as transition model.

The differing practices of youth workers not only suggest the co-existence of divergent understandings of youth and adulthood, they also project very different models of youth-adult relations. For example, the subjectivities relating to adulthood as epitomised by self-awareness and restraint and youth as transition result in Dave positioning himself as a teacher of 'how to be an adult'; positive youth-adult relations are characterised by social conditioning of incomplete young people by adults. On the other hand recognition of youth as distinct and heterogeneous informs a very different interpretation of productive youth-adult relations. This interpretation is characterised by starting from where young people are at and focusing on the specific experiences of individual young

people. The role of the youth work is to listen and situate learning rather than conditioning young people. Thus the ambiguous purpose of the social education is a manifestation of the dualistic understandings of youth and adulthood underlying the practice.

Looking at the practices of youth workers from the perspective of the understandings of young people and adults they reflect illustrates the impact of subjectivities on discourse. Given the interconnectedness of discourse, power relations and subjectivities, a Foucauldian appraisal of the ambiguous nature of the social education – whether it is an exercise in critical pedagogy or conditioning – would suggest that the tensions relating to youth work's purpose and 'good youth work' are rooted in the competing understandings of youth and adulthood and the relations between the two producing this discourse. Importantly, the oppositional subjectivities do not serve to produce entirely separated discourses which youth workers then select; they are co-existent parts of a single, tension-ridden discourse of social education which speaks to differing sub-discourses of positive practice. The co-existence of sub-discourses is indicated by the fact that the same exchanges can be interpreted as manifestations of both sets of subjectivities and combine distinctly different relations of power. For example the exchange between Alisha and Sam explored above represents both a youth as subcultures and youth as transition model.

The discourse of social education in this instance reflects both a critical pedagogical project (where the position of adults and young people relative to one another is challenged through situating knowledge) and a conditioning pedagogy (where youth workers attempt to transform youth into a single model of successful adulthood). Similarly the treatment of masculinity and aggressive behaviour at Urban Youth can be interpreted both as part of an individualised, treatment-oriented approach to behaviour (a social conditioning approach) and as indicative of 'bringing emotions in' to learning (a situated knowledge

approach). The result of this is a discourse which is embedded with tensions, contradictions and ambiguities between the multiple understandings of positive youth-adult relations it conveys. On one hand these relations are characterised by a homogeneous model of young people who need to be 'made adult'; on the other hand they are characterised by the need to recognise the social experience of a heterogeneous social group.

Here it is important to recognise that interactions between youth and adulthood and the subjectivities associated with youth and adulthood have a symbiotic relationship and are mutually constitutive. As such it is not the case that youth workers can reject particular subjectivities merely through altering their practices. As youth workers' views and approaches are informed and directed by subjectivities and have been, as Rose notes, conditioned to adhere to discursive relations of power *ab initio* (Rose, 1999), the extent to which they can move away from one image of youth-adult relations towards another is limited. In Foucauldian terms this means that the power relations – conceived as systems of action and interaction – and subjectivities embedded within discourse are intertwined not separate. As Kelly and Harrison (2006) note, as practitioners are produced by a particular discourse, their actions – even where they are more 'critical' – are conditioned by the subjectivities and power relations within that discourse. Because of this even critical acts of 'freedom' are limited to adhere to particular norms of interaction. At Urban Youth this emerges in the tension between pedagogies which encourage young people to critique their social situation and individualising young people's experiences in an effort to 'normalise' their behaviour manifest in interactions between youth workers and young people. This represents a distinct discursive tension. The practice of social education within youth work at Urban Youth conveys very different models of 'positive relations' (social conditioning and critical pedagogy).

Given this tension I now want to explore the experience of the ethical subject within youth work and the possibilities for and limitations of achieving an ethical practice. Building on the arguments in Chapter 2, I apply a Foucauldian interpretation of the relationship between subjects and discourse, the possibilities for the ethical practice presented by discursive ambiguity (such as that underscoring social education) and the limitations to such a practice. Crucially, as I will subsequently demonstrate, these limitations are the result of the dynamics of discourse rather than the approaches of individual subjects. Specifically, understandings of youth workers, young people and youth work limit and undermine the critical engagement within discourse that the production of the ethical subject requires.

Producing the 'ethical subject'

The discussions above illustrate the how the dualistic interpretations of social education's purpose is rooted in the existence of competing, contradictory subjectivities and power relations in the discourse of youth work. Moreover they show how the distinction between conditioning and critical narratives is blurred – the same practices may be interpreted both ways; they are co-existent parts of a single discourse. The upshot of this is that producing an ethical youth work practice in which young people are equal to youth workers involves more than simply choosing an alternative way of working with young people. Rather it involves challenging discourse in order to unsettle the power relations which render young people 'unequal' within youth-adult relations. The dilemma for the ethical subject within this Foucauldian frame is rooted in the subject's capacity to challenge power relations by exploring the "field of possibilities" of subject positions and understandings within discourse. As I argued in Chapter 2, the ambiguous, tension-ridden discourse of social education enhances the possibilities for this challenge to take place as it provides an opening for the subject to exercise "care for the self" (Foucault, 1984) – to think critically about

their subject-position/-function and the subject-position/-function they wish to transform themselves towards.

This section will help explore this argument further using the findings from fieldwork analysed above. Here I will consider what the dynamics of social education can tell us about the production of the ethical subject. Of key import are the limitations and possibilities facing practitioners' wishing to destabilise discourse. There are three stages to this: first a consideration of what the possibilities for producing an ethical subject in the Foucauldian sense are; second, the limitations on the production of the ethical subject; and third a discussion of how the limitations could be minimised and the possibilities mobilised. This third stage will also indicate where youth workers were presented with possibilities for disrupting discourse and subjectivities which they did or did not take advantage of. The purpose of this discussion is highlight that – while there are limitations on the exercise of "care for the self" and ethical conduct - the conditions for the production of an ethical subject are already existent but are not being fully taken advantage of. The observations reviewed in this chapter will help answer the overarching research questions regarding the potential for informal third sector organisations to act ethically.

Placed beside the discourse of youth work, a Foucauldian model helps move from an understanding of ethics as a set of procedures or approaches to an understanding based on the transformation towards an ethical self. In youth work, this directs practitioners towards approaches which critically engage with the limits of how youth, adulthood and youth-adult relations can be understood. For instance critically engaging with the assumption that young people's knowledges are inadequate through "starting from where young people are at" or disrupting the position of youth workers relative to young people. The focus of the ethical subject from a Foucauldian perspective is thus not the specific procedures within the 'lived' practice of youth work but the power relations

which produce these approaches and render them ethical. Such an approach suggests that the process of reflecting on and testing pedagogical relationships between young people and adults characterises ethical youth work not specific procedures.

Within the context of social education, the basis for a discursive interpretation of ethical practice rather than a procedures-oriented stems from the questionable ethical nature of particular procedures. A Foucauldian model of ethics helps demonstrate how practices which purport to be ethical may in fact reinforce unequal power relations. For example, although the critiques of formal education might appear ethical in the sense that it withdraws from certain controlling or conditioning relationships between youth workers and young people, it could equally be considered unethical as it does not critically engage the power relations which prescribe particular subject-positions and subject-functions within the discourse of youth work to young people and adults. This relates to Williamson's (2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.)) description of youth workers as unwilling or unable to "maximise their potential as educators" (Williamson, 2009: 76) in favour of a practice of 'banter' (ibid). According to Williamson, there is a tendency amongst many youth workers to avoid tackling significant social issues and debates. Rather, youth workers favour a more recreational approach where they 'banter' with young people (Williamson, 2009: 77). By not using this relationship as a springboard for more serious discussions, youth workers implicitly reinforce the assumption that young people have the capacity to actively engage in critical thinking and the associated power relations such subjectivities sustain. The fundamental principle that a Foucauldian perspective emphasises is that the production of an ethical subject is dependent on engaging in discourse rather than acting in a particular way.

Within the confines of Urban Youth specifically the need to interpret ethical practice according to discourse rather than procedures is represented by the fact

that – as I have already outlined – approaches which initially appear to reflect a particular relationship may actually be manifestations of a very different set of power relations when analysed according to the subjectivities it conveys. This is indicated by Sam and Alisha's exchange, for example. In this instance while Sam's approach could be seen as an attempt to act as Alisha's confidante and facilitate a non-threatening environment, analysed in terms of the subjectivities Sam's views represent a social conditioning discourse underwritten by unequal relations of power between young people and adults. This indicates that in order to assess how ethical a particular approach is it is important to look at the subjectivities and power relations it represents rather than solely the procedures.

A Foucauldian reading is also important as it indicates that power relations and subjectivities will not be disrupted merely by changing procedures. At Urban Youth a clear representation of this is the fact that – while Dave's positioning of himself as potentially gay is a different approach from explicitly 'drawing a line between acceptable and unacceptable' (see: Dunford, 2008; Furedi, 2009) to disrupting young people's assumptions – it still represents the same conditioning-oriented pedagogical discourse (and the associated subjectivities and power relations). In this instance the change in approaches does not represent a change in power relations or transformation towards a more ethical practice in the discursive sense.

Importantly however, following the arguments in Chapter 2, applying a Foucauldian model helps identify where the possibilities for producing an ethical practice lie. Presented with an ambiguous discourse of 'good youth work', youth workers are afforded the possibility to reflect upon what they want the practice to achieve and problematize the aspects of social education discourse which run contrary to their imaginings of ethical practice. Comparing with the theoretical framework, ambiguity relating to ethical youth work provokes the "compulsion to choose" correlated to the production of an ethical subject by Kelly and Harrison

(2006). The ambiguities embedded within the lived experience of practitioners are therefore ethically productive in that they create openings for practitioners to reflect upon and critically assess the assumptions which render their approaches ethical. This opens the potential for transformation towards a practice which disrupts discourse, subjectivities and power relations. Theoretically this follows Foucault's arguments on "care for the self" (Foucault, 1984) or critical self awareness as the foundation of the ethical subject. According to Foucault, by appropriating an ethic of "care for the self" – by reflecting on our position and subjectivities – subjects can engender the capacity to fully engage with the "field of possibilities" of how subjects can be ordered and their potential functions within discourse.

Looking at findings from fieldwork indicates that Foucauldian ethics are already partly embedded in youth workers' approaches. For instance, in the absence of a clearly understood productive social education, youth workers problematize and critically engage with the boundaries of positive social interactions. For example, following the temporary banning of one young person, Jack, for repeated aggressive and disruptive behaviour, Sam comments that she "[doesn't] like banning kids because that's what schools do" (fieldnote 29/09/2010). Rather she will always try to find a way to work with young people and develop a relationship. Here Sam both problematizes accepted reactions to aggressive behaviour – specifically exclusion and suspension – and promotes the need to think critically about what constitutes a positive response to problem behaviour. She emphasises the need to explore all avenues for establishing an impactful pedagogical relationship with young people and thinking creatively about how best to respond to problem behaviours. In terms of producing a Foucauldian ethical practice, Sam's efforts to find a way to work with young people and not resort to a strict codified view of how to respond resonates with Connolly's (1993) description of Foucauldian ethics as epitomised in moving from a codified

morality to “an embodied care for an enlarged diversity of life” (Connolly, 1993: 379).

However the *possibility* of producing an ethical subject should not be conflated with the *necessity* to act ethically. While discursive ambiguity – between how best to respond to problem behaviour or even what counts as problem behaviour for example – affords practitioners like Sam the opportunity to critically reflect on the discourse framing their approaches, it is not entirely necessary for them to do this. For this reason it is important to look at the conditions which make actualising the possibilities presented by discursive ambiguity more likely. At Urban Youth, the conditions for producing an ethical subject are, to an extent, already built into the operating structures. For example youth workers fill in an evaluation form after each session. This form – reprinted in Annex B – provides information of who attended the session, what activities they engaged in, what worked well/did not work well (in terms of engaging young people, facilitating an ‘impactful’ relationship during the session) and requests an assessment of how ‘good’ the session was. Normally this form was completed by the youth workers with input from young people – I will outline this procedure in more depth in the following chapter. Although quite formulaic in that the same pro forma was used for each session, by encouraging youth workers to reflect on the dynamics of the sessions Urban Youth was – to a degree at least – opening up the necessary conditions for the production of an ethical subject. While, as I will subsequently discuss, the space for reflection the pro formas provided does not represent a full disruption of discourse, it should still be assessed as another example of how the possibilities for producing a Foucauldian ethical practice are already partly embedded in youth workers’ practices.

That said, a Foucauldian analysis indicates how the management techniques cited above could equally be considered as an attempt to curtail ethical practice rather than facilitating it. The pro formas were primarily intended to improve

sessions rather than challenge them. A clear example of this arose in the Fit2Eat sessions. These sessions focussed on promoting healthy eating and fitness and were divided into one hour of sport and one hour of cooking. Discursively Fit2Eat predominantly resonated with a social conditioning model; the purpose was to alter young people's behaviours in a particular direction. While some of the youth workers were unhappy with these sessions – Dave, for example felt they were “too structured” and prevented deeper discussions – the post-session evaluations were directed at improving Fit2Eat and ensuring the session was more successful rather than challenging the type of interactions it engendered or indicating how it needed to be replaced with something else. The procedure of post-session evaluation could thus be interpreted as a manifestation of governmentality or a practice which facilitated self-regulation by youth workers (youth workers curtailed their actions to fit into Fit2Eat).

The distinction here can be explained using Coussée et al's (2010) arguments on the co-option of critical pedagogical methods by social conditioning methodologies. Commenting on Connexions' advisors, these authors state that although these practitioners appear to follow a critical pedagogical tradition – in that they locate learning in young people's real work experience – “the goals are set from within a formal educational and social work horizon” (Coussée et al, 2010: 798). The implication here is that, while the procedures may indicate an orientation towards a more critical pedagogy, they are still framed by a conditioning discourse. Transposing this argument onto Urban Youth's post-session evaluations suggests that, while the procedure may suggest that youth workers are afforded the possibility for the production of a more ethical subject it could equally be considered as a technology of government. This resonates with Rose's (1999) description of how subjects are controlled through systems of surveillance and operational guidelines. This introduces a key issue that needs to be taken into account when exploring the possibilities for the production of a

Foucauldian ethical subject. By applying Foucault's arguments regarding the nature of discourse the *limitations* on how much youth workers can achieve such an ethical practice becomes apparent. Central to this is the position of the subject within discourse and the interaction between discourse, subjectivities and power relations. According to Foucault, discourse and subjects do not operate separately from one another. Subjects are *discoursing*; they are the products and producers of discourse (Foucault, 1970). In terms of youth work this means that while youth workers may attempt to disrupt discourse, their position within discourse means that they will ultimately reinforce the power relations and subjectivities they disagree with. This is demonstrated by the examples cited above. While Sam and Dave criticise the power relations embedded in formal education, the alternative relations they attempt to instigate and their position within youth worker-young person relations are informed by the same subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood – for example adulthood as a socially responsible, 'moral' state – and youth-adult interactions – for instance youth workers as role models. As such the discourse that formal education represents also underwrites the approaches embedded in Urban Youth.

The second limitation on the enacting of an ethical practice relates to the impact of subject interactions on the production of discourse. As, according to Foucault, discourse is not generated by solely one subject or group of subjects the perspectives and attitudes of service-users may also act as a limitation on the construction of an ethical practice. At Urban Youth this tension is revealed by the difficulty some young people in using the youth workers' first names rather than addressing them as "Miss" or "Sir". In this instance, the potential for youth workers to challenge the boundaries of the youth-adult relationship is limited by the fact that young people implicitly expect adults to be superior. The position of the youth worker as archetypal knower and social education to involve providing young people with information is reinforced by young people's expectations of

them. This demonstrates how the potential for anti-oppressive practices is restricted by the fact that discourse and power relations are co-produced by other subjects through social interaction. Even if practitioners are able to challenge discourse on a personal level, the relations of power may still be sustained through the actions and assumptions of service-users. Youth workers capacity to introduce critical pedagogical approaches is limited by the subjectivities attached to them by young people. The reproduction of conditioning interpretations of social education is a reflection of these limitations.

Appropriating a Foucauldian model of the construction of the ethical subject illustrates the possibilities for an ethical practice which disrupts discourse rather than reproduces it. Specifically it identifies how the ambiguous discourse of 'good youth work' opens the possibility for disrupting subjectivities and power relations. Additionally a Foucauldian approach identifies the limitations to the possibilities presented by discursive ambiguity. For example, a Foucauldian approach illustrates where practitioners' reproduce power relations even in their reflections (such as through the post-session evaluations) and where the disruption of discourse is limited by interactions between and understandings of subjects (for example by young people's expectations of youth workers). This is due to what Foucault calls the 'productivity of power' through the 'constitution of subjectivity' (Faubion, 1994: xix). Central to this idea is the reproduction of power relations and subjectivities due to and through subject's position within discourse. According to Foucault, as Faubion writes:

The individual impact of power relations does not limit itself to pure repression but also comprises of self-awareness and identities
(Faubion, 1994: xix)

I have already explored these theoretical arguments in Chapter 2 and as such do not wish to repeat them here. The central point is that a Foucauldian analysis shows that although the conditions for the production of an ethical subject are there – subjects have the opportunity to critical reflect - the opportunities for taking advantage of these possibilities are limited by discourse and power relations. This is due to the fact that both of these instil the forms of self-awareness and identity which direct and control the subject through conditioning the subject's understandings and actions.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a more nuanced insight into the production of an ethical youth work. Overall this chapter highlights three key points relevant to the principal research question: first, that the necessary conditions (specifically ambiguity in what counts as positive youth work) for the production of an ethical subject are already existent in youth work discourse; second, the capacity for practitioners to take advantage of this are limited by discourse and; third, because of this discursive limitation a more ethical practice will not be engendered purely by changing approaches, the absence of ethical or equal relationships is not due to individual action or inaction.

Having explored this dynamic in the context of social education I now want to assess whether similar issues emerge in the second dominant narrative in youth work discourse – participation.

Chapter 6: "No come on – what do you think?"

Introduction

The preceding chapter outlined the dynamics of the production of the ethical practice in the context of youth work. Applying two sub-discourses of social education it illustrated how the discourse of youth work was produced through the power relations and subjectivities relating to youth, adulthood and youth-adult relations. Through applying these sub-discourses it also described the tensions and ambiguities embedded in the discourse of social education. Applying the arguments proposed in Chapter 2 the chapter propagated that these ambiguities present possibilities for producing a Foucauldian ethical practice. That said the chapter also highlighted the problems that emerged as youth workers tried to challenge the discourse of youth-adult relations. Through this the chapter was able to clearly illustrate that while the conditions for the production of the ethical subject exist, they are also limited by the discursively-rooted power relations through which the subject and the subjects interactions with the world are produced.

This chapter expands these arguments in the context of the second dominant theme identified in Chapter 3 – participation. As in the preceding chapter the discussion considers the dualistic Interpretations of participation youth workers' practices and observations reflect. It identifies how these dualisms are produced by and produce differing subjectivities of youth and adulthood and result in particular power relations between both. It then considers the difficulties youth workers encounter as they attempt to challenge discourses which produce unequal relations between young people and adults and construct an ethical practice. Drawing on Foucauldian arguments regarding the production and control of the subject within discourse, it explores the limitations on how much

equal relations can be produced through youth work and the problems encountered by the production of an ethical practice.

Like Chapter 5 this discussion is structured in three stages. First I outline where the different interpretations of participation – developing agency and preventing exclusion – emerge at Urban Youth. Next I describe how these manifestations of participation are produced by and produce the differing subjectivities relating to and power relations between youth and adulthood. Finally the chapter outlines the possibilities and limitations presented by the ambiguous, tension-ridden discourse of participation (as both developing agency and preventing exclusion) for the production of an ethical practice in a Foucauldian sense.

Developing agency

At Urban Youth participation developing agency is represented not just by the position of the practice (as something that young people participate in voluntarily) but also in youth workers' approaches to the activities that take place at the club. For instance, while youth workers' may set up a range of different activities before sessions commence (i.e. an Arts and Crafts area, a sports area, computers, board games etc) the direction these activities take depends on the input of young people. This can lead to situations where the young people reject the activity that has been proposed by youth workers in favour of something else. The role of youth workers is to respond to this. An example of this arises in an exchange between one of the part-time youth workers, Tommy, and some of the young people interested in Arts and Crafts' activities:

Wednesday, entrance area. As part of the Arts and Crafts' activities for the evening, Tommy has set up a 'cartoon-drawing' area. The youth workers' original plan is to draw comic strips and award the best one £1 credit for the tuck shop. However, the potential for this

plan to restrict the activities of young people is minimised by the fact that youth workers' respond to how young people want to act in that space. For example, Tommy is using some scrap paper – a page from a SpongeBob Squarepants colouring book – to lean on while drawing his comic. One girl, Morwena, notices this and wants to colour in the SpongeBob. Rather than try to divert her attention towards making a comic strip, Tommy offers to get her a fresh colouring in page.

Arts and Crafts' area; fieldnotes 15/9/2010, 3.45pm

As youth worker, Tommy supports the young people (by photocopying a new picture) but crucially does not deter them from moving away from the original activity. This resonates with a developing agency approach to participation as it emphasises the importance of allowing and supporting young people direct and shape activities (see Chapter 3 for more on this). The dimensions of the activity are decided by collaboration between youth workers and young people. As Smith (1980) notes, young people in this interpretation are positioned as 'creators not consumers'; the practice of participation is a process of assisting young people create activities rather than solely providing pre-set activities for them to 'consume'. According to Smith, processes which either involve young people and youth workers to "jointly make decisions" or where youth workers "don't intervene in any way [and] have no power over what the outcome might be" (Smith, 1980: 17) are emblematic of a 'creators not consumers' approach aimed at developing young people's agency. Tommy's interactions with the young people in this instance echo such an understanding; his actions demonstrate a focus on encouraging young people to lead the activity.

A further example of how youth workers' practices point to an interpretation of participation as rooted in developing agency emerges in their stance on doing things for young people. The youth workers at Urban Youth would help young people but not do things for young people. This could be problematic as it

occasionally meant that the youth workers had to refuse some of the young people's requests for "help" if these requests led to the youth work completing a task rather than supporting the young person. On more than one occasion during my fieldwork youth workers had to say to young people they were assisting "I'll help you but I won't do it for you". Such an interpretation of participation echoes the description of youth work proposed by Williamson (2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.)) which states that:

Youth work should be able facilitating young people to pursue their own activities and aspirations through adherence to a principle that youth workers only *do* those things that young people cannot do by virtue of their age (Williamson, 2009 in Harrison and Wise (eds.): 77-78)

In other words, participation in the context of youth work should be focussed on developing agency and supporting young people's ability to "pursue their own activities". The emphasis on 'helping' rather than 'doing for' by youth workers at Urban Youth resonates with this.

Connected to this participation – under this discourse – is intended to develop young people's ability and capacity to enact change¹⁶. Here participation is

¹⁶ This undeniably resonates with the critical pedagogy discourse discussed in Chapters 3 and 5. This is not wholly surprising given that critical pedagogy is defined by theorists such as Freire and bell hooks as a *participatory* educational philosophy targeted at engendering collectivity and solidarity across communities. Moreover both are a particular interpretation of what interactions between youth workers and young people should achieve and the positioning of young people relative to youth workers. Such common concerns again reflects the fact that the discourse of youth work is produced by subjectivities – the relationships advocated by both critical pedagogy and developing agency are the product of 'transitions' understandings of young people (and the associated roles for youth workers these subjectivities prescribe). That said, in the context of what 'good' youth work should achieve, there is some distinction between critical pedagogy and developing agency, principally in relation to their orientation. Critical pedagogy is an interpretation of what education should achieve; developing agency is an interpretation of what 'being in a youth work organisation' should look like

posited as intended to support young people develop the skills to engage with the issues they encounter effectively (see: Williamson, 1995). This link is outlined by Smith (1980) who argues that participation is "not an end in itself [...]" the significance of 'participation' is in how it can help social education" (Smith, 1980: 18). Central to this is supporting young people develop the capacity to "move beyond their current capabilities and learn new tasks and acquire more sophisticated skills" (Vygotsky, 1978; cf. Mitra, 2005: 522). Similar arguments are made by Prout (2000) who describes child participation as focused on facilitating young people's 'self-realisation' of their capabilities. In the context of youth workers' practices, an approach to participation characterised by teaching young people or facilitating a pedagogical relationship is indicative of a developing agency interpretation. An effective participation strategy should focus on "guiding young people on a process of self-discovery" (Williamson, 2009: 71).

Importantly, such an understanding of 'positive' or effective participation does not conceive a positive relationship between young people and youth workers purely as one where youth workers are 'spectators' (see: Smith, 1980). The role of youth workers is to actively engage with young people in order to help them develop the capacity to take control, not disengage from activities completely. At Urban Youth the understanding of participation as developing agency through supporting young people develop the capacity to take control emerges in youth workers' approaches to organising specific activities. For example, towards the end of my fieldwork period, Dave became interested in starting a 'backyard project'. The backyard of the building where Urban Youth was located was used as a car park. To improve the aesthetic of the building, Dave wanted to encourage the young people to design a graffiti image and paint it on the back wall. The project was suggested to the young people via word of mouth and on the club's Facebook page. After garnering some interest, the club invited a local

and what the negotiations between youth workers and young people in this space should lead to.

graffiti artist to run a practical session on designing graffiti art with the young people during which the young people suggested designs and had a go at sketching some potential motifs. An open invitation was also extended by the artist to attend an exhibition he was holding in Nottingham and an excursion was organised by the youth workers.

Dave's intention in the 'backyard project' was to both engage young people in a longer project and encourage them to take part in something which would have wider effects on their community. In this the project mirrors O'Donoghue et al's (2002) assessment of youth participation as primarily concerned with involving young people in planning and decision-making. Such an interpretation understands participation in youth work as intended to support young people develop an awareness of their surroundings and provide them with the 'building blocks' to engage in social action. As part of the project young people were encouraged to develop a 'collectivity' (what would they as a group like the image to be?) and asked to consider the 'spatial' aspects of social action (where would the image go? How would it look in comparison to the rest of the area?). As Hall et al (1999) indicate each of these elements of working with young people are central to developing a sense of agency (both as an individual and as a section of the community). Dave's practices in the context of the graffiti project therefore indicate a distinct concern with developing agency.

The relationship between developing agency/autonomy and projects which focus on encouraging young people to consider the spaces around them is explained further by Hall et al (1999). Focusing on the interaction between space, place and young people's identity, these authors argue that "the assertion of an increasingly individual and independent identity is closely linked to, and finds expression in, issues of space and place (Hall et al, 1999: 506). Young people's emerging sense of their own autonomy and the social and political agency is closely associated with the development of "room of one's own" and "room to

move" (ibid). Youth work plays an active role in supporting this by providing young people with a "space in which to meet with others, space which young people can enter on their own terms and on their own initiative" (ibid). Part of this process of developing "room" involves claiming or occupying a particular territory. From this perspective, by facilitating a project intended to encourage and allow young people to influence the aesthetic of the space around them Dave is implicitly providing young people with the opportunity to develop a sense of agency and autonomy¹⁷. Participation in the graffiti project is intended to help the young people develop a sense of ownership over the space the club occupies.

The connection between "owning space", autonomy and developing agency is made more explicit in Strobel et al's (2008) description of the developmental potential of after-school youth clubs versus formal educational establishments. According to these authors, formal educational establishments – particularly US urban public schools – restrict and deny autonomy to young people. Environmentally public schools are "large, anonymous and lacking in opportunities for meaningful connections between teachers and students" (Strobel et al, 2008: 1679; see also: Darling-Hammond et al, 2002; Fine, 1986). Schools do not encourage young people to develop 'room of their own'; rather they are structured in such a way as to fit young people into a particular space with few "opportunities for autonomy" (ibid). Projects such as Dave's run counter to this by encouraging young people to reclaim a particular space rather than 'fit' into it.

The inclusion of young people in decisions regarding the allocation of funding and hiring new staff at Urban Youth also points to a practice which emphasises

¹⁷ The use of graffiti to invoke a sense of agency and autonomy is also interesting when posited against existing literature on street art and territoriality. Brighenti (2010), for example, describes graffiti as an aesthetic representation of a specific constitution of the public domain – graffiti artists use the art as a means of exerting ownership over a space. Dave's graffiti project can therefore be considered as a manifestation of an attempt to develop a sense of ownership and agency amongst the young people.

young people's ability to control the dimensions of a space. This is outlined in the extracts from fieldwork below:

Foyer. I have called around to submit my proof of address for my CRB and speak to Dave, the other full-time youth worker, about the club. [...] I ask Dave how the hiring process at Urban Youth works. He explains that potential new hires are interviewed and asked to come for a trial session at the club. Young people are then asked for their thoughts on the person and appointments are made based on this feedback. Dave feels that involving young people in the recruitment process is of utmost importance as it is "their club".

Initial meeting with Dave; Fieldnotes 08/08/2010

Main hall. Dave is going around with the monthly evaluations of the club. As Dave has previously explained, the youth workers use these to shape their practices and involve the young people in planning. I observe Mark filling in a form with Shahin, one of the older boys. Rather than leave the form with Shahin, Dave asks him the questions (what's good/bad at the club? What would he like to do?) and writes down his answers as Shahin plays table tennis with Isaiah. This is something Dave takes very seriously – and is clearly very important to him. Whenever Shahin says "I dunno" or doesn't give a response, Dave says "No, come on, what do you think?" In this way Dave tries to make what could otherwise be quite a tokenistic exercise more meaningful by guiding the young person through the questionnaire and drawing out a response. Shahin's final comment of what he thinks of the youth workers is that they're "safe, especially Dave and Sam".

Conversation between Dave and Shahin; fieldnote 08/10/2010, 7.40pm

In both of these instances youth workers' emphasised the role of young people within decision-making procedures at Urban Youth. Their primary aim was to allow young people access to planning issues and reinforce the view amongst young people that this was their 'space'. Comparing with the arguments of Hall et al (1999) and O'Donoghue et al (2002), the approaches of youth workers at Urban Youth could therefore be seen as driven by a concern with helping young people develop a sense of agency and autonomy. Reinforcing the fact that the acquisition of new hires depends wholly on the acquiescence of young people helps young people develop "a sense of competence in their dealings with the world" (Strobel et al, 2008: 1679). By including young people in the hiring process youth workers' practices aim to develop young people's management capacities. As an indication of how participation was interpreted by youth workers, the effort they put into consulting young people suggests that developing young people's sense of control over the space was their central concern. As the observations from fieldnotes cited above illustrate, such broad consultation was not an efficient process. Dave's conversation with Tariq took over half an hour and even then did not yield a great deal in terms of practical guidance that the youth workers could then directly implement in order to improve the club. This indicates that it was facilitating the development of agency that was important, not efficient management approaches.

This was not an isolated example of how difficult it could be to involve young people at Urban Youth in decision-making. For example, during my fieldwork the youth club received a donation from the Children in Need fund for equipment and facilities. This was obviously a boon for Urban Youth and they immediately canvassed as many of the young people as possible so a collective decision on how to spend the money could be made. Every effort was made to consult as many young people as possible: notices were placed up by the tuck shop and in

the computer room (where it would be easily visible to young people); an announcement was made on the club's Facebook page; young people were told about the money when they signed in; youth workers spoke openly about what they could spend the money on (to generate an awareness of the funding); and Sam approached each young person to ask for suggestions. Nevertheless, despite their efforts, the response from young people was limited in its usefulness for transforming the club. Young people either requested equipment that the club already had (one boy asked for video cameras and the club had four which they used on sessions that he did not attend), equipment they could not provide for health and safety reasons (some young people asked for air-guns) or equipment that would only benefit one or two (one of the younger boys - Daniel - said he would like a new bicycle which he would look after at his house!). In the end the youth workers had to make a number of suggestions for equipment which would benefit the greatest number¹⁸ and take a vote.

In this instance, although the eventual outcome of the consultation attempts by the youth workers was not a completely successful example of 'self-directed group work' (Mullender and Ward, 1991) or of encouraging the young people to take charge in the direction the club took, the level of effort that the youth workers invested in eliciting young people's opinions strongly indicates that they interpreted effective participation as a process of developing agency. This

¹⁸ This experience also serves to highlight another issue that should be taken into account when assessing youth work - that the provision of activities or availability of different modes of participation should not be taken as indicative of 'good practice' in participation. This is noted by Williamson (1995) who, identifying participation as a necessity for engendering an impactful relationships (Williamson defines impact in terms of empowerment) describes how providing vehicles for young people to participate "is a necessary, but not always sufficient, prerequisite for [impactful youth work]" (Williamson, 1995: 8). That said, in terms of evaluating how 'good' participation strategies in youth work organisations are, it is the relationship between young people and youth workers that matters not the club's tangible achievements. This point is outlined in more detail by Brew (1957) who states that "a youth leader must not try to be too concerned about results" (Brew, 1957: 183) and by Sercombe (1997; 2010) who emphasises that "youth work is constituted by a particular kind of relationship between a professional and young people" (Sercombe, 1997: 2) rather than the achievement of set targets.

example is a doubly importance instance of this as it demonstrates how youth workers' prioritise developing agency – emblematised through 'self-directed group work' and allowing access to decision-making and planning – over efficiency. This resonates with the arguments of Smith (1980) and O'Donoghue et al (2002) who describe how, for participation to be understood as targeted at developing agency, the scale of young people's role does not matter as much as the facilitation of their involvement.

The above examples of how the practices of youth workers at Urban Youth can be considered as a process of developing agency are significant not only in supporting developing agency as an interpretation of participation but also in their diversity. The fact that the aim of developing agency can be seen in the shape of youth work (as voluntary) and in a range of practices indicates that developing agency is characterised not by specific activities but by an understanding of the relationship between young people and youth workers. This argument echoes the arguments of Prout (2000) who states that effective participation should be understood in terms of the relationship between young people and adults it represents not the specific facets of a participation strategy. Similarly, Williamson (2009) describes how youth workers use a range of activities and strategies to help develop young people's confidence in exercising their autonomy and their practical skills for taking charge of a space.

Furthermore, the examples above illustrate how developing agency interpretations are not immediately indicative of "unstructured" youth work where there are no constraints. The distinction here is described by Spence et al (2006) and Williamson (2007). As Williamson states:

No self-respecting youth worker would wish to make a case for 'unstructured' youth work, for there is a fundamental contradiction here: if

the work is 'unstructured', then it is not de
facto youth work (Williamson, 2007: 90)

In the case of Urban Youth the 'structuring' of youth work takes the form of youth workers proposing ideas, negotiating with young people on the best options, providing materials for young people to work with, and advising them on what direction the activity might take. Practical examples of this are the fact that the Arts and Crafts table is set up at the beginning of a session with a particular activity which the young people may either choose to take part in or not. The youth worker tries to some degree to influence their decision by promoting particular aspects of each activity – what the pros and cons are, why it's interesting etc. Here youth work is structured in such a ways as to help young people make an informed decision.

Comparing the findings from Urban Youth with existing writing on youth work suggests that participation in this context can be interpreted as directed at developing young people's agency and supporting the production of "room to move" (Hall et al, 1999). This establishes a particular relationship between young people and youth workers where youth workers attempt to challenge and disrupt hierarchical relations between young people and adults. Moreover, such an image of youth work positions young people as autonomous, independent actors with the capacity to engage with and change the social situations they find themselves in. Participation is directed at emboldening young people and strengthening these capabilities.

Preventing exclusion

The section above highlights how the practices of youth workers at Urban Youth indicate that the discourse of participation is focused on developing agency. Despite this, as I will now outline, the practices of youth workers also point to an interpretation of participation as epitomised by encouraging "insideness" and

preventing exclusion to the greatest number of young people. As I explained in Chapter 3, practices targeted at preventing exclusion are fundamentally distinct from those aimed at developing agency. Developing agency discourses of ethical youth work focus on facilitating young people's self-realisation (Prout, 2000) and self-discovery (Young, 1999). In practice this can include encouraging young people to take charge of a space or an activity (such as through Dave's backyard graffiti project or Tommy's approach to Arts and Crafts activities). A preventing exclusion interpretation, on the other hand, interprets the purpose of participation is to both prevent young people from either being or becoming "outsiders" and focus the organisation on bringing "outsiders" "inside".

The nuances of distinction are described by Williamson (2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.)) in his critique of laissez-faire attitudes in contemporary youth work practice (Williamson, 2009: 77). According to Williamson, there is a temptation amongst youth workers to withdraw from engaging young people in "serious conversations" and to use facilities such as pool tables solely as "a safe way of occupying the 'lads'" (ibid). Youth workers appropriate basic techniques – such as a game of pool – as a means of establishing a positive relationship with young people at a distance from them socially. In other words they use specific practices in order to entice "outsiders" "inside" and prevent exclusion; they are primarily concerned with keeping young people active rather than on channelling this activity productively. However, these efforts to prevent exclusion can be at best self-limiting and at worst destructive for youth work. Their usefulness in preventing exclusion and the potential controversy that the 'exploitation' (Williamson, 2009) of these techniques to develop a sense of agency and encourage more critical awareness can bring deter youth workers who "opt Instead for a quiet life" (Williamson, 2009: 77). Williamson's observations point to a situation where youth workers' will to prevent young people from being

excluded precludes them from mobilising opportunities to push young people towards a more agency-oriented form of participation.

A similar situation is described by O'Donoghue (2006, in Ginwright et al) in her assessment of basketball projects in the US. As part of an effort to "keep young people off the streets" a number of basketball-oriented CBYOs had been established from the 1980s onwards. These projects remained open at night and provided a safe place for young people to socialise, eat and play basketball. Embedded with the ethos of these projects was a concerted effort to prevent exclusion by providing young people with an "inside" and encouraging them to participate fully and openly in the decision-making process. Although proponents of these organisations were ultimately well-intentioned, as O'Donoghue (2006, in Ginwright et al) argues, in an effort to retain young people's enthusiasm for the organisation and ensure that there were young people willing to sit on committees (for example) at all costs, organisers sometimes either neglected or sacrificed the potential for these clubs to act as vehicles for developing agency. O'Donoghue describes this as a tension between "intentionality" and "success" (O'Donoghue, 2006, in Ginwright et al: 239). While the intention was that young people would participate openly and freely, "in times of crisis" where there was a risk that young people might drift away from the organisation or lose interest, the "commitment to creating spaces for youth participation even where that may not be the more efficient process" was sacrificed in favour of a "decision-making hierarchy with young people at the bottom" (ibid).

Williamson and O'Donoghue's observations resonate with the dynamics of Urban Youth. A concern with maintaining "insideness" and keeping young people occupied dominated many of the activities at the club. As in Williamson's analysis the youth workers would frequently "opt for a quiet life" in order to sustain a rapport with young people, avoiding practices that could potentially cause controversy or conflict. This was particularly apparent in interactions with

young people with anger management problems and the older young people. For example, for the majority of my fieldwork “wrestling” was one of the most popular activities amongst the younger boys at the club. At Urban Youth “wrestling” was broadly modelled on “WWF” – crash mats were placed out in the hall and (under the watchful eye of a youth worker) young people were allowed to tackle one another. The result was normally somewhere between a grappling match and a *mêlée*! Concerned that I might not whole-heartedly approve of wrestling¹⁹, the youth workers explained that, although it was certainly very physical and not obviously productive – in that it did not produce anything – it was a good way of providing a space for young people to vent their aggression. This is illustrated by an exchange with Tommy early on in my fieldwork:

Thursday, Main Hall. Tommy is overseeing what is basically a brawl on crash mats between four boys and one girl aged between 8 and 11 years old. Although there are some general rules (for example when one boy punches the girl or when the young people grab each other by the neck he doles out time-outs ranging from one to five minutes) the play is still pretty rough. Tommy explains that it's a wrestling match and a good way to get their energies out. Tommy seems a bit wary that I will not approve of the wrestling and says that although some people might see it as unsafe, the young people enjoy it and want to do it every week.

Conversation with Tommy – Main Hall; fieldnotes 16/9/2010, 6.40pm

¹⁹ Tommy's wariness here was in part a manifestation of his (and other youth workers') initial uncertainty regarding my intentions. I have already mentioned this in Chapter 3 Part 1. At this early stage in my fieldwork, Tommy and the other youth workers – particularly Sarah – were quite guarded about their responses to me or, as in this case, very detailed in their explanations of their practices. This could perhaps be interpreted as defensive and required a lot of reassurances that I “was not there to judge”. That said, as in this instance, such defensiveness also worked slightly to my benefit as it led to longer explanations and reflections by the youth workers on the rationale for procedures at the club.

Whilst on one level the provision of a space for wrestling could be interpreted as indicative of an attempt to allow young people "room to move" (a developing agency approach) it could equally be seen as an attempt to prevent the exclusion of young people for violent behaviour. In this case it is a form of preventing the individual from becoming an excluded 'outsider' due to their actions rather than due to their resources (I explain this distinction in Chapter 3 Part 2). Tommy's explanation of why wrestling is available at the club is that it helps young people "get rid of excess energy". It is fundamentally something to keep a certain section of the club's attendees occupied; to keep them "inside". In this way it is predominantly a way to prevent exclusion rather than develop agency.

This analysis is further supported by the fact that, as in Williamson's description of laissez-faire attitudes around the pool table, wrestling was not used as a springboard for facilitating a broader discussion about aggression or masculinity. Arguably, given the problems young men in particular encounter relating to anger management and aggressive behaviour, wrestling could have been used as a way of introducing a discussion of when physicality is or is not appropriate. However this did not happen at Urban Youth. As such, like the basketball projects problematised by O'Donoghue (2006), wrestling stands as an example of how participation is interpreted as a way to keep young people "inside" and prevent exclusion through allowing young people – particularly young men who are more at risk of exclusion due to aggression (Harland, 2001) – to expend their energy. Here the concern with preventing social exclusion through getting young people to expend their energy runs counter to a developing agency approach where young people are encouraged to channel their energies productively (for example through graffiti projects or collective action).

A similar example of how Urban Youth's practices represent an understanding of participation as intended to prevent exclusion rather than develop agency comes

from their tendency towards “reactive” rather than “proactive” engagement (Williamson, 2009) with older young people (over 14-years old). Over-14s were a minority at Urban Youth and, with some exceptions, few of the regular attendees were over 16 years old. Nevertheless, the need to take a “proactive” approach to working with this group was perhaps more important given the increasing pressures they face as they move to Independence; unlike the younger participants those over 14 were encountering issues that would directly shape the rest of their lives. This is reflected in writing on young people, exclusion and marginalisation – the majority of which focuses on the 12-18 age group (see: MacDonald et al, 2001; Barry et al, 2005; Lister, 2005; Williamson, 1997).

“Reactive” and “proactive” approaches to youth work are decidedly different. Within a “reactive” approach, youth workers are primarily “spectators” (Smith, 1980), responding to young people’s wishes and actions without directing or pushing them towards a particular activity. On face value, reactive approaches would then seem to follow a developing agency interpretation. However, placed against the other indicators of a developing agency approach explored above – i.e. providing young people with the “building blocks” (Freire, 1969) or facilitating the development of their ability to reclaim space – a discontinuity between a reactive approach and developing agency interpretation emerges. Primarily a reactive approach to participation follows the lead of young people rather than propels or suggests – a “proactive” approach. Proactive approaches to participation involve youth workers playing a much more active role. The practice is much more collaborative and built on co-working rather than limiting the input of youth workers in order that young people will take a controlling role.

Interestingly, reactive or proactive approaches to youth work not only reflect a different understanding of what participation should achieve, they also reflect a different assumption of why young people participate. Within a proactive

framework, young people participate in youth work because it "helps [them] stay off the streets, learn new things, avoid boredom, and participate in enjoyable activities that are fun" (Borden et al, 2005:38). Within a reactive framework, young people participate in youth work because they are in a position of control or allowed space to do what they like. However, in addition to reflecting particular understandings of why young people do or do not participate, the decision to either take a reactive or proactive approach also reflects a particular understanding of participation's ultimate aim. Within a proactive approach the central aim is to channel young people's energies productively (a developing agency interpretation); in a reactive approach the central aim is to minimise young people leaving (a preventing exclusion interpretation).

At the same time, it is important to emphasise here that the distinction between the discourses and subjectivities represented by reactive and proactive approaches is not entirely clear cut. Proactive approaches could just as easily engender the controlling youth-adult relationship which characterise preventing exclusion. Furthermore reactive approaches, when combined with collective reflection can be used as the basis for facilitating developing agency. Although youth workers' principal focus is maintaining a rapport rather than developing agency this does not necessarily mean that the relationship is wholly passive. As Rosseter (1987) notes, regardless of what format the rapport take, engaging young people in a discussion implicitly "allows for the chance of becoming something more" (Rosseter, 1987: 52). In terms of this thesis this is a crucial point as it indicates the potential for interpreting the same procedures as representative of very different discourses. This again reinforces the need to analyse the subjectivities that particular approaches reflect and the power relations between young people and adults these subjectivities produce. It is these subjectivities that indicate whether a particular procedure is embedded within a developing agency or preventing exclusion interpretation or should be

considered as reactive/proactive. I will return to this discussion later on. For now, it is sufficient to note that the legitimacy of interpreting Urban Youth as oriented towards reactive approaches as indicative of a preventing exclusion understanding of 'good' participation.

While youth workers also try to approach participation proactively – as in the examples outlined in the preceding section – for much of the time their interaction with more “difficult cases” or older young people is primarily reactive. This is due to the fact that, as Sarah comments, “the older ones just want somewhere to chill out” (conversation with Sarah, fieldnote 08/10/2010). One of the most obvious examples of erring towards reactive practices in order to sustain a relationship was the case of Aaron, a 15 year-old boy who infrequently attended the club. When I first began attending the club he had already been excluded from two schools for aggressive and disruptive behaviour. He had also previously been temporarily banned from the club after threatening another young person with a knife and was only allowed attend a limited number of sessions (Thursdays only) during my first few months of fieldwork. Aaron was frequently verbally abusive and threatening and could become very destructive when challenged (in one memorable instance he broke a chair after being asked to stop swearing).

On the one hand the youth workers' – at least those who Aaron would respond to, he rarely interacted with any of the volunteers – attempts to work with Aaron resonated with a proactive approach in that it tried to find at least some common ground on which to develop a rapport with him and then use this as a basis for opening up broader discussions. However, the form this engagement took – football – and youth workers' reticence in moving past 'banter' in case it caused Aaron to flare up or stop attending indicates that their engagement with him was primarily reactive rather than proactive. Although Sam and Dave would challenge Aaron's behaviour when it became disruptive or aggressive – when he

verbally abused other young people or staff for example – this critical engagement with his behaviour was usually a reaction to a particular event rather than part of an on-going strategy to encourage self-reflection or help Aaron develop more productive ways of interacting with the world.

This raises a critical point for this thesis. In the case of Aaron and the older kids youth workers were faced with a situation where moving towards a developing agency relationship was limited by the concerns regarding young people's reaction. Here both youth workers' assumptions regarding what would interest/deter young people and young people's expectations of what would happen at the club created a tension between youth workers' wish to develop agency and their need to prevent exclusion. This is explained by Smith (2009, in Harrison and Wise) who describes how:

The casual conversation of [youth] workers is not primarily about socializing and spending a pleasant half hour (although it may involve these things). It is work. It has a further purpose. The danger in this situation [...] is that we can be fully taken in by our own act and so lose touch with the reality of our performance (Smith, 2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.): 181)

In Aaron's case the youth workers' practices indicate that they were so concerned with sustaining the rapport that is a prerequisite to developing agency that their willingness to engage in the disrupting and challenging exchanges which move casual conversations beyond "banter" was debilitated. This is something I will return to later on when I consider how the production of the ethical subject is constrained by power relations and subjectivities.

Aaron's story is important as it illustrates not just how youth workers can emphasise preventing exclusion but also how this can be restrictive in terms of establishing the types of relationship with adults that having the most lasting impact on young people. This impact is described by Strobel et al (2008) who argue that youth work organisations which focus on developing a collaborative or dialogical relationship between young people and adults have the most positive effect on young people's life development. According to these commentators a key problem faced by young people is that their interactions with adults are constrained to fit in a particular relation of power (for example interactions with parents or teachers). In opposition to this, positive youth work should project a relationship of mutuality and dialogue between young people and adults. While on one hand Aaron's relationship with the youth workers points to an attempt to disrupt the more controlling interactions with adults he has at school, on the other hand solely playing football with Aaron does not necessarily mean that a productive dialogue is being developed. The nature of their relationship with him and the emphasis on being "something fun to do" meant that, in order to keep Aaron coming to the club, youth workers' shied away from challenging the bravado that characterises Aaron's relationship with the outside world in case this deterred him from attending.

This resonates with the observations of Harland (2001). Commenting on youth work with young men in Northern Ireland Harland argues that many organisations find it difficult to move past "bravado and banter" – what Hall et al (1999) describe as "low-level identity work" (Hall et al, 1999: 510) – to more serious, less comfortable conversations about young men's fears and masculinities. In this instance the reactive practices of youth workers at Urban Youth represent an interpretation of positive participation as targeted at preventing young men from Aaron from becoming excluded through maintaining a rapport with them. This differs sharply from a developing agency interpretation

where, arguably, Aaron would be encouraged to move to other activities and "difficult questions" which may challenge the banter-based relationship with the youth workers would be asked (see: Williamson, 2009).

That said the self-limiting nature of a primarily banter-based or reactive relationship is recognised by some of the youth workers at Urban Youth. For example, during a conversation with Tommy, he describes how he feels that the unwillingness of Urban Youth to channel or take a more active role in facilitating young people's energies means that his relationship with young people will always be superficial. Previously Tommy worked at YMCA camps in the US. Although these camps were a lot more structured, Tommy argues, the "bond" that developed between adults and young people was a lot stronger than at Urban Youth:

Main hall, Thursday. Tommy is explaining how he came to be involved in Urban Youth while he oversees what is basically a brawl on the crash mats (more on this later). Tommy recounts how his initial work with young people was at summer camps in the United States. "Coming to a place like this where there's no structure was a bit like ahh! I worked on a [YMCA] summer camp where it's all structure. It's all 'at this time, you do this'. Because it's big projects it has to be". Although Tommy recognises that as Urban Youth is a lot smaller and not a residential camp the demand for such a fixed structure is less he feels it is the quality and depth of the relationship between young people and youth workers which primarily distinguishes the two types of youth club. "You develop such a good relationship with the kids. Because they're away from home, and for lots of them it's their first time away from home, you become their only adult connection and you develop such a close bond with

them...Here it's different. They see me every day. I'm just another adult".

Conversation with Tommy – Main Hall; fieldnotes 16/9/2010, 6.45pm

Tommy's sentiments here provide an important insight in the tensions arising from focusing participation at preventing exclusion. Although he recognises that the key aim of Urban Youth was to get young people involved – as compared to the approaches in youth camps in the US which were already well established and, due to their residential nature, did not need to worry about young people leaving sessions early if bored – he feels that the culture of participation at Urban Youth limits his ability to develop a deeper bond with the young people. As a youth worker at Urban Youth his primary concern is to ensure young people keep attending and that they remain "inside". Nevertheless his statements here indicate that he is less than satisfied with this emphasis. He would prefer not to be "just another adult". This resonates with the description of positive youth work provided by Stobel et al (2008) and Williamson (2009). At the same time Tommy also notes how important it is that the youth workers make a concerted effort to promoting "insideness" and preventing exclusion. His recognition is demonstrated here by his admission that it is important to allow young people direct activities to ensure that they keep coming to the club.

The example of Tommy and wrestling is also important as in this instance youth workers are not only conceptually "spectators" (Smith, 1980) – in that they have no input into the direction activities take – they are also *physically* "spectators". During wrestling sessions youth workers stand at the edge of the crash mats and monitor young people – i.e. policing head locks, giving "time outs" when the scuffles get too severe – but do not actively engage. This contradicts a developing agency approach where youth workers collaborate with young people to help them develop their skills. For example, whereas a preventing exclusion interpretation focuses on encouraging young people to take part, a developing

agency interpretation uses activities as tools for skills development or helping young people channel their energies productively. This distinction is elucidated by Williamson (2009) who argues that effective participation uses recreational activities as a pedagogical tool and an arena for co-working between young people and adults. Ineffective participation, on the other hand, uses recreational activities as a means of occupying young people's time. Youth workers' disengage themselves from the games and do not exploit their potential as vehicles for developing productive relationships. Wrestling at Urban Youth mirrors this model of ineffective participation.

Importantly for noticing the distinction between different interpretations of participation, the laissez-faire separateness displayed by youth workers in the above examples resonates with the work of Spence et al (2006). Reflecting on the voices of youth workers based in Durham, these authors note that a vision of youth work as "structured" is typical to orientations towards developing agency – what they address as "opportunity" – rather than social exclusion-centric youth work which tends to be more open and fluid. As they state in their review:

Structured agencies are part of practice, and are dominant in some organisations, particularly those which are orientated towards youth opportunity and challenge rather than social exclusion (Spence et al, 2006: 34)

Like developing agency, the interpretation of participation can also have an impact on the shape the organisation takes, the relationship between young people and youth workers, and the practices of youth workers. Furthermore, findings from fieldwork indicate that it can also influence young workers' satisfaction with the practice. Youth workers' vision of 'good practice' in this

Instance was predicated on an understanding of a fully participatory session as one that was well-attended and active. Not achieving these markers of success resulted in dissatisfaction. This relates back to the discussion of reactive versus proactive approaches to participation. As I noted above, the decision to maintain a reactive practice – i.e. one where youth workers responded to what young people immediately want to do rather than tried to influence or channel their energies – was framed by a dominant understanding amongst the youth workers that young people (particular those over 14-years old) would simply leave. As Kane (2004) makes explicit “no [youth work] programme can make a difference if it does not change the daily experiences of youth and it cannot do that if attendance is poor” (Kane, 2004: 2).

Structurally, the emphasis on keeping young people inside is indicated by the type of organisation that Urban Youth represents. It is what Williamson (1995) describes as “patch-based” youth work (see Chapter 3 Part 1 for a definition of this). While many attendees of the club have common experiences or share common characteristics the club does not target one specific group (for example unemployed young people, young people with learning difficulties, young people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, lesbian, gay and bisexual young people). Rather it markets itself as a space where young people from a variety of backgrounds – albeit within a specific age range (6-16 years old) - are encouraged to attend. In fact, as a patch-based organisation, Urban Youth target audience is more broadly defined than Williamson’s characterisation suggests. Although it is nominally geographically defined due to its location, it advertises activities to neighbouring areas. For example, ‘Playscheme’ – the club’s week-long projects during school holidays²⁰ - is advertised across the city. This makes the target audience of Urban Youth more opaque as it leads to

²⁰ During school holidays the club would take a break from normal sessions and run day-long activities (with an hour break for lunch). These included a trip to the local park (weather permitting) for a sports day and a trip to the cinema around the corner.

young people from very different socio-economic backgrounds to the young people in the immediate vicinity attending sessions.

While on one hand the broad focus of Urban Youth has resonances with a developing agency approach in that it allows young people to define the parameters of the club themselves – this follows Smith's (1980) and Hall et al's (1999) arguments – it also points to an interpretation of participation as antonymic to any form of "outsideness". The unwillingness of youth workers to limit their target audience to a specific portion of the youth population indicates that their primary concern is bringing – and keeping – young people "inside". The focus is preventing *any* exclusion (or "outsideness") rather than either encouraging young people to develop their ability to challenge particular social issues that affect them or collaboratively constructing a "space". Similar arguments are made by Harland (2001; see also: Harland and McCready, 2007) who argues that successful participation – particularly in youth work focused on young people – has been measured in term of the amount of young people organisations manage to engage in specific activities (usually recreational or sports-based).

Another example of how "insideness" is the central concern of youth workers trying to sustain a "participatory" space at Urban Youth emerges in their attitude towards regulation. This has already been partially referenced in relation to the willingness of youth workers to allow interactions with young people – particularly young men with more problematic behaviours – to remain at the level of banter. In the case of young men like Aaron, for example, the youth workers withdrew from challenging the roots of his aggressive tendencies as this might deter him from attending. In its mildest form this tendency emerged in youth workers' willingness to just play football with Aaron and entertain him. However in its most extreme, the emphasis on "insideness" as opposed to asking difficult or uncomfortable questions can cause significant problems for

youth workers ability to challenge perceptions of acceptable behaviour in a meaningful way.

This tension resonates with the arguments of Harland (2001) and Harland and McCready (2007) who argue that the focus on occupying young men's time in order to divert them from anti-social or aggressive behaviours debilitates the potential of youth work to "create environments where young men can think, reflect, talk openly and honestly, explore values, and consider other viewpoints" (Harland and McCready, 2007: 1). As Akom et al (2008) and Ginwright et al (2002) stress, creating such environments is a prerequisite to developing young people's capacity to address the problems they face and channel their agency and energies productively – the key concerns of a developing agency interpretation. Solely playing football with Aaron indicates that youth workers are more concerned with keeping him "inside" than encouraging self-reflection.

The above examples indicate the prevalence of an interpretation of participation as intended to prevent exclusion and ensure "insideness". Although preventing exclusion is important – exclusion is something young people are increasingly at risk of (MacDonald et al, 2001) – this can also present a significant problem for youth workers. For example, the focus of behaviour also creates tensions for youth workers' whose primary goal is to keep young people "inside". As a result of this tension, youth workers have to balance attempts to control behaviour against sustaining a relationship with young people at all costs. Thus the engaged collaborative critical reflection – on aggression or masculinities for instance – which characterises both developing agency and critical pedagogy approaches are sacrificed in favour of approaches where, as Williamson (2009) describes, difficult questions (for example why aggression is an acceptable image of masculinity) are not asked.

Subjectivities, power relations and participation

Like social education, exploring participation indicates that youth workers practices can be interpreted dualistically – as intended to develop agency or to prevent exclusion. What I want to do here, as in the preceding chapter, is illustrate that this ambiguity is fuelled by competing subjectivities relating to youth, adulthood and youth-adult interactions. These subjectivities are embedded within the discourse of youth work and inform, facilitate and are reproduced through the power relations between young people and adults in youth work settings. This section will explore such ambiguities and tensions through the frame of participation. It will outline how subjectivities produce ambiguous and contradictory power relations between youth workers and young people, both in terms of their position relative to one another within discourse and the practices they engage in. These power relations produce a tension-ridden and contradictory discourse of 'best practice' which focuses both on preventing exclusion and developing agency. Moreover, analysing participation in this way shows that the division between interpretations is not clear. As in social education, the same procedures speak to contradictory subjectivities and power relations. This again supports my argument in Chapter 2 that particular procedures can sustain conflicting discourses of youth work which render these procedures possible and ethical.

In Chapter 4 I argued that the historical and policy narratives of youth work projected two main images of youth (and by implication adulthood): the transitions model and the subcultures model. The previous chapter showed how these models convey particular subjectivities relating to youth and knowledge which contribute to the production of the different understandings of good social education. What I will now show is that this is also the case for the discourse of participation – albeit with different elements of each model of youth, in particular the position of youth in social relations. Given the predominant concern with

young people's status as 'insiders' or 'outsiders' – and the problems with these concepts – underlying the management of participation within youth work organisations such as Urban Youth, understanding the divergences in how young people's position is understood and the power relations these understandings produce is of key import to understanding the nuances of this discourse. This discussion will also help frame the assessment of the difficulties inherent to the production of an ethical practice.

As Chapter 3 Part 2 described, the transition model conceptualises youth as characterised by the *movement* from a position of dependence to relative independence. Central to this move, according to theorists such as Hall (1904) and Coleman (1961) is the assumption of particular responsibilities and capacities – the ability to fully engage in the labour market for example or responsibility for their housing circumstances – and 'freedoms'. As Thomson et al (2009) state "in becoming adult, young people are pursuing the experience and recognition of *competence*" (Thomson et al, 2009, in Roche et al: xv; emphasis in original). Here, Thomson et al approach youth as an identity framed by a shift in position from being directed to being able to self-direct. This position of self-direction may emerge, Thompson et al argue, through engaging in a range of different activities:

...a young person may develop a sense of competence by being a valued worker, a parent, a successful student, musician, sportsperson, sexual partner, popular or feared member of a social scene (Thomson et al, 2009, in Roche et al: xv)

The vision of youth as a process of developing 'competencies' here resonates with the transitions-oriented model of youth and knowledge (i.e. youth as a

period of building knowledge). However, in terms of the discourse of participation, what is interesting about the transitions conceptualisation of youth is the concern with 'being part of' or 'insideness'. Youth is characterised by the movement from being 'inside' one experience to being 'inside' another. This emphasis is made more apparent when combined with transitions' literature concern with youth exclusion or failed transitions. Failed transitions, from this approach, is characterised by being 'outside' or on the margins (Chapter 3 Part 2 outlined this link in detail).

Interestingly the subcultures model also deals with the position of youth as 'outside' and marginalised. However, in contrast to the transitions model, the subcultures model does not explicitly problematize 'outsideness' as a sign of failure. Rather it uses the separateness of youth from childhood or 'adult' cultures as proof of the fact that youth experiences differ from those of adults and as such should be considered as culturally and socially distinct rather than incomplete or inadequate. Moreover, as I have already outlined, youth subcultures literature uses the fact that young people may have a variety of social experiences outside of the traditional economically-grounded transition to independence (this is addressed in terms of complex or broken transitions by transitions literature) as proof that the notion of 'youth' has been misused as a cover for what is in reality a heterogeneous social group (see: Griffin, 2009; Hall, 1970). From a subcultures approach, the problems interpreted as 'failed transitions' by youth as transition theorists – for example unemployment, poverty, lack of educational attainment, homelessness – are actually the result of broader social inequalities (based on class, race or gender) which can impact upon some young people more than others depending on the social circumstances.

At Urban Youth the differing understandings of youth emerge quite clearly within the discourse of participation. The concern with engaging as many young people

as possible mirrors the problematization of 'outsideness' under the transitions model whereas the broadening out of the club's target audience reflects the subcultures argument that 'youth' is not a singular experience. Moreover, as in social education, the differing subjectivities are co-existent within the discourse of participation. However, whereas in the case of social education this was indicated by the fact that youth workers' practices could be interpreted as representative of either a situated knowledge or a social conditioning approach, in relation to participation such co-existence emerges in the disparity between youth workers' practices and their image of positive youth work.

For example, Tommy's discomfort with his relationship with the young people at Urban Youth points to a situation whereby his approaches are informed by understandings of subject-positions which problematize any 'outsideness' – a core facet of the transitions approach. However, his self-evaluation is informed by discourses of 'good' practice which emphasises the need to challenge the distancing of young people from adults – a subcultures approach – and develop more personalised relationships. He is unhappy with the fact that he is 'just another adult' and voices a preference towards youth work relationships wherein a close bond between individual young people and youth workers is developed. This indicates a discursive tension. On the one hand Tommy's sentiments represent an understanding of good youth work as characterised by interacting with a inherently heterogeneous group on a personal level; on the other his practices – which are overwhelmingly oriented towards getting as many young people involved as possible – represent a understanding which underscores keeping young people 'inside'. Taken in combination Tommy's story illustrates how the subject of the youth worker within the discourse of ethical youth work is ambiguous and how this can produce tensions in the lived practice as youth workers orientate themselves towards differing subject-functions and subject-positions. In this case the subject of the 'good' youth worker is characterised

both by establishing a personal relationship with young people and by bringing as many young people 'inside' as possible; these understandings, while co-existent within Tommy's statements, speak to differing discourses of youth-adult relations (one informed by subcultures and one by transitions).

The discursive tension between youth as homogeneous and youth as heterogeneous emerges elsewhere in the discourse of participation at Urban Youth. A clear example is the attitude towards form of expression – particularly swearing. The de facto position of youth workers at the club was to chastise young people for using 'bad language'. This was rationalised by Dave as recognition that "swearing is generally unacceptable in society". This projects a homogenised understanding of young people as it suggests that swearing was always representative of an act of aggression. It is viewed as a rejection of norms of participation and youth workers like Sam and Dave considered swearing as 'verbal abuse' and inherently 'bad'. However, in terms of the subjectivities associated with young people, such a reaction to swearing ignores the fact that young people – as heterogeneous – express themselves in different ways. Swearing, although considered socially unacceptable by Sam and Dave, was embedded within the norms of conversation and expression for some of the young people (particularly the ones over 11 years old). In this case, the standardised approach to participation – as dependent on specific social practices – did not recognise the heterogeneity or idiosyncrasies of the service user population. Although youth workers were trying to encourage young people to develop a sense of agency and express themselves openly, the implicit assumption that swearing was indicative of being 'outside' social norms meant that youth workers placed limitations on how young people could express themselves. This dissonance reflects the co-existence of different subjectivities relating to acceptable youth expression and the nature of youth within a single discourse.

Furthermore, whereas in the context of social education the different subjectivities were reflected in the interactions between youth workers and young people, in participation they are also reflected in the *position* of youth workers relative to young people in the participatory projects. The various understandings of youth and adulthood inform what youth workers role should be in an effective participatory strategy – whether as ‘controllers’ (Jeffs and Banks, 1999) or as ‘spectators’ (Smith, 1980). However, the division between the different positioning and subjectivities is not clear cut. I have earlier described how the ‘spectator’ role can be interpreted as emblematic of either a reactive or proactive approach. This is due to that fact that youth workers’ role as ‘spectators’ or ‘controllers’ can each be seen as a manifestation of either set of subjectivities relating to youth-adult relationships. For example, the positioning of youth workers as controllers could be viewed as representative of an understanding of young people as less capable than adults and in need of control (a transitions model) or of an understanding of productive youth-adult relationships as characterised by facilitating the development of young people’s abilities (a subcultures approach) depending on whether it was combined with a critical reflection on whether young people were being curtailed – for instance – or not. In terms of this thesis this is of critical importance as it again indicates the ambiguities embedded in youth work discourse and the different types of relations that the same subjectivities can advocate. Furthermore, it again illustrates how the subject of the youth worker in ethical youth work can be produced according to differing sub-discourses. This creates tensions in the lived practice as youth workers operate according to ambiguous (and indeed competing) understandings of their subject-position and subject-function.

The different understandings of youth workers’ position relative to young people are also visible in youth workers’ understanding – reflected through statements and practices – on what a ‘positive’ relationship between youth workers and

young people is. On the one hand, the findings from Urban Youth outlined above indicate that youth workers view a positive relationship with young people as one which disrupts hierarchical relations between young people and adults – the youth as subcultures model. For example, in the case of Tommy, his attitude to the young people taking Arts and Crafts' activities in a direction that he had not intended points to an understanding of 'good youth workers-young person relations' as represented by young people having as much control over the space as the youth workers. Moreover, Dave's graffiti project represents an understanding of positive youth work as characterised by collaboration between young people and youth workers. There are two points of note here: first, the youth workers approaches to developing agency indicate an understanding of youth-adult relations as traditionally hierarchical; and second, they indicate that youth workers see their relationship with young people as moving towards non-hierarchical relations but this is not to say that they are necessarily devoid of hierarchies. This latter point is illustrated by the fact that youth workers do not view allowing young people do what they want as entirely positive or productive – participation is not wholly self-directed, youth workers are not "spectators" (Smith, 1980) and "there is a rhyme and reason, and a structure, to the practice" (Williamson, 2007: 90).

It was through speaking to Dave about my research – particularly around the historical development of youth work – his views on the centrality of young people's position in decision-making emerged. This is described in the extract from fieldnotes below:

Wednesday, Main Hall. I have arrived a little before the session starts and Dave is taking the opportunity to practice his table-tennis skills. He asks how my PhD is going and what sorts of things I am finding out. I tell him that I have started writing the 'history' chapter and have been spending most of the week reading through policy

documents from the 1960s and 1970s. Dave is genuinely interested and asks have I found anything funny. I tell him about statements regarding mixed youth clubs in the 1960s and the view that it would "give lads a chance to chat up girls". Dave laughs and comments that it's strange to hear such detailed statements on 'what young people need' when "young people were probably never even asked".

Conversation with Dave – Main Hall; fieldnote 2/2/2011, 3.15pm

Dave's criticism of youth work which does not consult young people speaks volumes. It is embedded within an interpretation of participative youth work as collaboration between young people and adults. This view is made more explicit when compared with his approaches to working with young people. For instance, when organising specific events Dave takes care to first ask young people what they would like to do. Moreover, as I outlined in the preceding chapter, Fit2Eat – the most prescriptive of the sessions at Urban Youth – is criticised by Dave as it does not allow young people to exercise control over the shape of the session instead operating according to a pre-assigned format. Cumulatively these examples indicate that Dave feels the role of participation in youth work should be to disrupt the understanding that young people are passive recipients of practices designed by adults. From this perspective, his interpretation of participation in youth work as directed at developing agency points to a rejection of existing, hierarchical relations between young people and adults and an understanding of youth work as a forum for challenging this hierarchy.

Interestingly these divergent positions illustrate that the discourse of participation does not solely encompass dualistic understandings of youth; it is also informed by dualistic understandings of adulthood (embodied through the youth worker). As I noted in Chapter 4, youth work policy is produced by and produces understandings of adults as both homogeneous archetypes of

'successful youth transitions' (see: Friedenberg, 1969 and Arnett, 2001 for more on this) and as an equally heterogeneous social category to the youth subcultures albeit with potentially different experiences and circumstances²¹. These subjectivities sustain very different relations between young people and adults. The first – reflecting the transitions model of youth – posits adults as adequate, 'complete' models who should condition, inform and guide young people's transition to adulthood. Adults in this frame are inherently superior to young people. The second – reflecting the subcultures approach – conceives 'adults' as at a remove from different young people's experiences and as such argues that 'adults' should try to understand and recognise young people as heterogeneous, equal social group who may need support in order to tackle the particular issues facing them successfully. Adults are not superior and it is important adults allow their views to be challenged. This point is outlined in depth by Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Epstein et al (eds.) (1998) in their analysis of youth cultures.

Within the context of Urban Youth the youth workers approaches and observations on their own identity illustrate the co-existence of these subjectivities. This has already been discussed in the context of social education. There I highlighted how youth workers would challenge the 'knowledges' of young people – or encourage young people to challenge their 'knowledges' – and recognise young people's experiences as heterogeneous and personal but would not critically reflect on their own assumptions about acceptability or introduce their personal circumstances and experiences to the young people. In this way youth workers acted according to both the subcultures model (recognising young people's experiences as different but not necessarily transitory) and the transitions model (maintaining a model of adults' knowledge as unquestionable).

²¹ That said these experiences and circumstances are not unique to 'adults' as Williamson's writing on 'young adulthood' (see: Williamson, 2001) indicates. The key principle is that the 'adult' experience or identity is not wholly different or more developed than that of the young person.

In the context of participation, the tension between subjectivities relating to adulthood – as inherently more socially developed or as equal but different – also emerges albeit in a different way. The most obvious example of this tension emerges in the position of adults as the directors or controllers of order at Urban Youth. Young people are always compelled to listen to and follow the directions of youth workers. Although the youth workers try to open up opportunities for young people to take charge of activities, the default position is that youth workers will direct activities, regardless of their individual abilities. This contradicts the developing agency discourse that promotes the development of self-awareness and argues that young people are a heterogeneous group with differing skills and capacities as it, implicitly at least, projects an image of the youth worker as uniformly good at each activity. This indicates that the discourse of participation is informed by both an understanding of adults as inherently more able than young people and an understanding of adults as just as heterogeneous as young people.

These instances indicate that the potential for different interpretations of participation are representative of a discourse embedded with divergent, often contradictory, subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood. The result of the co-existence of these subjectivities is a discourse of participation which facilitates practices and forms of interaction – power relations – representative of interrelated but oppositional aims (developing agency and preventing exclusion). Moreover, analysing the approaches of youth workers discursively indicates that there is no clear delineation between the different interpretations of 'good' youth work. The same practices may be representative of very different subjectivities. Furthermore the same subjectivities may advocate seemingly contradictory approaches. This reinforces the arguments proposed in Chapter 2 and the analysis of social education. There I proposed that the tensions and ambiguities in the discourse of youth work organisations like Urban Youth reflect a discourse

embedded with contradictory subjectivities and power relations. This emerges in both the policy and practice narratives of organisations – such as social education and participation – which can be interpreted as representations of very different relationships between and understandings of subjects.

Having outlined this central argument in relation to participation I now want to consider what this might mean for the production of an ethical youth work practice. Using Foucault's conceptualisation of the ethical subject I will now outline and explore the possibilities presented by the ambiguous discourse of participation. This will then be counterpointed with the limitations on the potential ethical subject. Combined with the preceding chapter this argument will help demonstrate the possibilities for constructing an ethical practice presented by informal organisations like Urban Youth.

Constructing an ethical practice

The discussion above elucidates the interplay between subjectivities, power relations and the ambiguous discourse of participation in youth work. Specifically it shows how the co-existence of subjectivities relating to young people's position in society – as inside or outside – and the assumptions about 'successful' adult participation produce a tension-ridden discourse which promotes agency and 'being part of' simultaneously. Additionally it illustrates the interaction between understandings of youth and adulthood and the subject-positions they hold. The discussion above illustrates that it is the interplay between discourse, subjectivities and power relations that produces the subject-positions and subject-relations of young people and youth workers/adults – within the discourse of youth work rather than specific approaches. This is also indicated by the fact that the same relations of power are manifest within differing approaches. As in the case of social education, the production of an ethical practice does not then solely involve switching approaches, it also

involves challenging the power relations and subjectivities embedded in discourse.

Using this as a base, I now want to consider what this means for the production of a Foucauldian ethical practice. As before, my analysis here focuses on the limitations on and possibilities for the exercise of "the will to knowledge" (Foucault, 1970) and "care for the self" (Foucault, 1984) and presented by the ambiguous and tension-ridden discourse of participation. This section explores how these limitations/possibilities are produced by but may also reproduce discourse.

In many ways the possibilities for a Foucauldian ethical subject are clearer in participation than in social education. This is due to the fact that the focus in the discourse of participation is resolutely on the interaction between youth workers and young people – and the results of this interaction – rather than specific models of participation. Moreover, the fact that young people's engagement is voluntary necessitates that the 'participation strategy' remain attractive and relevant to them. The survival of organisations such as Urban Youth depends on young people's continued attendance. As such youth workers are compelled to reflect upon their practices in order to ensure that the participation approaches are effective and a rapport with young people is maintained. From a Foucauldian perspective the possibility of the exercise of "the will to knowledge" is thus an inherent element of the practice.

The ambiguities and tensions embedded within the discourse of participation also present possibilities for an ethical practice in that they encourage youth workers to problematize or at least challenge their relationships with young people. The ambiguous nature of an "ethical" practice combined with the fact that seemingly ethical practices can reinforce exclusionary discourses which pathologise young people (as deviant or at risk for example) encourage youth

workers to critically reflect on how positive their practices actually are. At Urban Youth this critical assessment and problematization emerges in both the self-criticisms of youth workers such as Tommy who criticises the relationship he has with young people as ineffectual or overly passive and the session-by-session evaluations embedded within the organisation's operational framework. Following Foucault, problematization of this kind is an innately ethical practice as it facilitates self-subjectification, involves subjects exploring fully the "field of possibilities", and leads to subjects critically engaging with the boundaries of discourse. As such, the ambiguous discourse of participation presents more opportunities for problematization as youth workers critically assess the benefits of each approach in order to find the 'best' one.

The combination of multiple understandings of youth and adulthood within the discourse of participation also produces possibilities for transformation towards an ethical practice. The fact that the identity of the service user group is ambiguous means that youth workers have to reflect on the subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood in order to identify what type of young person they want to orientate themselves toward. This opens the possibility of both critical reflection on subjectivities and self-subjectification as youth workers reflect on the identities of the young people they come into contact with. At Urban Youth this reflection and subjectification is manifested through youth workers' systematic consideration of the dimensions and characteristics of their service user group. Each session of the club begins and ends with a discussion between the youth workers on what the young people were attracted to, what worked well and what might need improvement. This is then combined with a register of the characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, personal circumstances) of their attendees. The result of this process in terms of producing an ethical subject is that it provides a space for youth workers to engage in the type of

critical subjectification that Foucault conceptualises as a necessary element of the "exercise of freedom" and "care of the self".

At the same time it is important not to conflate this promotion of reflection with *critical* reflection. While youth workers at Urban Youth and youth work writing, emphasises how "evaluating [youth work] practice gives opportunities to learn from experience by identifying what would well and what was problematic (Thompson, 2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.): 198) there is little to say whether this is part of an effort to introduce what Foucault calls an "ethic of discomfort" (see: Faubion, 1994; I discuss this further in Chapter 2) or a manifestation of the systems of control (in this case self-subjectification and self-regulation) used to reproduce discourse (see: Foucault, 1978; Rose, 1999).

The distinction between these mirrors Foucault's differentiation between the "will to knowledge" and the "will to truth". Transposing these arguments onto findings from Urban Youth suggests that, while the evaluation mechanisms might encourage youth workers to consider their approaches more deeply, this may not necessarily amount to the exercise of the "will to knowledge" or critical reflection if not accompanied by a questioning of the subjectivities and power relations informing such approaches. Rather these may act as a means of reinforcing particular sets of subjectivities and interpretations of ethical youth work and facilitating youth workers' self-regulation – thereby representing a form of governmentality. This is an important point as it again highlights that while there are possibilities for the production of the Foucauldian ethical subject these may be limited if a full critical engagement with the subjectivities and power relations is absent.

That said there are other elements of the discourse of participation which suggest the potential for production of the Foucauldian ethical subject. For example the emphasis on maintaining a rapport can also engender ethical

transformation as youth workers are encouraged to re-engage with the discourse of participation – who are they trying to reach, how can a rapport be maintained - in order to ensure that an impactful relationship is sustained or that the impact of youth worker-youth interactions can be maximised. This reinforces the argument that the tensions and contradictory power relations underlying the discourse of youth work (between maintaining a rapport, engendering an 'impactful' relationship with young people and youth workers' retaining some degree of control) can introduce possibilities for disrupting discourse and moving towards a more ethical practice. Here the lack of clarity regarding what ethical subject relations within youth work look like, and the variances in the potential subject-positions and subject-functions for youth workers within the discourse of ethical youth work, opens up a space for the critical reflection Foucault deems prerequisite to the production of an ethical subject.

An example of where this occurs in practice emerges in youth workers critique of the types of young people they should focus on as part of their 'preventing exclusion' strategy. The broadening out of Urban Youth's target audience and the withdrawal from focusing on specific groups was not entirely accepted by some of the youth workers. Dave and Sarah in particular voiced concerns about an approach directed at quantity of young people rather than those on the margins. In one of my first conversations with Dave he was critical of the club's "open doors" policy and emphasis on keeping as many young people as possible inside. Contrary to this perspective, Dave felt that the club should be somewhat more selective and focus on including "the poorer kids" (fieldnote, 30/8/2010). According to Dave, young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds should be priorities as they were more at risk of becoming socially excluded. Sarah also felt the same way, stating that she felt it was "not fair" that young people from the Park Estate (a more well-off area of the city) were encouraged to attend the

club as they "are able to do things that the kids around here can't...they have the money to do things" (fieldnote, 11/9/2010).

Importantly here, while Sarah and Dave find the "quantitative" element of Urban Youth's approach to preventing exclusion/promoting "insideness" problematic they do not criticise this interpretation of participation as indicative of "bad youth work". It is not the emphasis on "insideness" that is unethical but the conceptualisation of who needs to be helped "inside". They feel that the club should focus on "the poorer kids" rather than try to attract all young people in Nottingham as those from higher socio-economic group are already socially included. In this way ambiguities in the discourse of participation in youth work – in this case relating to who should participate and the nature of being inside/outside society – open up a space for the problematization and self-subjectification emphasised by Foucault. The dissonance between Sarah and Dave's view of who Urban Youth's target audience are and their understanding of how the club should position itself – as open to all young people – creates an opportunity for critical reflection on the discourse of participation.

Further possibilities for ethical transformations are presented by ambiguities regarding the control and management of activities and questions regarding what the position of both young people and adults within a fully 'participative' space should be (see: Prout, 2000; O'Donoghue et al, 2002). As the findings from fieldwork and youth work policy indicate, a significant aspect of youth work's participative project involves reconceptualising the position of young people relative to adults – and vice versa – within discourse. Both developing agency and preventing exclusion focus on changing the location of young people relative to adults in youth work organisations (in the decision-making process for example) and generally (outside or inside society). At Urban Youth reconsidering the positions of young people and adults emerges in youth workers' attempts to rescind control of specific projects – for instance the backyard project or

Interviews – and in their attempts to assume the role of facilitators rather than controllers – a physical example of this comes from the peripheral position of youth workers in wrestling.

The ambiguities in the subject-positions and subject-functions of young people and adults within youth work (produced through the co-existence of varying sub-discourses of participation) open up another opportunity for youth workers to critically reflect on their role and interactions with young people. At Urban Youth youth workers were provided with opportunities to critically consider where they should position themselves within the discourse of youth-adult relations in order to enhance participation and ensure that the relationship between young people and adults was as impactful (in either developing agency or preventing exclusion) as possible. The lack of clarity regarding the subject-position of youth workers in a fully participative relationship (and indeed what constitutes such a relationship) open up the space for practitioners to critically reflect on where they should be located relative to one another. For example the question of whether occupying a 'spectators' role, a 'facilitators' role or a 'controllers' role generates an impactful youth-adult relationship provides an opening for youth workers to consider more critically where they should locate themselves and why. As a possibility for constructing an ethical subject, this resonates with Foucault's arguments regarding the potential transformative opportunities presented by self-subjectification and discursive ambiguity. According to this approach, as I have already outlined in Chapters 2 and 5, considering more deeply the subjectivities and subject-positions implicitly invokes the type of critical engagement and "care for the self" (Foucault, 1977) which can elicit ethical transformations and discursive disruption.

That said, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1986) note, this is primarily a diagnostic process in that while self-subjectification allows subjects to critically assess the elements of their subjectivities they do not agree with, their capacity to change

these subjectivities is limited by the dynamics of discourse. As Rose (1999) describes, the boundaries of possibilities for an ethical practice are embedded within discourse not separate from it. As such while self-subjectification may open a space for critical reflection on subjectivities, this is ultimately curtailed within pre-set discursive boundaries. This leads me to the second part of this discussion. As in the case of social education there are limitations on the capacity for youth workers to disrupt discourse. These are rooted in the dynamics of discursive reproduction. As I have already described, a significant element of Foucault's argument is that discourse is both the product of and reproduces subjectivities and power relations. It is not the case, as Foucault argues, that you have subjects on one side and discourse on the other. As I have already explained earlier in this thesis, subjects' identities, practices and positions are both the products and producers of discourse.

Another limitation on the production of an ethical practice is rooted in the broader discourse of 'impactful' participation in the world and the limits of how much youth workers can test what counts as a 'good' participation strategy. This argument echoes the work of Kelly and Harrison (2006) in relation to possibilities for acting otherwise and exercising "care for the self" presented by youth employment projects which encourage young people to be "entrepreneurial" (an ultimately ambiguous concept) and aware of their "personhood" (Kelly and Harrison, 2006: 1). As in this thesis, these authors describe how the practice of challenging the "field of possibilities" for participation – in their case participation in the world of work as opposed to participation in an organisation or project – and ethic of 'starting from where the young person is at' opens up the spaces for critical reflection on the subjectivities of the self necessary for disrupting discourse. At the same time, Kelly and Harrison argue that these possibilities are limited by a combination of factors specifically the personal circumstances of different young people, the

norms of organisations, and the expectations of the world on both young people and youth work. As such the production of the ethical subject is both given impetus and curtailed by the dynamics of discourse.

The central argument proposed by these authors is that while ambiguities regarding what it means to be entrepreneurial and effective “worker of the world” (ibid) present opportunities for critical engaging with the boundaries of and rearticulating “personhood” (this term is used by Kelly and Harrison in place of subjectivities) the possibilities for being free or acting otherwise (performing in a way outside discursively reinforced behavioural norms) are limited. Young people in this piece are pushed towards self-awareness and to be ‘free’ – defined here as being entrepreneurial – but “to practise that freedom in limited ways” (Kelly and Harrison, 2006: 10). These “limited ways” are informed by the “processes of normalisation” (ibid) embedded within discourse and emerge during interactions between young people and adults where young people are both encouraged to voice dissent and their opinions and told not to be a “smart arse”.

Similarly, within the context of Urban Youth while, as I have discussed above, the ambiguities relating to ‘good’ participation presents possibilities for ethical transformation in that it facilitates self-subjectification and critical reflection there are limitations on the ways they can exercise these freedoms. While youth workers may orient themselves towards an ethical transformation through experimenting with the “field of possibilities” and problematizing their practice, in reality the extent to which they can alter their practices or approaches is limited. For instance, although youth workers may be unhappy with having to direct activities and make efforts to develop young people’s sense of agency, they are still compelled to maintain particular practices or modes of interaction. Crucially for this thesis, this ‘compulsion’ does not wholly come from specific policy demands or targets but is fuelled by the subjectivities relating to youth

and adulthood and what a 'productive' relationship looks like. For example, while Dave may problematize youth-adult relationships which assume adults know better - this comes across in his critique of youth policy as formulated without talking to any young people - his promotion of positive adult role models mean that the capacity for youth work participation strategy to challenge the position of adults relative to young people - as controllers for example - is limited.

Furthermore, like social education, the limitations to engaging with the "field of possibilities" are not just generated through the understandings of youth workers they are also supported by the attitudes of young people towards youth workers. For example, even though youth workers may attempt to problematize participation strategies which focus on keeping young people 'inside' rather than developing their capacity to self-direct activities, this is frequently not accepted by young people. Many of those who attend the club arrive expecting that activities will be provided for them to then engage in. Their understanding of youth workers is the adults who give them things to do and their attendance is based on this assumption. This is due to the fact that, as Spence et al (2006) note, the majority of young people who attend youth work projects, particular patch-based organisations similar to Urban Youth, do so in order to participate in activities and do not think too deeply about the position of organisations in their lives or the possibilities for changing the organisation. This limits the ability of youth workers to challenge the boundaries of youth engagement and "act otherwise" as, should the expectations of young people not be met, the youth workers may find themselves without a service user group. From a Foucauldian perspective this dynamic reflects the interplay between power relations and subjectivities - young people's actions are based on particular understandings and the ability of youth workers to challenge both these understandings and power relations while still retaining young people's interest and involvement is

questionable. This point is made by Smith (2009, in Harrison and Wise) who describes how:

There is [...] the continuing likelihood of roles being defined differently by people in the situation. While we may understand ourselves as 'educators', those we are attempting to work with might stubbornly define us as 'friends'. [...] until roles are defined and accepted there is likely to be conflict (Smith, 2009, in Harrison and Wise (eds.): 182)

This demonstrates how the possibilities for ethical transformation are limited by the subjectivities of youth workers as much as youth. In this instance young people's understandings of youth workers and youth work limits the capacity of youth workers to move their interactions outside the realms of 'banter' and 'casual conversation' (see: Williamson, 2009; Smith, 2009).

Connected to this limitation was the differential impact of the *specific* young people who youth workers engaged with. Although the majority of the young people were from similar class background and lived in close proximity to the club, they were a heterogeneous group. Resonating with the observations of Kelly and Harrison (2006), the "field of possibilities" for critical reflection were engaged with more easily by some young people than others. At Urban Youth this tension emerged during the drama session on Fridays. These sessions were part of a larger theatrical project which encouraged young people to write, design and produce a play which would then be staged to the public. Like the project analysed by Kelly and Harrison (2006) and approaches assessed by Prout (2000) the purpose of the drama project was to encourage young people to openly reflect on their abilities – in this instances their ability to act, to write

and to direct a dramatic project - and exert a "care for the self" - Kelly and Harrison address this in terms of 'rearticulating personhood' whereas Prout uses the term 'self-realisation'. Moreover, the absence of a strict formula for how drama sessions were run - they varied from week to week depending on what young people had said they'd like to do in the preceding session - opened up the possibility for 'acting otherwise' as there was no fixed format imposed by youth workers.

From a Foucauldian perspective the drama project is a good example of how youth workers facilitate the practice of freedom through encouraging young people to critically reflect, to actively consider what they should do and how they should act within this space (subjectification) and to consider the possibility of acting otherwise. The ambiguous nature of what the sessions should look like (although what they were intended to achieve was fixed) left room for the types of critical reflection which, according to a Foucauldian approach, can facilitate the process of ethical transformation (see: Rabinow, 1994). However the reality of this process was significantly different and the potential for critically engaging with the "field of possibilities" depended heavily on the personalities and circumstances of attendees. While some of the young people took full advantage of the possibilities offered by the sessions, others withdrew from them and many stated that the sessions were either "boring" or did not engage in the session at all, instead playing on phones or talking about unrelated issues. Although the youth workers would position themselves in such a way as to open up the possibility for reconfiguration of the power relations between young people and adults - for example by encouraging young people to decide what they should do at following sessions - the understandings of some of the young people (specifically how they constructed their own subject-position as recipient of activities rather than producer of activities) and their unwillingness to take

advantage of these possibilities limited youth workers' capacity to fully disrupt these discursive relationships.

Here the potential for an ethical transformation towards a different youth-adult relationship is limited by the fact that not all young people respond well to being encouraged to take control of the activities. From a Foucauldian perspective this is due to the fact that young people's self-subjectification – the subject-positions and subject-functions they orient themselves towards – controls the youth-adult relationship towards a discourse wherein adults are in control. This is a reflection of the reproduction of discursively constituted relations of power between subjects by subjects; in this instance the power relations which position the young person as a passive recipient of participation activities provided and controlled by adults. The internalisation of these by particular young people means, as Smith (2009) notes that young people are resistant to efforts by youth workers to renegotiate the roles within discourse prescribed to each.

These instances raise a fundamental question mark over the possibility of engendering an ethical transformation in youth work. Although the ambiguous nature of participation facilitates critical reflection, it is still embedded within a particular discourse and as such, according to a Foucauldian perspective, the potential for ethical transformations are limited. The combination of discursive dynamics (specifically the productive nature of discourse), expectations of young people (and their subjectification of youth workers) and the differential impact of young people who did not take advantage of the possibilities for critical engagement restricted the ability of youth workers to construct an ethical practice. In the case of the drama session, the interactions between young people and youth workers in fact served to reinforce the tensions between the subjectification of youth workers as providers of activities and controllers of space and young people as a distinct, heterogeneous group with their own interests and voice.

Arguably there are limitations to the extent to which youth workers can achieve the type of ethical participative relationship – where young people's personhood is recognised and developed and where young people play a more 'controlling' role in the direction organisations take – that they would like to achieve. For example, as the consultation about how to spend Children in Need funding indicates, whilst youth workers may attempt to develop young people's sense of agency through requesting that they control the distribution of funds, there are limitations on how 'free' young people can be. In order to ensure that the money is spent on things that will benefit the collective the youth workers have to intercede, thereby implicitly curtailing young people's agency. This tension is described by Smith (1980). Recounting the story of organisation of an ice-skating trip by a group of young people, Smith argues that even though the young people had instigated the project the organisation and planning inevitably needed to be guided by adult youth workers in order to ensure the trip was successful. As Smith states:

One of the most difficult times for [youth] workers using this approach is when things appear to be going wrong. Does the worker stride in and save the day or does s/he remain in an enabling role even if it means the thing the members are organising fails? In some cases the experience of failure may do more harm than good, in others it can be a valuable experience. (Smith, 1980: 22)

In terms of the production of an ethical practice Smith's observation raises an important question. How much is the potential for acting otherwise and disrupting discourse limited by the need to achieve specific ends? This point is considered by Kelly and Harrison (2006), Williamson (2007) and Jeffs and Banks

(1999). Each of these authors highlights how, regardless of youth workers' efforts to engender critical reflection and "care for the self" the achievement of particular demands may require youth workers to direct young people rather than cede control. As such although youth workers may have the potential to construct an ethical practice due to the ambiguities within the discourse of their practice, the possibilities for such ethical transformations are limited by external factors. Jeffs and Banks (1999) allude to this tension in their analysis of the need for youth workers to be 'controllers' stating that:

However great the desire to foster imagination and teach via 'novelty, excitement, fun, a chance to explore new things' (Jephcott, 1942:67), youth workers have to exercise a measure of control [...] they need to temper their optimism (Jeffs and Banks, 1999, in Banks (ed.): 97)

At the same time such an argument is only legitimate if the disruption of youth-adult relationships is interpreted as emblematised by the adult becoming passive. As the 'facilitators' role – whereby adults facilitate the development of agency but do not fully cede control – suggests, this reading is not entirely accurate. As Prout (2000) and O'Donoghue et al (2002) both note, renegotiating the position of young people relative to adults – what a Foucauldian perspective would identify as a disruption of power relations – does not necessarily involve inverting the controlling role completely. This places a question mark over the supposed limitation that the need to achieve particular goals presents. Moreover, reassessing the validity of this limitation provides a further example of how the renegotiation of discourse does not necessarily involve changing procedures – I have already noted how the same approaches can manifest in vastly different discourses – thereby reinforcing the argument that ethical transformations

involve more than switching approaches, they involve a reconsideration and disruption of the discourse that produced these approaches.

Conclusion

Once again this chapter highlights the discursive tensions, ambiguities and possibilities in youth work. Using findings from fieldwork I illustrate how participation within youth work discourse can be interpreted as both targeted at developing young people's sense of agency and at preventing their exclusion. These interpretations reflect very different relations of power between and understandings of youth and adults and produce an at best ambiguous image of best practice. That said, appropriating a Foucauldian conception of the construction of the ethical subject, these ambiguities and tensions also present possibilities for disrupting discursive power relations and challenging subjectivities and the boundaries of discourse. Without a concrete image of 'good' participation (i.e. without a clear sense of their and young people's subjectivity within discourse) youth workers have to critically engage and problematize their approaches. From a Foucauldian perspective this opens up the possibilities for power relations to be challenged and an ethical transformation initiated.

However, due to the nature of discourse, there are limitations on this transformation. As I noted in Chapter 2, the subject is also controlled by discourse through governmentality. At Urban Youth, the subjectification of youth workers and young people (for example) towards particular subject-positions and subject-functions within discourse may reinforce the power relations that youth workers are attempting to resist. An example of this is the drama project wherein the subject-position attributed to youth workers by the actions of young people (through remaining passive or being resistant to taking control of the project) reinforces the discourse of youth-adult relations that youth workers are attempting to unsettle. Relating this back to the key arguments of the thesis,

this illustrates how the possibilities for the production of an ethical practice emergent in the 'lived' experience of youth work (through the formation towards an ambiguous discourse of 'good' youth work) may not be actualised due to both the subject-position, subject-function and self-subjectification of youth workers and young people in this discourse.

Conclusion: Producing ethical youth work

Introduction

This thesis began as an exercise in producing a more nuanced explanation for what potentially makes youth work ethical. In the introduction I argued that youth work is ethical in that the ambiguity of the discourse of ethical practice it projects – what subject-positions are, relations between subjects should be, what the goals of subject-interactions are – and this presents opportunities for disrupting unequal relations of power between practitioner and service user groups. This follows a Foucauldian model of the ethical subject as characterised by the capacity to transform discourse. This allowed me to indicate how the discourse of ethical youth work organisations was ambiguous in the models of 'good' practice – in terms of practitioner-service user relations – it advocated. Applying four different potential sub-discourses of 'good' practice produced through the discourse of youth work I showed how optimal youth work-young person relations were understood multiple ways. The co-existence of these sub-discourses meant that the subject of the youth worker, the young person and what counted as positive relations between the two was ambiguous. This I argued opens up space from the subjectivities relating to practitioners and service users to be challenged.

At the same time, the thesis also highlighted the limitations on these opportunities. In particular it illustrated the impact of governmentality on practitioners' ability to disrupt subjectivities and power relations embedded in discourse. This discussion emphasised how – as products of discourse – practitioners and service users were governed by the subjectivities embedded in discourse. As such, even where practitioners' recognised unequal relations of power and attempted to disrupt them, they would reproduce them implicitly through their actions. The thesis also recognised how unequal relations of power

where also reproduced by service users' expectations and understandings of practitioners.

Having explored this in depth over the preceding chapters I now want to provide a brief overview of the thesis as a whole, evaluating what it adds to current debates as well as its limitations. I will then conclude by identifying the future research opportunities that the thesis findings present.

Overview

Based on the brief review in the Introduction I indicated two key issues that the thesis would explore. First, I stated that the thesis would provide a more nuanced explanation of what was ethical about youth work, based on a Foucauldian reading of ethics as the disruption of power relations and discourse. As well as further supporting the focus (in the writing of Young and Sercombe for example) on relations between practitioners and service users rather than specific procedures, I described how I would extend this discussion to consider more deeply what 'being ethical' looked like. Moving away from a more procedures-oriented understanding, as I outlined in **Chapter 2**, I applied a Foucauldian understanding of ethics. This understanding conceptualised 'being ethical' as challenging unequal relations of power and disrupting the discourse that produced such relations. From a Foucauldian perspective, what makes youth work ethical is not necessarily that it was more 'equal' (see: Young, 1999; NYA, 1999) or that it received its mandate from service users (see: Sercombe, 1997). Rather youth work is ethical in that the discourse – the position of subjects relative to one another and subjectivities – it advocates is ambiguous. This, applying Foucault, potentially affords fluidity which opens up possibilities for practitioners to challenge unequal relations of power. While such possibilities are also limited by discourse, their existence can be understood as what characterises youth work as ethical.

The second task I set the thesis was to show what the possibilities for youth workers to behave ethically (in a Foucauldian sense) and to actualise these possibilities. In practice this required an investigation into whether the requisite discursive ambiguities existed as well as considering the capacity of practitioners to take advantage of these ambiguities. I showed this by identifying how the overarching discourse of youth work produced multiple subjectivities of and systems of relations between practitioners and young people, each of which spoke to a different understanding of ethical practice. Highlighting the discursive ambiguities in this way also helped illustrate further how the dynamics of being ethical were more complex than selecting one set of procedures over another.

To fulfil this second point I conducted single case study analysis of an informal youth work organisation (Urban Youth). The rationale behind this case selection and methodology were outlined in **Chapter 3 part 1**. Applying four different sub-discourses of positive youth work (outlined in **Chapter 3 Part 2**). These sub-discourses – critical pedagogy, social conditioning, developing agency, preventing – each produced different understandings of youth workers' and young people's subjectivities, subject-positions and subject-functions in youth work discourse. As such each projected different understandings of what ethical youth work practice should look like. Moreover, none of the sub-discourses was resolutely ethical, each conveyed power relations between practitioners and service users which were at times equal and unequal. Furthermore, each model was a legitimate interpretation of what youth work practice should achieve based on how 'youth' was conceptualised within discourse. In this way the four sub-discourses showed neither more 'equal' relations between practitioners and service users nor shaping their mandate according to what service users want or need automatically makes youth work organisations 'ethical' or devoid of unequal relations of power.

The four sub-discourses were then applied to policy textwork (**Chapter 4**) and fieldwork at a patch-based youth club in Nottingham (**Chapters 5 and 6**). This shows how the discourse of youth work and the types of relationships that would be considered positive are ambiguous. Comparing with the Foucauldian understanding of what it means to be ethical outlined in **Chapter 2** I argued that the co-existence of the four sub-discourses in the overarching discourse of youth work indicated that this discourse was fundamentally ambiguous in the understanding of 'good' practice it advocated. This, I argued, opens up possibilities for practitioners to consider more deeply the discourse they are framed by and, potentially, critically engaging in or disrupting the boundaries of that discourse. The dynamics of this is outlined in depth in **Chapters 5 and 6**. At the same time, I also noted that applying Foucauldian logic indicates the limitations on practitioners to disrupt discourse and destabilise unequal relations of power.

Evaluation and contribution

According to Wagner (1993), empirical research should be principally evaluated not in terms of 'truth' but in terms of 'ignorance'. The predominant questions that an evaluation of a piece of empirical research should ask are "How far beyond ignorance does this work take us?" and "Compared with what we don't know without it, in what ways can this work help us know more?" (Wagner, 1993: 16) Applying this logic, the thesis's conclusions should be summarised and assessed in terms of what they add to existing knowledge and debate rather than whether they are irrefutable (I will outline the gaps in the research subsequently).

Overall, the thesis carries both conceptual and empirical benefits. Conceptually, it both reinforces and extends existing explanations for why youth work has become considered as ethical. Moving beyond the positioning of youth work organisations' presumed 'equality' or responsiveness to their service user

population as what makes them ethical I propose a new interpretation derived from Foucault's work. This approach argues that it is the opportunities for challenging unequal relations of power that the discourse of youth work presents that make organisations ethical not the procedures it advocates or the level of control it affords service users. Such an interpretation provides a more nuanced explanation to the issues raised by Williamson (1997; 2007) and Jeffs and Banks (1999) who argue that while shaping their practices around the wishes of service users might appear more ethical it could also engender a relationship where service users perspectives are not challenged and lead to permissive practitioner approaches which, according to Williamson (1997) strike of 'benign indifference' or 'malign neglect'. Thus the thesis provides a greater insight into the tensions and difficulties associated with 'being ethical' in youth work.

The research evidence also provides a critical insight into the discursive roots of youth workers approaches and the role of subjectivities relating to both youth and adulthood in producing the discourse of ethical youth work. Furthermore, in its considerations of the dynamics of social education and participation strategies in youth work, the thesis findings provide an important perspective on the tensions associated with social educational practices – in particular those informed by critical pedagogy – and the conflicts which occur as youth workers try to enable young people. In doing so the thesis contributes further evidence to the discussions of commentators such as Banks (1999; 2011), Williamson (1997; 2005; 2007), Harrison and Wise (2009) and Sercombe (1997; 2010).

The thesis also illustrates further the potential applications of Foucault's later work in social policy debates. While much has already been made of Foucault's work on governmentality (see for example: Dean, 2010; Thomson, 2001; Brandon, 2005), less attention has been paid to his theory of ethics or ethical transformation; the work of Kelly and Harrison (2006) is a notable exception to this. In the absence of this, the thesis acts as a useful example of how

Foucault's later work can assist our understanding of the dynamics of practitioner-service user relations as well as the possibilities for resisting unequal relations of power in this context.

Blank spots and blind spots

Nonetheless, despite the positive aspects of this research, it does have its weaknesses. Here I am going to divide these into 'blank spots' and 'blind spots'. This follows Wagner's (1993) discussion of the limitations of empirical educational research. 'Blank spots' are defined as "what [researchers] know enough to question but not answer"; 'blind spots' are defined as "what [researchers] don't know well enough to even ask about or care about" (Wagner, 1993: 16). Importantly, the process of identifying blank and blind spots is not intended to undermine the research in its entirety but to provide a more nuanced picture of, in Wagner's phrasing, how far beyond ignorance the material presented in the work takes us (ibid). Ultimately this is not an exercise in detraction but in indicating what the research does/does not do. This is useful both due to the necessary caveats to applying the research it highlights and the avenues for future research it presents.

Blank spots

The blank spots of this thesis divide into two key groups – issues that are not fully explored due to the focus of the thesis and answers that the empirical evidence does not provide. In effect blank spots amount to 'what the thesis does not tell us' and the areas where further information is required to answer certain questions. As Wagner (1993) notes, blank spots represent research areas "that have not been investigated as adequately as we would like" (Wagner, 1993: 17). In practice blank spots are shaped by the research design and methodology. By orienting the research towards a particular area over another or by selecting a particular methodological approach the researcher inevitably excludes certain information or issues thereby creating blank spots.

The most obvious blank spot in this thesis is the perspective of the service user. As the predominant focus from the start was how the discourse manifested in the images of ethical practice projected by policy and practitioner approaches/statements the views and opinions of the young people themselves have been left under-theorised. While interactions between youth workers and young people were recorded in some depth and the position of young people within discourse was obviously given a great deal of consideration – in line with the Foucauldian theoretical framework – the voices of young people themselves have not been explored. The rationale behind omitting these voices was that I felt their inclusion would make this a very different study. My predominant interest throughout was the interplay between subjectivities relating to young people – outlined in the two models of youth and adulthood in Chapter 3 – and the discourse of ethical youth work produced through youth work policy and practice. While, as I note below, this is definitely an area for further investigation, in light of the thesis' discursive focus, the omission of the views of young people themselves does not undermine the analysis.

The second blank spot relates to the differential impact of youth workers' professional status on their approaches. Although this is dealt with to an extent – youth workers' views and practices are framed by their personal and professional experiences – I was not able to compare the individual professional experiences of youth workers and the impact this had on Urban Youth as a collective in any great depth. Again this was largely due to the locus of the analysis – I was principally aiming to provide a robust insight into the interplay between subjectivities relating to youth and adulthood, power relations and discourse which could then be used as a basis for a broader conceptual discussion. Because of this there was less scope for comparing the differential impact of individual youth workers' professional backgrounds or status within the case study group itself. Nonetheless, the fact that youth workers' – such as

Tommy and Dave for example – made open comparisons between their prior work and Urban Youth professional experience clearly has an impact on their thinking. Although it was beyond the scope of this study to explore this sufficiently, it is an area that deserves further consideration.

The third blank spot within this study is the difference between the lived experience of statutory and non-statutory organisations or between different types of youth organisation. As the focus of this study was the lived experience of non-statutory organisations and the methodology followed an interpretative, "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) strategy, the scope for comparing across different organisations was limited without sacrificing descriptive and analytic depth. The decision to opt for the depth rather than generalizability was informed by the methodological writing of commentators such as Yin (2009), Geertz (1973) and Atkinson et al (2001). These methodologists argue that, although it does not provide information on differential impact across other cases, single case study and ethnographic research – such as this project – provides the depth and detail necessary for substantial conceptual analysis. This can be then used to inform robust, albeit not fully generalizable, conclusions and develop our knowledge of the nuances of a particular phenomenon significantly. As it was these nuances that I was predominantly interested in, while the absence of a cross-organisation analysis is unfortunate, it was a necessary sacrifice.

Blind spots

If blank spots can be roughly categorized as 'what the thesis does not tell us' then blind spots are 'things the research was not designed to consider' or 'questions that were not anticipated at the beginning of the research project'. The distinction here is rooted in reviewer expectations. With blank spots, one might legitimately expect that the information not provided may have been should data have been collected or analysed differently; with blind spots, this

expectation is not wholly legitimate as the need for such information or even the existence of such information was not factored into the research design. Like blank spots, however, the existence of blind spots does not debilitate the research in question. As Wagner (1993) explains, research findings are "materials that provoke scientists to ask new questions [which can] illuminate blind spots" (Wagner, 1993: 16).

The key blind spot in this project was the impact of service user expectations on the capacity of practitioners to challenge discourse. While my initial focus was the impact of practitioners' assumptions and position within discourse on their capacity to be ethical, as Chapters 5 and 6 highlight, fieldwork evidence suggests that the expectations and actions of young people also reinforced discourse. Although, following the Foucauldian conception of discourse and power, I had considered that the actions of young people would have an impact on practitioners' approaches I did not anticipate that young people would restrict the disruption of discourse. Fortunately, due to my inductive approach to data-collection I was able to include some of this discussion in the analysis. That said it is still relatively under-theorised within the thesis and deserving of further investigation in future research.

Future applications and research possibilities

As a whole, the thesis extends existing discussions on what makes youth work ethical. The research evidence provides a more nuanced insight than existing explanations. It acts as an example of how Foucault's theory of ethics can give an indication of how practitioners in youth work organisations can be ethical. The theoretical approach in the thesis also gives an indication of the limitations on practitioners' capacity to challenge unequal relations of power and be ethical in the Foucauldian sense. Central to this is the effect of discourse on the subject's position, action and relationship with other subjects.

Given its robustness, the thesis highlights a number of areas where further research is necessary. Some of these have already been mentioned above. For example, the findings of this thesis could be compared with the experiences of statutory youth work organisations to see what impact this form of governmental interference had on the possibilities for the production of an ethical subject. Moreover, the differential impact of youth workers' experiences and professional status has also been left under-theorized. This does not detract from the positive aspects of this study but indicates potential aspects of the thesis which could be used as a basis for further research.

Bibliography

- Adair, J. G. (1984), "The Hawthorne effect: A reconsideration of the methodological artefact", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 69, no. 2, pp. 334-345**
- Akom, A.A., Cammarota, J., and Ginwright, S. (2009) "Youthtopias: Towards a New Paradigm of Critical Youth Studies", *Youth Media Report: The Profession Journal of Youth Media Field*, vol. 2, iss. 4, pp. 1-30**
- Alcock, P. (2010) "A strategic unity: defining the third sector in the UK", *Voluntary Sector Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 5-24**
- Alderson, P. (1995) *Listening to children: children, ethics and social research*, Barkingside: Barnardos**
- Amsler, S.S. (2011) "From 'therapeutic' to political education: the centrality of affective sensibility in critical pedagogy", *Critical Studies in Education*, vol. 52, no. 1, pp. 47-63**
- Arches, J., and Fleming, J., (2007) "Building our own monument: A social action group revisited", *Practice: Social Work in Action*, vol. 19, iss. 1, pp. 33-45**
- Arnett, J.J. (2001) "Conceptions of the Transition to Adulthood: Perspectives from Adolescence through Midlife", *Journal of Adult Development*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 133-143**
- Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., and Lofland, L. (eds.) (2001) *Handbook of Ethnography*, London: Sage**
- Banks, S., (ed.) (1999) *Ethical Issues in Youth Work*, London: Routledge**
- Barry, M. (ed.) (2005) *Youth Policy and Social Inclusion: Critical debates with young people*, Oxford: Routledge**

- Barzelay, M. (1993)** "The single case study as intellectually ambitious inquiry", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 305-318
- Baudelaire, C. (1964)** *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, translated by Jonathan Mayne, London: Phaidon
- Baxter, P., and Jack, S. (2008)** "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers", *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 544-599
- Becker, H. (1963)** *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: The Free Press
- Becker, H. (1971)**, *Sociological Work*, London: Allen Lane
- Behar, R. (1996)** *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*, Boston: Beacon Press
- Bellamy, C. (2002)** *The State of the World's Children 2003*, New York: UNICEF
- Board of Education (1939)** *In the Service of Youth*, London: HMSO. Available in the *informal education archives*:
http://www.infed.org/archives/gov_uk/circular1486.htm
- Board of Education (1944)** *Teachers and Youth Leaders. Report of the Committee appointed by the President of the Board of Education to consider the supply, recruitment and training of teachers and youth leaders*, London: HMSO
- Booton, F. (ed.) (1985)** *Studies in Social Education 1860-1890*, Hove: Benfield Press
- Borden, L. M., Perkins, D.F., Villarruel, F.A., and Stone, M.R. (2005)** "To participate or not to participation: That is the question", *New Directions for Youth Development*, Vol. 2005, Iss. 105, pp. 33-49

- Bragg, S. (2007), "‘Student voice’ and Governmentality: The production of enterprising subjects?", *Discourse: Studies in the Culture Politics of Education*, Vol. 28, Iss. 3, pp. 343-358**
- Brandon, T. (2005) "Empowerment, policy levels and service forums", *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 321-331**
- Brew, J. M. (1957) *Youth and Youth Groups*, London: Faber & Faber.**
- Brew, J. Macalister (1943), *In the Service of Youth: A practical manual of work amongst adolescents*, London: Faber**
- Brighenti, A.M. (2010), "At the Wall: Graffiti Writers, Urban Territoriality and the Public Domain", *Space and Culture*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 315-332**
- Broadhead, R. S., and Rist, R. C. (1976) "Gatekeepers and the Social Control of Social Research", *Social Problems*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 325-336**
- Brockliss, L., and Sheldon, N. (2012), *Mass Education and the Limits of State-Building, c. 1870-1930*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan**
- Brock-Utne, B. (1988) "Formal education as a force in shaping cultural norms relating to war and the environment", in: Westing, A.H. (ed.), *Cultural Norms, War and the Environment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press**
- Burchell, G., Gordon, C., and Miller, P. (eds.) (1991) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality (with two lectures by and interviews with Michel Foucault)*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press**
- Burney, E. (2009) *Making People Behave: Anti-social behaviour, politics and policy*, Devon: Willan Publishing**
- Burnham, P., Gilland Lutz, K., Grant, W., and Layton-Henry, Z. (2008) *Research Methods in Politics*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan**

- Campell, J. P., Maxey, V. A., and Watson, W. A. (1995)** "Hawthorne Effect: Implications for Prehospital Research", *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, Vol. 26, Iss. 5, pp. 590-594
- Cantle, T. (2001)** *Community cohesion: a report of the independent review team*, London: Home Office
- Clarke, J., Gewirtz, S., and McLaughlin, E. (2000)** *New Managerialism, New Welfare?*, London: Sage
- Clifford, J., and Marcus, G. (eds.) (1986)** *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Coffey, A. (1999)**, *The Ethnographic Self: fieldwork and the representation of identity*, London: Sage
- Cohen, S. (1980)** *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, London: Martin Robertson and Company Ltd
- Coleman, J. S. (1961)** *The adolescent society: the social life of the teenager and its impact on education*, Oxford: Free Press of Glencoe
- Coles, B. (1995)**, *Youth and social policy: youth citizenship and young careers*, London: UCL Press
- Connolly, W. E. (1993)** "Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault", *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 365-389
- Coussée, F., Bradt, L., Roose, R and Bouverne-De Bie, M (2010)** "The emerging social pedagogical paradigm in UK child and youth care: Deus ex machina or walking the beaten path?", *British Journal of Social Work*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 789-805

- Crawford, A. (2006) "Networked governance and the post-regulatory state?: Steering, rowing and anchoring the provision of policing and security", *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 449-479
- Creswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches*, 2nd edition, London: Sage
- Darder, A., Baltodano, M., and Torres, R.D. (2009) *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*, London; New York: Routledge
- Darling-Hammond, L., Aneesh, J., & Ort, S. (2002) "Reinventing high school: Outcomes of the Coalition Campus Schools Project" *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 39, pp. 639-673
- Dauphinée, E. (2007) *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press
- Davies, B. (1979) *From social education to social life and skills training: In whose interest?*, Leicester: National Youth Bureau. Available in the Informal education archives:
http://www.infed.org/archives/bernard_davies/davies_in_whose_interests.htm
- Davies, B. (1986) *Threatening Youth. Towards a national youth policy*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Davies, B. (1991), "The concept of agency: a feminist poststructuralist analysis", *Social Analysis*, vol. 30, pp. 42-53
- Davies, B. (1999) *From Voluntarism to Welfare State. A history of the Youth Service in England Volume 1: 1939-1979*, Leicester: Youth Work Press.
- Davies, B. (2005), "Youth Work: A Manifesto for our Times", *Youth and Policy*, No. 88, pp. 5-28

- Davies, B., and Gibson, A. (1967) *The Social Education of the Adolescent*, London: University of London Press
- Dean, M. (2010), *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London: Sage
- DeMarrais, K.B., and Lapan, S.D. (2004) *Foundations for research: methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*, Mahwah (NJ): L. Erlbaum Associates Ltd.
- Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*, London: Sage
- Department for Education and Employment (2000) *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*, London: The Stationary Office
- Department for Education and Employment (2001) *Transforming Youth Work: Developing youth work for young people*, London: The Stationary Office
- Department for Education and Skills (2002) *Transforming Youth Work - resourcing excellent youth services*, London: Department for Education and Skills/Connexions.
- Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Every Child Matters*, London: The Stationary Office
- Department of Education and Science (1969) *Youth and Community Work in the 70s. Proposals by the Youth Service Development Council* (The 'Fairbairn-Milson Report'), London: HMSO.
- Drakeford, M., and Williamson, H. (1998), "From Benign Neglect to Malign Indifference? Housing and Young People", *Research Highlights in Social Work*, Iss. 32, pp. 183-203
- Dreyfus, H. L., and Rabinow, P. (1986) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (with an afterword by Michel Foucault)*, Brighton: Harvester Press Limited

- Durkheim, E. (1956) *Education and sociology*, translated by Fox, S.D., New York: Free Press
- Eckstein, H. (1975) "Case Study and Theory in Political Science", in: Greenstein, F. W., and Polsby, N. W. (eds.) *The Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 7, "Strategies of Inquiry", Reading (MA): Addison-Welsey
- Emerson, R.M., and Pollner, M. (1988), "On the Uses of Members' Responses to Researchers' Accounts", *Human Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 189-198
- Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., and Shaw, L. (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Emond, R. (2002) *Learning from their lessons: A study of young people in residential care and their experiences of education*, Dublin: Children's Research Centre
- Epstein, J. S. (ed.) (1998) *Youth Culture: Identity in a postmodern world*, Malden (MA): Blackwell
- Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, London; New York: Longman
- Fielding, M. (2004) "Transformative approaches to student voice: theoretical underpinnings, recalcitrant realities", *British Education Research Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 295-311
- Fine, G.A., and Holyfield, L. (1996) "Secrecy, Trust, and Dangerous Leisure: Generating Group Cohesion in Voluntary Organizations," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 59 No. 1 pp. 22-38
- Fine, M. (1986) "Why urban adolescents drop into and out of public high school", *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 87, 393-408

- Flint, J. (2004) "The responsible tenant: housing governance and the politics of behaviour", *Housing Studies*, Vol. 19, Iss. 6, pp. 893-909
- Flint, J., and Robinson, D. (eds.) (2008), *Community Cohesion in Crisis? New dimensions of diversity and difference*, Bristol: The Policy Press
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) "Five Misunderstandings about Case Study Research", *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 219-245
- Foucault, M. (1974) *The Order of Things: An archaeology of the human sciences* London: Routledge
- Foucault, M. (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage/Random House
- Foucault, M. (1981) *The will to knowledge: The history of sexuality vol 1* (R. Hurley, Trans.), Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Foucault, M. (1990), *The care of the self: The history of sexuality vol 3* (R. Hurley, Trans.) Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Foucault, M., and Faubion, J. D. (ed.) (1994) *The essential works of Michel Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, London: Penguin
- Foucault, M., and Rabinow, P. (ed.) (1994) *The essential works of Michel Foucault, Vol. 1: Ethics*, London: Penguin
- France, A., and Wiles, P. (1997), "Dangerous Futures: Social Exclusion and Youth Work in Late Modernity", *Social Policy & Administration*, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 59-78
- Fraser, N. (1989) *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Freeman, A. (1914) *Boy life and labour*, London: P. S. King and Son

- Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Friedenberg, E.Z. (1965) *The Dignity of Youth and Other Activism*, Boston: Beacon Press
- Furedi, F. (2009) *Socialisation as Behaviour Management and the Ascendancy of Expert Authority*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
- Furlong, A., and Cartmel, F. (1997) "Risk and uncertainty in the youth transition", *Young: The Nordic Review of Youth Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 3-20
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology*, Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice-Hall
- Garfinkel, H., Lynch, M., and Livingstone, E. (1981) "The work of a discovering science construed with materials from the optically discovered pulsar", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 11, pp. 131-158
- Geer, B. (1964), "First days in the field", in: Hammond, P.E. (ed.) *Sociologists at Work*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 372-298
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The interpretation of cultures*, New York: Basic Books
- Geertz, C. (1995) *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press
- Gerring, J. (2007) *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press
- Ginwright, S., Noguera, P and Cammarota, J. (2006) *Beyond Resistance: Youth Activism and Community Change – New Democratic Possibilities for Practice and Policy for America's Youth*, New York: Routledge

- Giroux, H. (2001) "Youth in a Suspect Society: Education Beyond the Politics of Disposability", *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 111-122
- Giroux, H. A. (2009) *Youth in a Suspect Society: Democracy or Disposability?*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave MacMillan
- Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, Garden City (NY): Doubleday
- Goode, E. (1996), "The ethics of deception in social research: A case study", *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 11-33
- Grace, G. (1995) *School Leadership*, London: Falmer Press
- Grusec, J.E., and Hastings, P.D. (2006) *Handbook of Socialization: Theory and Practice*, New York: The Guilford Press
- Hall, G. S. (1904) *Adolescence: its Psychology, and its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, New York: D. Appleton
- Hall, S., and Jefferson, T. (eds.) (1976) *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Sub-Cultures in Post-War Britain*, London: Hutchinson
- Hall, T., Coffey, A., and Williamson, H. (1999) "Self, Space and Place: Youth Identities and citizenship", *British Journal of the Sociology of Education*, vol. 20, Iss. 4, pp. 501-513
- Hammersely, M., and Atkinson, P. (2007), *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 2nd edition, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge
- Hammersley, M. (1992), *What's wrong with ethnography? Methodological explorations*, London: Routledge

- Hammersley, M., and Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in practice*, London: Routledge
- Harding, S. (1986), *The science question in feminism*, Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press
- Harland, K. (2001) "The challenges and potential of developing a more effective youth work curriculum with young men", *Child Care in Practice*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 288-300
- Harland, K., & McCready, S. (2007). Work with young men. In M. Flood, J. K. Gardiner, Harrison, R., and Wise, C. (eds.) (2009) *Working with Young People*, London: Sage
- Hart, R. (1995) "The right to play and children's participation" In *The Article 31 Action Pack*, published by PLAY TRAIN
- Henriques, B. (1933) *Club Leadership*, London: Oxford University Press.
- hooks, bell (1994) *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*, New York: Routledge
- hooks, bell (2000) *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*, Pluto Press
- Howes, D. (ed.) (1991) *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- Illich, I. (1971) *Deschooling Society*, Harmondsworth: Harper and Row
- Jeffs, T. and Smith, M. K. 'Individualization and youth work', *Youth and Policy*, vol.76 pp. 39-65. Available in the informal education archives:
- Jeffs, T. J. (1979) *Young People and the Youth Service*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Jeffs, T., and Smith, M. K. (eds.) (1987/2010) *Youth Work Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan
- Jones, C. (2002) "Voices from the Front Line: State social workers and New Labour", *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 31, pp. 547-562
- Kane, T. (2004) *The impact of after-school programs: Interpreting the results of four recent evaluations* [Working paper]. Retrieved 25 July 2012 from W. T. Grant Foundation Website: http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/usr_doc/After-school_paper.pdf
- Kelly, P. and Harrison, L. (2006) "'Don't be a smart arse': Young workers, individualization, and an ethic of enterprise in Jamie's Kitchen", in: *Sociology for a mobile world: TASA 2006. Proceedings of the annual conference of the Australian Sociological Association*, Sociological Association of Australia (TASA), Hawthorn, Vic., pp. 1-11
- Kidder, L.H., and Judd, C.N. (1986) *Research Methods in Social Relations*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Laurila, J. (1997), "Promoting research access and informant rapport in corporate settings: Notes from research on a crisis company", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 407-418
- Ledwith, M. (2001), "Community work as critical pedagogy: re-envisioning Freire and Gramsci", *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 171-182
- Leeson, C. (1917), *The Child and the War*, London: P.S. King and Son
- Levitas, R. (1996), "The concept of social exclusion: the new Durkheimian hegemony", *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 1

- Levitas, R. (1998) *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, London: MacMillan
- Liebow, E. (1967) *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*, Boston: Little Brown
- Lister, R. (1990), *The Exclusion Society: Citizenship and the Poor*, London: Child Poverty Action Group
- Lodge, C. (2005) "From Hearing Voices to Engaging in Dialogue: Problematising Student Participation in School Improvement", *Journal of Educational Change*, Vol. 6, pp. 125-146
- MacDonald, N. (2001) *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave MacMillan
- MacDonald, R. (ed.) (1997) *Youth, the 'Underclass' and Social Exclusion*, London: Routledge
- Malinowski, B. (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1961 ed.) New York: E.P. Dutton
- Marcus, G. (1998) *Ethnography through thick and thin*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Mason, J. (1996), *Qualitative researching*, London: Sage
- Masschelein, J., and Quaghebeur, K. (2005) "Participation for Better or for Worse?", *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 39, iss. 1, pp. 51-65
- Mayall, B. (2003) *Sociologies of Childhood and Educational Thinking*, London: Institute of Education, University of London

- Mayo, E. (1933), *The human problems of an industrial civilization*, New York: The MacMillan Company
- McCarney, R., Warner, J., Iliffe, S., van Haselen, R., Griffin, M., and Fisher, P. (2007) "The Hawthorne Effect: A randomised, controlled trial", *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, Vol. 7, No. 30
- McWilliam, E., Lather, P. and Morgan, W. (1996) *Field Work, Head Work, Text Work: a textshop in new feminist research*, Brisbane: Centre for Policy and Leadership Studies, Queensland University of Technology.
- Mead, M. (1928) *Coming of age in Samoa*, (1971 ed.) New York: William Morrow
- Mellin-Olsen, S. (1987) *The Politics of Mathematics Education*, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company
- Merton, B. (2007) *Good Youth Work: What youth workers do, why and how*, National Youth Agency Publications
- Miles, M. B., and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, London: Sage
- Millin, S. Shannon (1917) "Child life as a national asset", *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, Vol. 13 Part 116, pp. 301-316
- Ministry of Education (1960) *The Youth Service in England and Wales* ('The Albemarle Report'), London, HMSO.
- Mitra, D. L. (2005) "Adults Advising Youth: Leading while getting out of the way", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 520-553
- Montagu, L. (1954) *My club and I: the story of the West Central Jewish Club*, London: Neville Spearman/Herbert Joseph

- Mueller, R.B., Wunrow, J.J., and Einspruch, E.L. (2000) "Providing youth services through youth-adult partnerships: A review of the literature", *Reaching Today's Youth*, Vol. 4, pp. 37-48
- Murray, S.B. (2003), "A Spy, a Shill, a Go-between or a Sociologist: Unveiling the Observer in Participant Observation", *Qualitative Research*, Vol.3, No.3, pp. 377-395
- National Youth Agency (1999) "Ethical Conduct in Youth Work", *Statement of Values and Principles from the National Youth Agency*; reprinted in Harrison, R., and Wise, C., (2009) *Working With Young People*, London: Sage, pp. 16-25
- O'Donoghue, J. L., Kirshner, B., and McLaughlin, M. (2002) "Introduction: Moving youth participation forward", *New Directions for Youth Development - Special Issue: Youth Participation: Improving Institutions and Communities*, Vol. 2002, Iss. 96, pp. 15-26
- O'Donoghue, J.L., and Strobel, K.R. (2006), "Directivity and freedom: The role of adults in empowering youth activists" *Paper presented at the Society for Research on Adolescence Conference*, San Francisco, CA. March 23-26, 2006
- Park, R., and Burgess, E. (1925) *The City*, (1967 edition) Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Parsons, T. (1959) "The School Class as a Social System: Some of its functions in American Society", *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 297-318
- Parton, N. (1998) "Risk, Advanced Liberalism and Child Welfare: The need to rediscover uncertainty and ambiguity", *British Journal of Social Work*, vo. 28, no. 1, pp. 5-27
- Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, London: Sage

- Pease, B. and Pringle, K. (eds.), *International encyclopaedia men & masculinities*
London: Routledge
- Pike, K.L. (1954), *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behaviour*, Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics
- Pogrebin, M. (2003), *Qualitative Approaches to Criminal Justice*, London: Sage
- Popper, K. (1934) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1968 ed.), New York: Harper and Row
- Prout, A. (2000) "Children's participation: control and self-realisation in British late modernity", *Children & Society*, Vol. 14, Iss. 4, pp. 304-315
- Putnam, R. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Schuster
- Ranciere, J and Ross, K (trans.) (1991/9) *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, California: Stanford University Press
- Ratcliffe, P. (1999) "Housing inequality and 'race': some critical reflections on the concept of 'social exclusion'", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 1-22
- Ravitch, D. (2000) *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, New York: Simon and Schuster
- Reay, D. (2004) "Exclusivity, Exclusion, and Social Class in Urban Education Markets In the United Kingdom", *Urban Education*, Vol. 39, No. 5, pp. 537-560
- Robinson, D. (2005), "The Search for Community Cohesion: Key Themes and Dominant Concepts of the Public Policy Agenda", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 8, pp. 1411-1427

- Roche, J., Tucker, S., Thomson, R., and Flynn, R. (eds.) (2009) *Youth in Society: Contemporary theory, policy and practice*, 2nd edition, London: Sage
- Roethlisberger, F. J., and Dickson, W. (1939), *Management and the worker*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press
- Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of freedom: reframing political thought* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosseter, B. (1987). "Youth Workers as Educators" in: Jeffs, T. and Smith, M. (eds.) *Youth Work*, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd
- Russell, C. E. B. and Rigby, L. M. (1908) *Working Lads' Clubs*, London: Macmillan and Co.
- Russell, C. E. B., and Rigby, L. M. (1908) *Working Lads' Clubs*, London: MacMillan
- Schill, P.H. (1935) *The history of the Ardwick Lads' and Men's Club*, Manchester: J. Ellis Benson
- Sercombe, H. (1997) "The youth work contract", *Youth Studies Australia*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 17-21
- Sercombe, H. (1998) "Power, ethics and youth work", *Youth Studies Australia*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 18-23
- Sercombe, H. (2010) *Youth Work Ethics*, London; Los Angeles: Sage
- Serido, J., Borden, J. M., and Perkins, D., F. (2011) "Moving Beyond Youth Voice", *Youth and Society*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 44-63
- Skelton, T. (2008) "Research with children and young people: exploring the tensions between ethics, competence and participation", *Children's Geographies*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 21-36

Smith, M. (1980) *Creators not Consumers: Rediscovering Social Education*, NAYC Publications; available at informal education archives: <http://www.infed.org/archives/creators/index.htm>

Smith, M. (1988) *Developing Youth Work*, London: MacMillan

Smith, Mark K. (2007) "Aiming high for young people: the English ten year strategy for positive activities", *The encyclopaedia of informal education*

Spence, J., Devanney, C., with Noonan, K. (2006) *Youth Work: Voices of Practice – a research report by Durham University and Weston Spirit*, National Youth Agency Publications

Springhall, J. (1977) *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940*, Beckenham: Croom Helm

Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*, London: Sage

Stanley, M. (1890) *Clubs for Working Girls*, London: Macmillan (Reprinted in F. Booton (ed.) (1985) *Studies in Social Education 1860-1890*, Hove: Benfield Press.)

Statham, D. (1978) *Radicals in social work*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Strobel, K., Kirshner, B., O'Donoghue, J., and McLaughlin, M. (2008) "Qualities that attract urban youth to after-school settings and promote continued participation", *Teachers College Record*, vol. 110, no. 8, pp. 1677-1705

Taylor, M. (1996) "Between public and private: Accountability in voluntary organisations", *Policy and Politics*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 57-72

Taylor, M. (2000), "Communities in the Lead: Power, Organisational Capacity and Social Capital", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 5/6, pp. 1019-1035

- Taylor, T. (1987), "Youth workers as character builders: constructing a socialist alternative", in Jeffs, T., and Smith, M. K. (eds.) *Youth Work*, London: MacMillan
- Thomson, P. (2001) "How Principals Lose 'Face': A disciplinary tale of educational administration and modern managerialism", *Discourse: Studies in the Culture Politics of Education*, Vol. 22, Iss. 1, pp. 5-22
- Thomson, P. (2002) *Schooling the Rustbelt Kids: Making the difference in changing times*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books
- Thomson, R., and Holland, J. (2006), "Young people, social change and the negotiation of moral authority", *Children & Society*, Vol. 16, Iss. 2, pp. 103-115
- Thorne, B. (1980), "'You Still Takin' Notes?': Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent", *Social Problems*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 284-297
- Triofonas, P.P. (ed.) (2000) *Revolutionary Pedagogies: Culture Politics, Instituting Education and the Discourse of Theory*, New York; London: Routledge Falmer
- Triofonas, P.P. (ed.) (2003) *Pedagogies of Difference: Rethinking Education for Social Change*, New York; London: Palgrave Farmer
- Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field: On writing ethnography*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K.L., and Brady, H.E. (1995), *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press
- Verschelden, G., Coussée, F., Van de Walle, T and Williamson, H (eds.) (2009) *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in society* (M. Cole, Trans.) Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press

- Wagner, J. (1993) "Ignorance in Educational Research Or, How Can You *Not* Know That?", *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp. 15-23
- Ward, D., and Mullender, A. (1991), "Empowerment and Oppression: An Insoluble Pairing for Contemporary Social Work", *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 21-30
- Whyte, W. F. (1955) *Street Corner Society*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Wickström, G., and Bendix, T. (2000), "The 'Hawthorne Effect' – what did the original Hawthorne studies actually show?", *Scandinavian Journal of Work Environment Health*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 363-367
- Williamson, H. (1997) *Youth and policy: contexts and consequences: young men, transition and social exclusion*, London: Ashgate
- Williamson, H. (2007) *The Thoughts of Chairman How: A selection of columns written for 'Youth People Now' between January 2003 and December 2006*, National Youth Agency Publications/*Young People Now*
- Wolcott, H. F. (2002) *Sneaky Kid and its Aftermath: Ethics and intimacy in fieldwork*, Walnut Creek (CA): AltaMira Press
- Worley, C. (2005) "'It's not about race. It's about the community': New Labour and 'community cohesion'", *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 483-496
- Wyn, J., and White, R. (1997) *Rethinking Youth*, London: Sage
- Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and methods*, London: Sage
- Young, K. (1999) *The Art of Youth Work*, Dorset: Russell House Publishing

Zeldin, S. (2004) "Youth as Agents of Adult and Community Development: Mapping the processes and outcomes of youth engaged in organisational governance", *Applied Developmental Science*, vol. 8, iss. 2, pp. 75-90

Zeldin, S., Camino, L., and Mook, C. (2005) "The adoption of innovation in youth organisations: Creating the conditions for youth-adult partnerships", *Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 121-135

Annex A: Fieldnotes extract

Date/time: Friday, 17/09/2010, 5-7pm

Staff present: Tommy and Sarah

Volunteers present: Alisha

Number of young people: 7

Age range: 7-11

Activities: drama/play

The session follows on from the previous weeks; this time the young people are not watching films but trying to structure the play. When I arrive Tommy, Sarah and Alisha are standing around the countertop between the kitchen and arts area. Tommy explains to me that the session will be broken into two halves as the young people begin to arrive. The first half will be 'teambuilding' exercises and the second will be spent thinking up a script for the play. Tommy – who thought the young people should move away from thinking of characters last week – is leading the session.

The team-building exercises take place in the hall. They involve passing/catching three soft balls (first in groups of three and then in one big group) and then doing '20 second objects' in groups of three. For this each group tries to 'construct' an object using their bodies while the other two groups try to guess what the object is. There is a youth worker in each of the groups, again highlighting how youth workers do not separate themselves from activities but try to actively take part. That said there is always a boundary and within the groups the youth workers (and Alisha, the young volunteer) frequently end up taking a managing/controlling role.

The activities work quite well though there are a few moments where the young people forget that they are meant to be working together on a specific activity and devolve to playing games. This is especially the case with Jason, who wants to do wrestling again and gets annoyed when Tommy tries to bring him back on task. This again points to a tension between creating an open space on certain nights and have more structured activities. In the minds of some of the young people, it appears, the club takes on a dual identity – between “normal club” (i.e. less structure) and the more structured sessions.

In the second half of the session the group moves into the computer room. Tommy and Alisha are trying to get the young people to write the script for the play. As a young volunteer rather than a youth worker (and as a former member of the club) Alisha has a bit more space to tell the others to shut up and listen (which she does). Tommy is more careful, erring towards an ‘anti-oppressive’ practice to limited success. He is getting visibly frustrated with some of the young people’s inability to pay attention to the task (particular Tony who spends most of the session telling Jason to stop farting). The fact that the young people keep drifting off means that the script doesn’t get very far...

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	M:	F:
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Workers Present

Name	P/V	Time	Hrs	Name	P/V	Time	Hrs

Session Report

Significant Occurrences:	Mini Evaluation:
--------------------------	------------------

Warnings Issued:	
Completed by: Signed by:	Date:

*For paid tick = yes; o = not yet; * = doesn't have to (agreement needed)

Annex C: Urban Youth Floor Plan