

Utopian Youth Justice?

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Public Works**

Part One: Context Statement

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Abstract

This Context Statement constitutes Part One of a two-part submission towards a PhD by Public Works, Part Two consisting of nine publications in the area of youth crime and youth justice. As these various works were written for distinct purposes and focused on a more diverse group of subjects than would be the case for a conventional PhD, the Context Statement aims to 'glue' them together by situating them within a broader political and theoretical context. It also seeks to provide firmer intellectual foundations than was evident in the original works, by reviewing in detail relevant literature, outlining the methods adopted in the studies, subjecting each publication to systematic critique and reflecting on my own development as a researcher. Finally, the Context Statement defines what I consider to be the significant contribution to contemporary analyses of youth justice policy that the public works represent.

The Context Statement is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Statement with a short account of how the publications came to be written and of my growing awareness of the need to give the applied work I was doing a more critical edge. Chapter 2 outlines the academic context for the research, reviewing the literature around four broad themes: the victimisation of children and young people; the relationship between schools, school exclusion and youth crime; the links between social exclusion and crime; and the preventative turn in youth Justice policy from the late 1990s. Chapter 3 reflects on the nature, scope and limitations of applied social research and considers different approaches that may fall under this heading, with consideration to their political and theoretical implications. Against this backdrop, it then describes and evaluates the range of methods employed in the studies on which the public works were based. Chapter 4 critically reviews each of the public works in turn, considering their focus, validity, impact and significance, and identifies the continuities between them as well as emergent themes. Chapter 5 concludes by re-situating the key findings from the works within the broader policy and theoretical context outlined in the literature review and demonstrating why, collectively, these public works constitute an original and coherent contribution to knowledge.

The public works submitted towards this PhD straddle the semi-connected worlds of youth crime and youth justice. They contribute to a growing appreciation of the victimisation of children amongst criminologists and others, emphasising that victimisation and offending correlate less because of the characteristics of the individuals and families involved than because of the restricting circumstances characteristic of late modern capitalist societies. The analysis of preventative strategies, in particular mentoring, whilst revealing examples of success and plausible explanations for this, also questions the extent to which such 'solutions' to the crime problem can 'work', given that they are predominantly geared towards changing individuals and so can have little bearing on the disadvantageous social and economic circumstances these individuals face. This said, utopianism may not be the worst thing in an uncertain world.

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There are many people who have contributed in various ways to this project – former tutors and friends, former colleagues, all the young people and professionals I have interviewed or worked with – but, mercifully for them perhaps, they are most unlikely to ever see it. I will therefore focus on the less fortunate.

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I dedicate the thesis to my late and much missed Dad.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There was no plan!

The public works to which this Context Statement relate constitute, collectively, a broad ranging series of applied social research studies investigating on the one hand, young people's involvement in and experience of crime and related problems and, on the other, interventions designed and intended to prevent and reduce youth crime and related problems. They include studies of children and young people's experiences of youth crime and victimisation in high-crime contexts, of statutory and non-statutory programmes designed to meet the needs of and reduce the risks posed by children and young people in such contexts, and, more broadly, of the contemporary politics of youth crime and youth justice.

It is fair to say that at no point in the commission of these studies did it occur to me that I was doing a PhD. There was no plan beyond conducting and disseminating the research in hand. In this sense, the imposition of coherence on this body of work is necessarily retrospective and is not without problems. How, for example, does one account for and justify the methodological jungle represented in my work, a messy mixture of quantity and quality, of questionnaires, focus groups, variously constructed interviews, of primary and secondary sources, of observed 'real' life and foot deep 'case files'? How to review the literature when a good deal of it was read or indeed written after the studies took place? How to pinpoint the singular contribution I have made to knowledge when the goals of the research presented here have typically reflected the concerns of policy makers, funding bodies and senior colleagues more than my own?

On the other hand, the opportunity to address these sorts of questions, to make sense of my work and to ponder what it has all been for, is appealing. Whether running cross-tabulations in SPSS or trawling through interview transcripts for common themes, I have always enjoyed the moments in a research project where patterns start to reveal themselves in the data and some sense of 'what these findings tell us begin to emerge. Accordingly, I see this Context Statement as a space for conducting a kind of meta-analysis of data collected over several years in different ways, for joining the dots between findings which once seemed specific in time and place, for situating this analysis in a broader historical and theoretical context and, along the way, for defining my contribution to the field. Over these next few pages, I will attempt to explain how this is to be done. I begin, however, in the more recent past.

Back to the future

"Verdict on UK riots: people need a 'stake in society', says report" (Fiona Bawdon in The Guardian, 28th March 2012).

The riots which broke out across English cities and towns following the shooting dead of Mark Duggan in July 2011 understandably generated an ever growing number of analyses of their causes. In March 2012, the official report by the 'Riots Communities and Victims Panel' concluded "that the riots were fuelled by a range of factors including a lack of opportunities for young people, poor parenting, a failure of the justice system to rehabilitate offenders, materialism and suspicion of the police" (Bawdon, 2012).

Fortunately, or so it might seem, the British Government appeared to have taken on board such factors and have fashioned a plan to address them. Thus, “the government is taking action across the board to help secure healthy communities and strong families and so give all children real opportunities, through:

- measures to support families including assistance for single parents to get off benefits and return to work, to help prevent marriage and family breakdown and to deal with such breakdown, if it does occur, with the least possible damage to any children....
- a determined assault on social exclusion - new ways of ensuring that all have a chance to share in the benefits of economic success;
- policies to help children achieve at school....; steps to tackle truancy and prevent so many exclusions; study support out of school hours; and better links between schools and business to help young people make the transition to adult working life;
- providing real opportunities for jobs, training, and leisure... through stable, sustainable economic growth and through positive leisure opportunities, including those which involve young people themselves in preventing crime; and
- action to tackle drug misuse with new initiatives in the criminal justice system.”

Like the ‘Riots Communities and Victims Panel’, the government observed that “parents have a crucial role in preventing their children committing criminal and anti-social acts” and “sets out ways of reinforcing parents’ responsibilities.” In keeping with (former) Minister of Justice Kenneth Clarke’s determination to prioritise tackling reoffending, the government said it “will extend the range of community penalties for young offenders”, with new interventions “combining punishment, rehabilitation and reparation to change offending behaviour and prevent further crime.”

This multi-layered approach appeared promising but there is a problem. All the quotations are 15 years old. They come from ‘No More Excuses’, a White Paper issued by the newly elected Labour Government in 1997 (Home Office, 1997). Moreover, that government was true to its word. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave the youth justice system a new statutory aim, the prevention of reoffending; new structures, a Youth Justice Board overseeing multi-agency Youth Offending Teams; new objectives including “confronting young offenders with the consequences of their offending”, “encouraging reparation to victims by young offenders” and “helping young offenders to develop a sense of personal responsibility”; new modes of punishment including Formal Reprimands, Final Warnings, Parenting, Action Plan and Detention and Training Orders ; and new ways of working: structured risk assessment, evidence based practice, parenting programmes, enhanced bail supervision and remand management, restorative justice, cognitive behavioural therapy and mentoring (ibid.). Which rather begs the question...

Where did it all go wrong?

My early career as a researcher of youth crime and youth justice began amidst this minor revolution in the official system for dealing with young offenders, indeed I consider myself complicit in the enterprise and at one point even ‘a carrier of the faith’. My first major role in the field was as part of an action-research based study of the origins of inter-group and inter-racial violence amongst young people which commenced some time before the publication of ‘No More Excuses’ (Home Office, 1997) and resulted in a strategy that could have served for a model of the ‘joined up’, multi-agency approach to addressing youth crime and associated problems espoused by New Labour (see

Porteous, 1998a (Submission 1) and also Pitts and Porteous, 1998). As the government invested significant resources into youth justice development projects designed to test and establish 'what works?', I and my colleagues joined with many others in 'hoovering' up some of the funding available to evaluate the many new initiatives underway (see Porteous, 1998b (Submission 5), Porteous 1999 (Submission 6); also Porteous, 2002a-d; Porteous, Melrose & Toon, 2001). I also participated in a Home Office funded study of one key area of governmental concern, the links between school exclusion and youth offending (Berridge et al., 2001 (Submission 2)) and in comparative research drawing on EU funds to identify and disseminate good practice (Porteous, 1999b; Pitts and Porteous, 2006, 2005).

There was no single moment of revelation. Over time however, the somewhat positivist zeal with which my younger self had approached these studies was displaced by a more critical disposition towards New Labour's reforms. This 'loss of faith' was of course informed by the growing chorus of critical commentary from criminologists and others old and wise enough to see the 'new youth justice' (Goldson, 2000) in historical perspective. In 1999 for example, Muncie observed that far from being a radical reinvention, the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act was "a logical continuation of policies that have been adopted by numerous youth justice teams in the previous decade" under which "the sole purpose of youth justice (had become) one of simply delivering a cost-effective and economic product" (1999: 290). In similar vein in 2001, my then colleague John Pitts lambasted the 'zombification of youth justice' under New Labour through which he suggested practitioners were being trained in a form of 'korrectional karaoke' which reflected political imperatives (to appear tough on crime) rather than the needs of young people and so undermined rather than strengthened professionals' capacity to respond effectively to these needs. In a Foucauldian critique of the 'risk factor prevention paradigm' underpinning New Labour's strategy, Armstrong argued that the:

"domination of the research and policy agendas in youth crime by a discourse of 'risk', and its assessment and surveillance by interventions into the family and community life of the poor, is part of a wider process of governmentality which has placed the individual within a disciplinary nexus of risk which incorporates and also regulates the families, schools and communities of the poor" (2004: 113).

From this perspective, what I had once considered to be a benign if limited way of helping out young people in trouble, mentoring, is seen to 'work' in a quite different way. Its goal is not so much transformation as regulation, not so much support as constraint. And if like me you are or have been an applied social researcher whose work has been framed (and funded) by the dominant agendas, it is difficult not to feel implicated in this 'process of governmentality' (Foucault, 1991) and to reflect on whether or not this is a good place to be.

As a result, my more recent writings on youth crime and youth justice demonstrate a closer affinity with such critiques of New Labour policy as well as with the longer and broader tradition of critical criminology in the UK and beyond. In what with hindsight was a premature account of its rise and fall in youth justice, for example, I re-surveyed the increasingly underwhelming evidence of mentoring's effectiveness as a tool for tackling youth offending and related problems and concluded that "whatever does explain the rise of mentoring in youth justice under New Labour it was not knowledge that it worked with young offenders better than other forms of intervention" (Porteous,

2007a: 23 (Submission 8)). In a contribution to an edited collection on 'Growing Up With Risk' (Thom et al., 2007), I argued with a nod to labelling theory (Becker, 1963) that:

“the ‘new youth justice’ has failed to stem the growing number of children and young people in custody but has succeeded in increasing the number of relatively low risk first and second time offenders with whom work is done in apparent ignorance of the lessons of the past (Porteous, 2007b: 274 (Submission 9)).

Elsewhere, in a book chapter that developed out of primary research examining young people’s experiences as victims of street crime in an east London borough, I observed that:

“Whilst the history of youth justice is one of balancing concern for the welfare (needs) of young people with concern about their behaviour (deeds), the focus has remained for the most part on the young offender and even though it has been long understood that the most prolific offenders are themselves very likely to have been victims, of family violence and child abuse as well as of crimes in public spaces, still the emphasis has been on to what extent this excuses and explains their offending” (Porteous, 2008a: 23 (Submission 4)).

Tying the knot or completing the jigsaw

The Context Statement presents the opportunity to draw the different strands of (some of) my work in the last fifteen years together and to tie together the arguments contained within them. Alternatively, one could say that the aim here is to put together the pieces of a jigsaw represented by the various works submitted such that an overall picture becomes clear. The regulations of course call for a more formal and altogether less metaphorical project. Whilst it was not how I initially envisioned it, the most appropriate structure adopted for contextualising and examining the significance of my work has been that of a more conventional PhD thesis.

Accordingly, the Context Statement is organised into four further chapters as follows. Chapter 2 reviews relevant academic literature in the broad area of youth justice policy within which the submissions sit collectively, focusing in particular on research and analysis which relates to my work on victimisation, the relationship between schools, school exclusion and youth crime, the links between social exclusion and crime and the preventative turn in youth Justice policy from the late 1990s. Chapter 3 examines the nature, scope and limitations of applied social research and considers different approaches that may fall under this heading before discussing and reflecting upon the methods used in the research underpinning the submissions and on the intellectual journey on which I have travelled. Chapter 4 presents the ‘findings’, in a critical review of each of the public works in turn which also seeks to draw out the continuities or themes that emerge from them as a whole. Finally, the concluding chapter re-situates these findings within the broader policy and theoretical context outlined in the literature review, explaining how the works relate to each other and why, collectively, these public works constitute an original and coherent contribution to knowledge.

At the outset of this exercise, I had a list of 15 published works, basically all and anything that I have had published on the subject of youth crime and youth justice. Whittling this down to nine publications involved removing from the list one or two pieces which were very similar in content to those that are left but also works focused on youth work policy and practice in other, mainly

European countries. This was largely a pragmatic decision: the additional literature, methods and critical reviewing that including these submissions would have involved made doing so unrealistic whilst ignoring them does not significantly alter the central argument that unfolds. However, one line from these excluded works does merit quoting: “Current policies which aim to reduce social exclusion by making the excluded ‘fit to work’ again through training, mentoring and the like, risk putting the unemployed cart before the profit minded horse” (Volland and Porteous, 2001: vii). A similar concern has gradually informed my interpretation of youth justice policy. I used to believe that a better understanding of youth crime would lead inexorably to a better understanding of how to reduce and prevent it (Farrington, 1996). One problem with this formula is that it tends to see *youth crime* only as a problem rather than as a solution, a solution to the personal, social, cultural and economic challenges posed to many young people in an “exclusive society” (Young, 1999). Additionally, it risks seeing *youth justice* only as a solution to the menace posed by deviant youth, rather than as a system of social control with problems of its own making.

The thesis that unfolds in this Context Statement therefore reflects, I believe, a more nuanced understanding of the semi-connected worlds of youth crime and youth justice, one which appreciates the real problems of everyday life of and for young offenders and young victims but which is equally attuned to how the politics of youth justice may serve to distort and even exacerbate such problems.

Chapter 2: Contextualising the Research: A Review of the Literature

Introduction

The chapter reviews the literature on youth crime and youth justice so as to locate my public works within a broader context. Being retrospective and in light of the fact that my works cover a wider set of issues than would be the case with a conventional PhD thesis, this is necessarily a selective and slightly contrived process. The review includes discussion of literature that is also cited in the public works themselves but also that written since my own works appeared. It makes reference to empirical research against which it is possible to compare the findings from my own studies but also to longstanding theoretical and policy debates to which they may be said to contribute in their own small way.

The chapter is organised so as to follow more or less the same order as that in which the submissions are critically reviewed in chapter 4. Accordingly, the review surveys work on the victimisation of children and young people, the relationship between school exclusion and offending, the concentration of youth crime and victimisation in areas of relative deprivation and the reforms to youth justice introduced by New Labour following its election in 1997 and the place of mentoring within them.

Before turning to these substantive areas, perhaps the first point to make concerns the considerable wealth of books, journal articles and published policy and research reports to have been produced on youth justice in the fifteen years or so since I entered the fray. The embarrassment of riches predates this period of course but with some notable exceptions (e.g. Cohen, 1985; Pitts, 1988; Pratt, 1989), the best known research and writing on young people and crime in England and Wales before the 1990s were classic studies of delinquency and its social construction (e.g. Downes, 1966; Cohen, 1973; West and Farrington, 1973; Parker, 1974; Willis, 1977; Hall et al., 1978; Corrigan, 1979; Campbell, 1981; Pearson, 1983) rather than of youth justice policy as such.

This could not be said of the more recent period. First there are text books ostensibly focused on youth crime (e.g. Muncie, 2009, 2004, 1999; Brown, 2005, 1998) but which include substantive chapters on the historical development of youth justice policy up to the present. Secondly, a closely related set of text books are more obviously about policy and especially recent policy though with substantive chapters as well on youth justice theory (e.g. Hopkins-Burke, 2008; Smith, 2007, 2003; Fionda, 2005; Goldson and Muncie, 2006; Pitts, 2003; Goldson, 2000). A third group of texts are distinguished by their targeting of practitioner as well as academic audiences (Pickford and Dugmore, 2012; Taylor et al., 2010; Stephenson et al., 2007; Bateman and Pitts, 2005) and a fourth by tending to focus on the findings from empirical research (Smith, 2010; Burnett and Roberts, 2004; Farrington, 1996) and their implications for policy and practice. Over and beyond this a fifth grouping could be said to include any number of books which have specialised on particular areas related to youth justice policy including education and schooling (Hayden and Martin 2011; Stephenson 2007), risk (Case and Haines, 2009; Thom et al., 2007), drugs and alcohol (Melrose, 2000; Marlow and Pearson, 1999); victimisation (Kennison and Goodman, 2008), youth gangs (Pitts, 2008), youth imprisonment and secure accommodation (Goldson, 2002; Neustatter, 2002) and restorative justice (Crawford and Newburn, 2003).

Academic books represent only one source of information amongst many. The academic journal 'Youth Justice' has since 2001 provided a quarterly digest of contemporary research, policy and practice issues largely focused on the UK though with a strong international dimension. 'Youth and Policy', though with a broader remit than youth crime and youth justice, regularly includes contributions in this area as do a number of other criminological and social scientific journals, notably the 'British Journal of Criminology', the 'Howard Journal of Criminal Justice' and 'Criminology and Criminal Justice'. The Youth Justice Board website has included a repository of research and evaluative studies commissioned since its inception in 1998 and the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Department for Education (and its predecessors) and more recently the Office of the Children's Commissioner have similarly published numerous policy and research reports of relevance to youth justice (for example around school exclusion, children in and leaving care and child sexual exploitation). Finally, a number of charities such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Howard League for Penal Reform, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO), the National Children's Bureau (NCB), the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and Barnado's have also funded and disseminated extensive studies and reviews in this area of policy and practice.

Situating my own contributions within this enormous bank of knowledge has not, it follows, been a straightforward task - needles and haystacks come to mind. The key aim has been to provide a sense of context and continuity whilst traversing a number of different areas of policy and practice in what is of course an ever changing and fiendishly complex story.

The 'discovery' of children and young people as victims of crime

To the extent that the problematic behaviour of children and young people has been a perennial concern of government, the media and agencies of formal and informal social control for as long as such 'respectable fears' could be recorded on paper (Ariès, 1960; Pearson, 1983; Hayden, 2007), it would be reasonable to expect that children's experiences as victims of crime and violence would have an equally lengthy, documented history. Yet whilst children's vulnerability to abuse, intimidation and exploitation from both adults and other children has been recognised and written about for a long time as well (Hek, 2007: 114), not least in fiction (Dickens, 1867-68), it is widely agreed (Walklate, 1989; Brown, 2005, Muncie, 2009) that from the 'discovery' of juvenile delinquency in the early C19th until the latter part of the twentieth century, the focus of reformers and policy makers was on the contagious effects of such behaviour and the likelihood that otherwise 'naturally innocent' children exposed to it would themselves become delinquent and so pose a threat to others (Carpenter, 1853; May, 1973; Hendrick, 1997). Within the discipline of criminology meanwhile, the main question arising in relation to young people and crime was until quite recently: 'why do they offend?'

This situation has however changed considerably. Although Muncie (2009, p164) argues that "(i)t is only in the past decade that anything approaching a specific critical youth victimology could be said to be emergent", the political, theoretical and empirical groundwork for such a project started some time earlier. Concern for victims of crime in general underpinned the establishment of the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme in the 1960s (Davies 2011), campaigns and research on domestic violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1980) and rape (Adler, 1987) in the 1970s and 1980s highlighted hitherto hidden forms of victimisation which was in turn revealed to be disproportionate not only in

terms of gender but in terms of class, race, age and geographical location (Lea and Young 1984; Kinsey et al, 1986; Hope 1995). In the same period, the murder of Maria Colwell by her Stepfather in 1973, and the subsequent public enquiry, transformed child abuse from being the “concern of a relatively small number of specialist professionals ... (into) a matter of major public interest” (Stainton Rogers et al., 1992, p15). In 1983, the inaugural British Crime Survey (Hough & Mayhew, 1983) brought the ‘dark figure of crime’, a murky creature that had previously escaped the attention of the police, according to the official statistics at least, into public view (Coleman and Moynihan, 1996). This survey and all subsequent runs of the BCS demonstrated that victimisation is much more widespread than police records suggest.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Morgan and Zedner’s (1992) study of children as victims of crime represented something of a wake-up call for criminologists, the authors themselves observing in the preface to the book that there had been up to that point no systematic study of the criminal victimisation of children that was not focused on and framed as child abuse by adults. Combining secondary analysis of police files with interviews with professionals, Morgan & Zedner argued that the label ‘abuse’ rather than that of ‘assault’ in cases of violence against children within the family “may well obscure the fact that a criminal offence has been committed” (1992: 20). Further the study revealed the considerable extent and consequences of the secondary victimisation of children in crimes such as burglary, how this was largely overlooked by professional and voluntary agencies and so remained largely hidden from public, official and criminological view. The fact that the study drew for evidence only on cases reported to and recorded by the police merely strengthened the point. If children were relatively invisible to in crimes known to the police, then what about their involvement in the dark figure of ‘unknown’ crime?

In the mid 1990s, a series of surveys (Anderson et al., 1994; Brown, 1994a, cited in Brown, 1998) Aye Maung, 1995, Hartless et al., 1995) provided growing evidence to answer this question. Consistently, these studies found that children were more likely to be victimised than adults and more likely to be victims than offenders, to be “more sinned against than sinning” as Hartless et al. (1995) titled their findings. It was probably Aye Maung’s (1995) report on the results of the first (and for a long time after only) British Crime Survey(BCS) to include a sample of children under 16 years of age which had the widest impact. This revealed that for incidents which they considered a ‘crime’ (as opposed to less serious incidents) children reported being the victim of theft from the person four times more often than adults aged 20-59 in the wider BCS sample, five times more often the victim of theft of property and seven times more likely the victim of assault (1995: 17). They also expressed higher levels of fear of crime, especially street crimes such as mugging, but were less likely to report such incidents - around 12 per cent of crimes against 12 to -15- year-olds had been reported to the police, as compared with around 35 per cent of those against adults aged 20-59 (1995:27). Aye Maung noted that whilst the levels of victimisation reported by children in the BCS might appear high, they were in fact lower than those found in other studies, notably Anderson et al.’s (1994) survey of school pupils in Edinburgh.

In Submission 1, I reported on the findings of a similar survey to that conducted by Anderson et al. (1994), with similar results. That was 1998 and in the following decade, the number of victimisation surveys involving children and young people has proliferated. Of particular note are three longitudinal studies. For the Youth Justice Board (YJB), Ipsos MORI have undertaken a series of youth surveys since 1999 in which a sample of around 6000 students in mainstream education (including a

subset attending Pupil Referral Units) have completed self report questionnaires on their experiences of crime and victimisation. Secondly, for the Home Office, four sweeps of the Offending Crime and Justice Survey, involving face to face interviews with around 5000 individuals aged 10-25 were conducted between 2003 and 2006. Thirdly, the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime tracked around 4300 children and young people who started secondary school in 1998 over the course of their studies with six annual sweeps of a self report survey undertaken in total. In addition, there have been more one-off surveys including Wilkstrom & Butterworth's (2006) analysis of the experiences of almost 2000 14 to 15-year-olds in Peterborough, a survey of 3000+ children aged 10 to 15 year-olds for the Howard League in 2007, and the 2009/10 British Crime Survey which included for the first time since 1992 a sub-sample of 3661 10 to 15-year-olds (Millard & Flatley, 2010). Although there have been big differences between these studies in the amount of victimisation reported, the consistent message remains that "despite young people's undoubted widespread involvement in offending....(this is) far outweighed by their vulnerability as victims" (Brown, 2005: 122).

The growth in the number of surveys of criminal victimisation has been paralleled in the area of school bullying. Thus Olweus' (1993) study of bullying in Norway in the 1980s is widely cited (Myers, 2010; Hayden 2011) as being seminal in bringing a previously under-researched issue to attention at an international level whilst in the UK Whitney & Smith's (1993) survey of almost 7000 primary and secondary-school pupils quantified the scale of the problem for the first time in this country. Further surveys) have confirmed that bullying is widespread with estimates of the number of British children who have ever experienced bullying varying from 25 to 75 per cent (Myers, 2010) whilst the number involved in 'bully-victim problems' at any one time is thought to be around one in five (Smith and Myron-Wilson, 1998, cited in Hayden 2011: 79). The Ipsos MORI surveys of school students for the YJB have included questions about bullying. Anderson et al., (2010) report that in 2009, 28 per cent of students in mainstream schools reported having been bullied within the last twelve months, a higher proportion than said they had been a victim in other ways, though this finding is somewhat reversed for children attending Pupil Referral Units, an issue to which I return below.

In the space of twenty years then, we have moved from a situation in which there was very little systematically recorded knowledge of children and young people's victimisation to one in which extensive data has been collected at national and regional levels using a variety of methodological approaches. In my account of Submission 1 below (chapter 4), I summarise some of the key findings from this body of research by way of demonstrating the parallels with my own work. To set the scene for the second and third of the two studies of victimisation in which I have been involved, however, I wish to pick up on certain themes which are evident in the survey research to a degree but which require reference to a broader literature on youth crime and youth justice.

Victimisation inside and outside of school

"Young people in mainstream education, who have been the victim of each offence, most commonly report this victimisation having taken place in school. However – in line with the 2008 figures – this differs for those who have been threatened with a knife or gun, which most commonly occurs in their local area (33%). There has also been an increase in those who reported being threatened with a knife or gun at school since 2008 (14% in 2009, compared with 9% in 2008).

In contrast, young people attending PRUs who have been the victim of an offence, and specified a location, are most likely to experience most types of victimisation in their local area – the only exception being experience of racial abuse, which 36% reported occurring at school” (Anderson et al., 2010: 13, paragraph break in original).

Schools have often and for more or less obvious reasons been a site and a focus for research into youth crime. One of these is simply a matter of practicality, no other place offers researchers access to a large ‘captive’ population of children and young people ready to be surveyed, interviewed and observed and both classic criminological studies (e.g. Willis, 1977; Corrigan 1979) and some of the more recent longitudinal studies referred to above have used schools as a gateway for investigating delinquency more generally. Secondly, the behaviour (or misbehaviour) of school students, to the extent that it affects the quality of the learning environment, educational performance and the safety and wellbeing of the school population (for both children and adults) is a key element of school life, of interest to educationalists and criminologists for overlapping if different reasons (Martin et al., 2011). Thirdly, schools vary in their ability to manage the behaviour of students (Graham, 1988) and how much this is to do with the running of the institution or the characteristics of students or some other variable is of interest as is the possibility that schools might generate deviance (Power et al., 1967) rather than or as well as socialise children in how and how not to behave. Fourthly, disaffection with, truancy and exclusion from school have all been shown to correlate positively with offending (Graham and Bowling, 1995; Berridge et al., 2001) and both the reasons for and consequences of this coupling of problematic behaviours has been a recurrent issue for those interested in understanding delinquency more generally (Stephenson, 2007; Hayden 2011). Fifthly and in turn, the effects of government policy on schooling, education and youth justice have also been subject to historical and contemporary analysis. Under New Labour’s administration, schools were tasked with a more central role in youth crime prevention as well as being increasingly “securitised” (Millie and Moore 2011), arguably more like prisons (Parsons, 1999) than ever but then the jury has long been out over whether schools function primarily to educate or to control (Foucault, 1977; Cohen, 1985).

Given the clear linkages between schools and crime, it seems slightly ironic that when it comes to the victimisation of children and young people, one consistent finding has been that pupils describe their schools as safe places (Hayden 2011) and this in spite of the fact that bullying and the most commonly reported forms of victimisation (such as theft and assault without injury) are most likely to take place within school grounds (Roe and Ashe, 2006; Anderson et al., 2009) In part this simply reflects the fact that a majority of children are not worried about being a victim, at school or elsewhere, nor are a majority actually victimised, so what at first sight seems paradoxical is no such thing. Nevertheless it is the *relative* or *comparative* safety of school that is at issue. Schools are safer than the street, parks etc. not because students are more likely to be a victim in such public spaces but because they are more likely to be a victim of more serious offences such as threats or attacks involving weapons there. Whilst not denying the evidence concerning the harmful effects of bullying inside schools on victims (Cowie, 2011), nor indeed the violent and sexual abuse to which young people are subject in their own homes (Creighton, 2004; Hoyle 2012), the fact that it is victimisation out of school and ‘on the street’ that children and young people appear to fear most is rational and evidence-based. To put the point more graphically, it is on the streets where older children and young people are dying (Dorling, 2008; Squires and Goldsmith, 2011).

Having said this, some children and young people spend more time ‘on the street’ or ‘on road’ (Young and Hallsworth, 2011) than others and some streets are of course more dangerous than others. In Submissions 2 and 3, the research has examined the experiences of one such risky group, children excluded from school, and one such risky space, in a borough ranked at the time the third most economically deprived borough in England and Wales. How these interact or how the links between them should be understood is a theme to which I will return. For now I want to review the literature specific to each study beginning with that on school exclusion and youth crime.

School exclusion and youth crime

In one sense, exclusion from school, its causes and effects, are a relatively recent phenomenon. The term exclusion was introduced in the Education Act 1986 and it is only since the early 1990s that records of the number of exclusions from school have been kept and research into the issue burgeoned. At the same time, it is important to recognise that what the term’s introduction signalled was not a sudden upsurge in problems for schools requiring more or more severe punishment but rather a novel means for them to carry out what has always been one of their core functions, the regulation and management of students’ behaviour. Prior to the Act, schools could ‘suspend’ or ‘expel’ pupils and the rapid growth of special units for disruptive and truanting pupils during the 1970s (Hayden 2011) indicates that forms of exclusion predated the official usage of the word with which we are familiar today. It is no coincidence that a ban on corporal punishment in state schools was also enacted in 1986, nor that the increase in off-site provision for problematic students in the preceding decade followed the raising of the school leaving age in 1972. Again, the issues surrounding exclusion have a much longer pedigree than the term itself.

A related point is that a sole focus on exclusion risks missing the wider issue of detachment from school more generally (Stephenson, 2007). Many more students are absent from school for reasons other than that they have been excluded, most notably through authorised or unauthorised non-attendance. To this group Stephenson adds students who are transferred from mainstream to ‘special’ schools having been diagnosed as having special educational needs (SEN), most commonly meaning ‘emotional and behavioural difficulties’ (EBD). Nor are these discrete categories - persistent absenteeism can be a reason for exclusion whilst transfer to a special school can be an alternative to exclusion. Many children in this context will have experienced all three forms of detachment at different times in their educational career.

Having said this, as long as researchers remain aware of such matters, the very fact that exclusion attains a political significance beyond that which history or theory might suggest it merits can be factored into analysis of the issue, at least in principle. Certainly, when my colleagues and I were successful in our tender to undertake the research reported on in Submission 2, the political significance of the title itself (one which, for the record, we were unable to change), “The independent effects of permanent exclusion from school on the offending careers of young people”, was tangible. Partly this reflected different internal government interests - suffice to say that had the then Department for Education and Employment commissioned the research rather than the Home Office, the title might have looked slightly different – but more importantly this was an issue which conjoined two very New Labour concerns – ‘education, education, education’ and being ‘tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime’. The Social Exclusion Unit’s (SEU) (1998a) report on truancy and exclusion from school stated the core of perceived wisdom as follows:

“Exclusion and truancy have costly effects, whether those costs are borne by the police, courts and prisons, by the social security budget or by the victims of crime. The Government is already substantially overhauling the system for dealing with young offenders. Tackling exclusion and truancy should contribute to stopping youngsters being drawn into crime in the first place” (SEU, 1998a: 21)

The evidence supporting this statement was very similar to that reviewed in our own study and so will be only very briefly summarised here. Specific concern about exclusions from school was, as noted, given impetus by the existence of official statistics quantifying the problem. In this sense it had literally to be constructed and one of the consequences of this process was the rapid inflation in numbers which gradually imposing the requirement to collect data inevitably entailed. Thus when what was essentially a guestimate in 1991-2 calculated the number of permanent exclusions for the year to be 2,910, the much more reliable figure of 11,000 for 1993-94 suggested a dramatic increase which was followed by further rises in 1995-96 and 1996-97 (Department for Education (DfE), 1993; Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1997, 1999). How much the increase reflected a worsening of pupil behaviour, or a greater enthusiasm to exclude amongst Head-Teachers, or simply improvements in the records kept is unclear but the effect was to give statistical substance to anxiety about behaviour in schools.

Also in the mid 1990s, evidence from Graham and Bowling’s (1995) study of young people and crime and from the Audit Commission’s (1996) evaluation of the youth justice system, indicated a strong correlation between both fixed term and permanent exclusion from school and offending, the latter for example noting that “three quarters of excluded pupils offend, but only one third of those who are not excluded (1996: 70). This and other research (Hayden & Martin 1998) also suggested that those permanently excluded were more likely than those excluded for a fixed period to have offended and Martin et al.’s (1999) study of persistent offenders, 55 per cent of whom had been permanently excluded, seemed to confirm this stronger relationship. So whilst it is important, as stated above, to locate permanent exclusion within the broader issue of detachment from school, one reason for focusing upon the issue was that the children and young people concerned appeared to represent a particularly high risk group.

As the largest (in terms of sample size) study of this group to be conducted in England and Wales, our research provided significant data to compare with that from existing studies. Earlier work had found that males were more likely to be excluded than females (DfEE, 1999) with Afro-Caribbean boys especially so (OFSTED 1996). Excluded students were also more likely to have been assessed as having Special Educational Needs (DfEE, 1999), to be eligible for free school meals (OFSTED, 1996), to come from troubled family backgrounds (ibid.), be known to other agencies such as social services (Hayden 1997) and to be ‘looked after’ (Sinclair and Gibbs, 1998). Studies had identified the most common reasons for exclusion which included abuse to staff, violence against peers, school-rule breaking, disruption and having committed a criminal offence (OFSTED, 1996; Hayden, 1997) and had explored strategies for preventing exclusion (Osler, 1997; Munn and Lloyd, 1997). Qualitative research had examined aspects of the experience of being excluded from young people’s perspective (Hayden, 1997; Brodie, 1999) highlighting the interactional nature of exclusion whereby the student’s behaviour and the school’s response seemed to rebound off each other.

The main rationale for our research, however, was that it presented an opportunity to investigate the relationship between permanent exclusion and offending – which comes first, how and why? One study to have addressed these questions was Martin et al.'s (1999) analysis of the educational and criminal careers of 44 persistent young offenders. Of the 24 young people amongst this sample who had been permanently excluded, 17 were found to have been involved in offending prior to exclusion and just seven to have begun to offend post-exclusion. This was a different if not necessarily contradictory picture to that conveyed by the Audit Commission in 'Misspent Youth' (1996) where evidence from one local authority suggested offending increased in the year following exclusion by as much as 50 per cent. In as much as there was consistency in the existing research it seemed to demonstrate that permanent exclusion was typically preceded by troubled and troublesome behaviour quite likely to include offending, but could then act to amplify the problem by providing the young person with time and opportunity to offend and increasing their contact with 'delinquent peer groups'.

Studies undertaken since our own research (the findings from which are discussed more fully below) do not significantly alter this picture. Daniels et al. (2003), in a study of post-exclusion careers of 193 young people, reported that up to 50% of offenders their sample had started offending after being permanently excluded whilst existing offenders continued to offend. Whilst not concerned with exclusion as such, Ipsos Mori's surveys for the Youth Justice Board have provided comparative data on offending amongst pupils in mainstream education and those enrolled at Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), over half of whom are likely to have been excluded previously (Anderson et al., 2010: 11). In the most recent survey, whilst 18 per cent of students in mainstream education self-reported offending in the previous year, 64 per cent of those in PRUs did so.

Reporting on the Edinburgh study of youth transitions and crime, McAra and Mcvie (2010) argue that truancy and exclusion from school do have an independent effect on offending. Comparing the conviction trajectories of groups identified via a self report study as early offenders (i.e. who began offending around age 9 or 10), they observe that those whose offending persisted into early adulthood were significantly more likely to have truanted and/or been excluded from their secondary school than those who desisted from offending in their mid teens. Moreover, the same was true of young people who began offending in their mid teens: "an increase in volume of truancy, greater likelihood of school exclusion and increase in adversarial police contact (including warnings and charges) were all precursors of later onset convictions" (2010: 197).

The DfE's (2012) report on pupil exclusions in England during 2009/10 shows that there has been a large fall in the number of permanent exclusions since the mid 1990s, down from 12,670 in 1996/97 to 5,470 in 2009/10 but that the "social pattern of exclusion" (Hayden, 2011) has remained similar over time. According to the report, students with a 'Statement of Special Educational Needs' are seven times more likely, those eligible for Free School Meals four times more likely, and Black Caribbean children also four times more likely to have been permanently excluded (DfE, 2012). Evidence suggests that the fall in the rate of permanent exclusions reflects changes in policy and so alternative means of dealing with at-risk students which may serve to re-produce rather than diminish social and educational disadvantage. As Gazely argues, "(p)ressure exerted at policy level to reduce the use made of permanent exclusions has led to an increased use of managed moves – the transfer of a pupil to a new school by agreement" and "an emphasis on using alternatives to

exclusion wherever possible” (2010: 294) but hard evidence that this has improved the experiences of and outcomes for the students involved is in short supply.

How then does the evidence regarding exclusion and offending relate to the victimisation of children and young people? One answer to this question lies with the fact that in self report studies of both bullying and crime, an overlap or blurring between offending and victimisation has become evident. Roe and Ashe, for example, record that 50 per cent of offenders in the 2006 OCJS had been a victim compared to 19 per cent of non-offenders and that 42 per cent of victims had offended compared to 14 per cent of non victims (2008: 29). Likewise, alongside the finding noted above that students attending PRUs are more likely to offend than those in mainstream schools, Anderson et al. (2010) also report that PRU students were also more likely to have reported being the victim of crime – 44 per cent of them, for example, reported being physically attacked compared with 19 per cent of those in mainstream education. They were also more likely to have been a victim of crime outside of school whereas the reverse was true for pupils in mainstream schools excepting, as mentioned already, offences involving being threatened or actually attacked with a weapon. The Edinburgh Study provides similar evidence, McAra and Mcvie observing that victimisation, alongside other ‘aspects of vulnerability’, correlates if not predates offending:

“(V)iolent offenders were significantly more likely than non-violent youths to be: victims of crime and adult harassment; engaged in self-harming and para-suicidal behaviour; exhibiting a range of problematic health risk behaviours including drug use, regular alcohol consumption, disordered patterns of eating, symptoms of depression and early experience of sexual intercourse; having more problematic family backgrounds; and, *for girls* in particular, coming from a socially deprived background” (McAra and Mcvie, 2010: 185).

The final factor in this list, social deprivation, has tended as here to be listed amongst numerous other correlates and, when subject to regression analyses, found to be less statistically significant than more dynamic or changeable factors such as family conflict or contact with ‘delinquent groups’ (Wood 2005). This conclusion is however at odds with substantial evidence elsewhere that crime and victimisation has since the 1980s become increasingly concentrated amongst the poorest neighbourhoods and most disadvantaged communities in the UK (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998b; Hope, 2001; Pitts, 2003). This blind-spot in large scale surveys of victimisation is arguably inherent in the methodology whereby deprivation is included as one potential risk factor amongst many. As Muncie observes, such surveys “typically fail to contextualise the experiences of young people either in personal biography or in broader socio-economic or political contexts” (2009: 171). With this in mind and to contextualise the research underpinning my third submission, I turn to the evidence concerning the increasingly uneven distribution of crime and victimisation in the UK since the early 1980s.

Social exclusion and youth crime

“Murder is a social marker. The murder rate tells us far more about society and how it is changing than each individual murder tells us about the individuals involved. The vast majority of the 13,000 murders that have been considered here were not carefully planned and executed crimes; they were acts of sudden violence, premeditated only for a few minutes or seconds, probably without the intent to actually kill in many cases (often those involved were drunk).... Behind the man with the knife is the man who sold him the knife,

the man who did not give him a job, the man who decided that his school did not need funding, the man who closed down the branch plant where he could have worked, the man who decided to reduce benefit levels so that a black economy grew, all the way back to the woman who only noticed 'those inner cities' some six years after the summer of 1981, and the people who voted to keep her in office. The harm done to one generation has repercussions long after that harm is first acted out. Those who perpetrated the social violence that was done to the lives of young men starting some 20 years ago are the prime suspects for most of the murders in Britain." (Dorling, 2008, p40)

For an obvious reason, self report studies of victimisation do not include murders. And whilst criminal statistics provide a notoriously unreliable guide to the extent and distribution of crime in general, on murders, because they are almost always reported to and recorded by the police, they are as close to one hundred per cent accurate as such statistics get. This fact, notwithstanding the quality of the statistical analysis and commentary, makes Dorling's (2008) investigation into the distribution of the 13,140 murders committed in Britain between 1980 and 2000 particularly compelling. Whilst the causal chain described in the quotation above would be disputed by many, the hard facts underpinning it are much harder to contest.

Dorling begins by observing that after infant boys under the age of one, young men aged 21 are the most likely to have been murdered and that young men between the ages of 17 and 32 accounted for a quarter of all homicides in the period in question. He then shows how during this period the chances of being murdered have dramatically changed – most of the population were less likely to have been murdered as time went on but for young men the chances rose, by 100% in the case of 20-24 year olds. Turning to where people were being murdered, Dorling observes that this too was changing over time. In 1981-85, those living in the poorest tenth of wards in the UK were already four and a half times more likely to die than those in the wealthiest, by 1996-2000, this ratio had risen to over five and a half. As for how they were murdered, this seemed to change little. The most common causes of death were cutting (by knives and other sharp objects) and whilst the number of individuals killed by guns had risen slightly in all areas, guns accounted for a substantially higher proportion of murders in wealthier wards (29 per cent) than they did in the poorest (11 per cent), perhaps because guns are expensive. Finally and most tendentiously perhaps, Dorling considers why poor young men were increasingly likely to be murdered during the period in question. As the quotation suggests, his answer relates to the significant social and economic changes initiated in Britain by the Thatcher governments of the 1980s leading to mass youth unemployment and a polarisation in the life chances, literally, of those living in the poorer and wealthier parts of Britain.

That inequality and relative deprivation might be connected in some way to crime is not of course a new idea. It is central to Durkheim's notion that high rates of crime arise in times of anomie, to Bonger's Marxist observations of criminality and economic conditions, to the Chicago School's concept of social disorganisation and to Mertonian strain theory. More recently, it is a significant link in the chain that connects various manifestations of sub-cultural (Cohen, 1955; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Downes, 1966) and labelling (Becker, 1963; Cohen, 1973) theory with all three incarnations of Jock Young - the new criminologist (with Taylor and Walton, 1973), the left realist (with Lea, 1986 and Matthews, 1992) and the cultural criminologist (with Ferrell and Hayward, 2008). It is part of the stock of commonsensical explanations of crime brought out in times of moral panic (Hall et al, 1978) such as in the aftermath to the riots that spread through England and Wales in August 2011. There

are right wing as well as left wing versions: the current Secretary of State for Welfare and Pensions Iain Duncan-Smith justifies cuts in welfare spending by drawing on a tradition which sees dependency on benefits as a form of poverty that 'breeds' crime (Murray, 1990). And yet when researchers report on their survey results, deprivation becomes transformed into one variable amongst many and when Youth Justice Workers conduct their risk assessments, living in a deprived neighbourhood appears as just one of 12 risk factors to be taken into consideration. The relationship between poverty, inequality, relative deprivation or as we now like to call it social exclusion and youth crime and victimisation remains contested, complex and relatively marginal to youth justice policy. Yet this is not for lack of evidence.

In 'The new politics of youth crime', Pitts (2003: 97-122) offers the following observations about the redistribution of resources and youth crime during the period covered by Dorling. All citations in the following edited and very abridged summary are from the original.

- *A redistribution of wealth:* Margaret Thatcher's election marked the end of a period in which governments at least pledged to reduce inequality. Between 1981 and 1991, the number of workers earning under half the national average wage rose from just under 1 million to nearly 2.5 million whilst the number earning twice the average rose from under 2 to over 3 million. The gap between rich and poor was reflected in regional variations such that the Gross Domestic Product of London was twice the national average whilst that of Merseyside and West Wales rendered "them eligible for EU 'special aid'" (ibid: 98).
- *Neighbourhood destabilisation and a concentration of disadvantage:* the successful 'Right to Buy' schemes introduced in the early 1980s saw the number of owner occupiers rise from 55 to 67 per cent of households leaving the least 'successful' to enter social housing. On traditional housing estates, 'distinct communities' were emerging (Dean, 1997), geographically close but otherwise worlds apart: longstanding elderly residents versus young families with few resources and multiple problems; 'established' white working class families living in "uneasy coexistence with incoming Black and Asian families" (ibid: 100). Poverty was racialised: "In London, by the mid 1990s, up to 70 per cent of the residents on the poorest housing estates were from ethnic minorities (Power and Tunstall, 1997)" (ibid: 100). Between the 1980s and the 1990s, the average household income of council house residents had fallen from 73 to 48 per cent with over a half of council households having no one in work (Rowntree, Foundation 1995).
- *Structural youth unemployment:* Although the British economy overall recovered during the 1980s, youth unemployment continued to rise, no longer "cyclical and temporary, but structural and apparently permanent" (ibid: 101) averaging 20 per cent amongst 16-19 year-olds by the late 1980s (General Household Survey, 1995) and rising to much higher levels in the poorest areas. At the same time income support for 16 and 17 year-olds was removed on the basis that it a disincentive to work. Jobs in the illicit economy, however, especially the booming drugs trade, soared (Pearson, 1993) following a pattern observed in the US by Hagedorn whom Pitts quotes: "It is likely today that drug sales is the largest single employer of young African-American and Latino males in Milwaukee" (1998, cited in ibid: 107)).

- *A steepening crime rate*: recorded crime doubled between 1981 and 1993, the fastest and furthest increase on record, before levelling off from 1994. In the same period, a fall in the youth population and “rigorous ‘systems management’” diverted many young people from the justice system and the numbers, charged, convicted and imprisoned fell dramatically before rising again from the mid 1990s as policy took a punitive turn. “Thus it could be the case....that by the mid 1990s, a smaller number of offenders were committing a larger number of offences” (2003: 97-98).
- *A redistribution of crime and victimisation*: Hope’s (1994) analysis of 1982 and 1992 BCS data revealed that lowest crime neighbourhoods (on a scale of one to ten) were effectively crime-free but “that by 1992, residents in the highest crime neighbourhoods experienced twice the rate of property crime and four times the rate of personal crime than those in the *next worst category*” (ibid: 99, italics added). In part this reflected the fact that “the people most vulnerable to criminal victimisation and those most likely to victimise them were progressively thrown together on the poorest housing estates in Britain” (ibid: 101) including according to one estimate (Burroughs, 1998) 25 per cent of all children aged under 16 in the UK.

Recognising the accumulation and concentration of disadvantage amongst the poorest and many of the youngest in society that occurred under Thatcher governments in the 1980s is critical, Pitts argues, if we are to understand “the intensification of crime and public disorder which characterises destabilised neighbourhoods throughout Britain:

“These young people are condemned by poverty and unemployment to inhabit overcrowded under-resourced high crime neighbourhoods, while the labour market and the dominant culture determine that they are to be less than whole people, trapped in a limbo world, somewhere between childhood and adulthood, long after the developmental tasks of adolescence have been completed. Moreover, they are also fixed ideologically, destined to provide the screen upon which the fears and the fantasies of those at the social centre are projected” (ibid.: 109).

In the noughties, such “fears and fantasies” have focused upon the apparent growth in the number of youth gangs and the increasing ‘weaponisation’ of youthful street cultures in British inner cities. On the one hand it is tempting to interpret the intense media interest in ‘gangs’ and ‘knife crime’ in this period as just as the latest in the long line of moral panics to have been documented by youth crime researchers since Cohen’s (1973) classic account of how the ‘mods and rockers’ achieved folk devil status was first published. Certainly a number of the elements of Cohen’s original formulation are there: exaggeration, distortion and symbolisation of the issue in the newspapers, the manning of the moral barricades by politicians, religious leaders and editors, the demonization of certain youth groups and styles, heightened surveillance and proactive policing all the way to new legislation being introduced in parliament to tackle the problem. Moreover, just as Cohen’s tale begins on that “cold and wet” Easter Sunday in 1964 with two days that were “unpleasant, oppressive and sometimes frightening” (Cohen, 1973: 18) but nothing like the organised orgy of violence portrayed in the papers, so as Squires and Goldsmith demonstrate, the initial moral panic over knife crime was in full swing at a time when the available evidence was, “at best, ambiguous” (2011: 202) with the 2008

BCS for example suggesting a 16 per cent fall in knife crime in London between 2005 and 2007 (ibid: 203)

But Squires and Goldsmith also reveal a twist in this otherwise familiar tale. As a direct result of the media and political frenzy over youthful street violence and knife crime, data began to appear from hospital accident and emergency departments on the number of people admitted following stabbings with knives and other sharp objects. This data was important as it carried greater validity than police recorded statistics which could reflect targeting of particular offences or victimisation studies which tend to under-represent vulnerable groups such as the homeless. In many respects the data confirmed that in focusing on young black men in London as the prime movers in a knife crime epidemic, the newspapers had been traditionally wide of the mark – the vast majority of victims of knife crime nationally were white and over 18. But the new data also revealed “a 75 per cent increase in stabbing victims 16-18 and an 88 per cent increase for stabbing victims aged under 16” (ibid: 206). As with the moral panic over the ‘mods and rockers’, the media and political focus significantly distorted reality, attributing undue attention to already marginalised groups in explaining a real increase in knife-related crime. But the retrospectively revealed kernel of truth about growing knife crime amongst young people also suggested, as Squires and Goldsmith put it, that there was “a spark of flame at the heart of all the smoke” (ibid: 207). In this there does seem to be a significant difference with Cohen’s account: it is as if some time after the dust had settled on that Easter bank holiday in 1964, a few dead bodies had been found washed ashore.

The tension or uncertainty in the question as to what extent and in what ways knife carrying and crime amongst young people constitutes a new and growing problem is also reflected in the recent academic debate over youth gangs (Pitts, 2008; Hallsworth and Young, 2008) with those on the more constructionist side charging the realists of being too accepting of official definitions and of reifying the very problem they purport to want to get rid of. Nevertheless whether describing ‘life on road’, or ‘reluctant gangsters’ or ‘delinquent youth groups’, it is to sites of multiple deprivation that these researchers travel to find young people to talk to about their experiences. On the question of where street violence is most concentrated and most dangerous, there would seem to be consensus, excepting that the other place one might look is in Young Offender Institutions (Wacquant, 2009).

In my research with colleagues described in Submission 3, which examined the experiences of young people who had been victims of street crime, we also went to one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. In doing so, we were simply reflecting the evidence recently summarised by Yates:

“While the young people caught up in the criminal justice system as perpetrators are disproportionately drawn from working class backgrounds with biographies replete with examples of their vulnerability, it is also apparent that victims of crime are also drawn from the same group. Those growing up in deprived areas also have a much greater chance of being a victim of crime.... Most children raised in poverty do not become involved in crime, but there are higher victim and fear of crime rates in disadvantaged areas (Griggs and Walker 2008: 5)” (Yates, 2010: 16, citation in original).

Studies seeking to explain offending behaviour amongst young people which have drawn attention to the impact of socio-economic disadvantage have been criticised for their focus on the relatively minor crimes of disadvantaged and relatively powerless individuals rather than on the crimes of the powerful (Box, 1983). A focus on young people as victims in disadvantaged and relatively powerless

communities, however, brings attention to the unequal distribution of criminal victimisation and to the corrosive, damaging effects of crime on their lives, crime whose social origins run deep.

New Labour, New Youth Justice

The fact that youth crime and victimisation is overly concentrated amongst poorer communities and neighbourhoods was hardly lost on the New Labour administration which took power under Tony Blair's leadership in 1997. In its manifesto for the election that year, the Labour Party manifesto promised to "attack the causes of crime by our measures to relieve social deprivation" (Labour Party, 1997) and in December that year a Social Exclusion Unit had been established within Downing Street with a brief to provide 'joined up solutions' to such 'joined up problems' as "unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown" (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998a). It was by tackling social exclusion that the new government sought to keep one side of Blair's famous promise to be 'tough on crime (and) tough on the causes of crime'. But it was very much the first part of that couplet which was the focus of the overhaul of youth justice services brought into being by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The changes to the Youth Justice system included in the Act had been widely trailed in the Home Office (1997a) consultation paper 'Tackling Youth Crime' and the White Paper 'No More Excuses' (1997b) and drew extensively on the Audit Commission's (1996) review of youth justice services entitled 'Misspent Youth: Young People and Crime'. The latter made little attempt to hide its damning conclusions, stating that "(t)he current system for dealing with youth crime is inefficient and expensive, while little is being done to deal effectively with juvenile nuisance" (Audit Commission, 1996, p96) but was also forthright in outlining an alternative strategy. Central to this was the apparently growing body of evidence concerning which risk factors increased the likelihood of offending amongst "certain young people in certain circumstances" (ibid.: 58) and which kind of interventions were most effective in addressing these factors. Both sides of this stratagem are incorporated in what Farrington (2000) came to describe as the 'risk factor prevention paradigm'.

Accordingly, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 made the prevention of offending by children and young people the primary aim of the new youth justice. As Smith (2007) observes, three distinct levels of prevention were developed: general social programmes targeted at disadvantaged neighbourhoods which included the Sure Start and Connexions initiatives; programmes targeted at 'at-risk' groups or marginalised young people which included the 'On Track' youth inclusion initiative; and individualised programmes focused on known offenders ranging from anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) to Intensive Surveillance and Supervision Programmes (2007: 45-50). It was only the second two of these levels of prevention which fell under the remit of the newly formed Youth Justice Board and Youth Offending Teams, albeit that in the new joined up approach YOT managers would sit on the board of Community Safety Partnerships and so be able to influence general social programmes as well.

The idea that 'prevention is better than cure' also informed the development of strategies for dealing with drug misuse amongst young people under New Labour and it was in the context of the ten year strategy, 'Tackling Drugs Together' that the evaluative research reported on in Submission 6 was conducted, albeit that the projects concerned were funded by Drug Action Teams established under the Conservatives. The study of two drugs education projects, both with a strong peer education element, was an opportunity to assess how likely they were to "help young people resist

drug use in order to reach their full potential”, the first of four elements of the strategy (Marlow, 1999). Existing research (e.g. Tobler et al., 1999) suggested that drugs education delivered by and amongst peers could be more effective than more conventional forms of teaching. The research was also an opportunity to examine the project methods and outcomes with the findings from similar evaluative studies (e.g. Davis and Dawson, 1996; Shiner and Newburn, 1996).

Submissions 5, 7 and 8 all focused on a form of intervention, mentoring, which has been deployed in initiatives targeted at both ‘at risk’ groups in general, so including young drug users, as well as individual offenders serving community based sentences. As each of these submissions included a review of the available literature on mentoring at the time they were written, the exercise will not be repeated here. One point worth noting, as Newburn and Shiner (2006) also observe in their evaluation of mentoring plus schemes, is that relatively little research had been conducted on mentoring young people identified as at risk of offending in the UK at the point when New Labour embraced the idea and when I began my own research. Evidence for its potential consisted mostly on Tierney et al.’s (1995) impact study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme and the apparent success of Crime Concern’s flagship mentoring scheme, the Dalston Youth Project in North London, which the Audit Commission (1996) cited as an example of innovative practice.

Nor was mentoring given anything but a passing mention in commentaries on the import of New Labour’s reforms of youth justice written around the time of the passage of the Crime and Disorder Act (Newburn, 1998; Brownlee, 1998; Muncie 1999b). In part, this reflected the focus on measures which seemed to demonstrate New Labour’s determination to be seen as ‘tough on crime’: the abolition of *doli incapax*, the introduction of child curfews, the emphasis on making parents responsible for the deeds of their errant children, the end of repeat cautioning and the clampdown on anti-social behaviour via ASBOs. At the heart of what Muncie (1999b) described as a new kind of ‘institutional intolerance’ of youth crime was in Brownlee’s (1998) words “the determination of New Labour to avoid any allegation that they harbour any softness on this most politically sensitive of issues” (1998: 318). At the same time, the embrace of new public sector management or, in a crime control context, “the new penology” (Feeley and Simon, 1992) suggested for Muncie “a depoliticization and dehumanization of the youth crime issue such that the sole purpose of youth justice becomes one of simply delivering a cost-effective and economic ‘product’ (McLaughlin and Muncie, 1994: 137)” (1999: 153, citation in original). To this unlikely coupling of “populist punitiveness” (Bottoms, 1995) and ‘managerialism’, Newburn (1998) identified a third ingredient, ‘communitarianism’, emphasising that along with rights come responsibilities. The latter arguably enabled New Labour to square (or rather triangulate) ‘justice’ and ‘welfare’, between the poles of which youth justice policy had swung throughout the C20th (Muncie, 2009). This is most evident in the White Paper ‘No More Excuses’:

“The United Kingdom is committed to protecting the welfare of children and young people who come into contact with the criminal justice process. The government does not accept that there is any conflict between protecting the welfare of the young offender and preventing that individual from offending again. Preventing offending promotes the welfare of the individual young offender and protects the public” (Home Office, 1997b: para. 2.2).

Restorative justice was another new form of practice institutionalised within youth justice under New Labour, most comprehensively through the creation of referral orders in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Crawford and Newburn, 2003). Referral orders were the primary vehicle for involving young victims of crime in the justice process. For Garland, “the return of the victim” has been one of the key “currents of change” in criminal justice policy in the last thirty years of the 20th. He argues that the individual victim has come to displace “the older notion of the public” which has become redefined and individuated: (s)pecific victims are to have a voice- making victim impact statements, being consulted about punishment and decisions about release” (2001: 9-10). At a symbolic level on the other hand, the individual victim “is a much more representative character, whose experience is taken to be common and collective”(ibid: 9); it could be anyone. The overlap between offending and victimisation evident in the research discussed earlier is absent in this conception of victimhood which as Garland says is a zero sum game “wherein the offender’s gain is the victim’s loss, and being ‘for’ victims automatically means being tough on offenders” (ibid.: 9). The referral order operates on the basis of such a fixed distinction. In practice, involving and satisfying victims has been one of the less successful aspects of the innovation (Crawford and Newburn, 2003).

Both mentoring projects and referral orders constitute, at least in theory, interventions capable of addressing certain level risk factors identified by developmental criminologists such as Farrington (1996; 2001; 2007) and Laub and Sampson (2003) and the subject of extensive longitudinal and cross-sectional research in the UK (summarised in Case and Haines, 2009). Many of the factors assessed using the risk assessment profile adopted by the YJB (2003), ASSET, would seem to be ones mentoring could help with including ‘family relationships’, ‘education, employment and training’, ‘lifestyle’, ‘problematic thinking and behaviour’, ‘perception of self and others’, ‘attitudes towards offending’ and ‘motivation to change’ and my own research (Submissions 5 and 7) has provided evidence of the potential for positive changes to occur in most of these ways. My work has also sought to explain why some mentoring relationships and some mentoring projects appear to be more successful than others, to identify as it were what the YJB termed the ‘principles of effective practice’. Summarising the findings from research into YJB funded and other mentoring projects and using the YJB ‘principles’ to frame their analysis, Stephenson et al. (2009) question the extent to which projects have been: sufficiently focused on criminogenic (as opposed to other) needs; action-oriented, community based; able to meet multiple factors (intervention modality), targeted towards specific, achievable goals (programme integrity) and intensive and lasting (dosage) (ibid: 184-188). In a separate meta-analysis, Pawson (2006) emphasised the need for mentees to be motivated, mentors to be resilient and for mentoring relationships to be embedded in a wider programme of, for example employment or training. How these observations compare with my own will be returned to in the later chapters.

Whilst the effectiveness of mentoring has been the subject of critique according to criteria developed within the risk factor prevention paradigm, others have raised serious questions about that paradigm itself, a number of which are incorporated in Submission 9. One line of argument concerns the extent to which risk assessment in theory and practice simplifies and reduces complex social, economic, cultural and developmental factors into a set of measurable individual deficits (Armstrong, 2004; Pitts 2003). A second body of criticism accused the YJB of embracing a tick-box, target setting form of micro-management which undermined and stifled practitioners’ professional judgment and activities so as to be seen to be dealing efficiently with the youth crime problem (Pitts,

2001; Smith R., 2007). A third questions the knowledge base underpinning those programmes and characteristics of programmes said to 'work' by the Youth Justice Board pointing to the selective use of 'evidence' this has entailed (Smith D., 2006; Bateman and Pitts, 2005) and noting for example that the lack of evidence that custody 'works' (McCord et al., 2001) did not prevent the number of children and young people sentenced to custody from rising under the first two terms of New Labour government. Relatedly, a fourth point of criticism concerned the big increase in the number of young people entering the youth justice system in the name of prevention which seemed to overlook the problems of labelling identified by criminologists over many years (Goldson, 2000). Finally and overall, there emerged a wide consensus amongst academic commentators that youth justice policy under New Labour was driven by politics, not evidence. Goldson and Muncie (2006), for example argue that there is:

“a conspicuous discordance between key messages from research and practice experience (the evidence) on the one hand and core aspects of 'modern' youth justice policy on the other.... Within the contemporary politics of youth justice policy, all (evidence) ... becomes secondary to appeasing public concern and securing electoral gain” (2006: 209-210).

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to outline the academic context within which the public works submitted towards this PhD were undertaken and written. As my work has straddled different areas of youth justice policy and spans a period of ten years, it has been necessary to survey quite a wide range of literature under separate headings: the victimisation of children and young people; the relationship between schools and school exclusion and youth crime; the concentration of youth crime and victimisation in disadvantaged areas and amongst disadvantaged groups and the development of a risk focused preventative approach to youth justice under New Labour. Yet whilst this may seem a rather disparate set of topics, two overarching concerns come to the fore – the context for and nature of young people's experience of crime and victimisation and the impact and appropriateness of policies ostensibly intended to ameliorate the harms resulting from youth crime. Within these sub-areas, the research I have conducted (with colleagues and in sole projects and writing) has examined the relationship between social exclusion, offending and victimisation and the rationale for and impact of certain recent policy initiatives designed to address these overlapping problems. The twinned question to which the collective contributions offer a partial answer is: how does youth crime involve and affect children and young people and, given this, how appropriate has been the policy response?

I will return to that partial answer in the concluding chapter. The next chapter reflects on methodological aspects of my work, considering in particular the nature and limitations of operating in an applied social research context and critically reflecting on the specific methods used in the course of the research reported on in my submissions. Each of the submissions is then critically reviewed in chapter 4, where the continuities I have tried to map out in this chapter in respect of the wider literature are further demarcated, but this time by reference to the findings from the various studies concerned.

Chapter 3: Reflections on Method, Politics and Theory: Doing Applied Social Research

Introduction

“The interest of the sociologist is primarily theoretical. That is, he is interested in understanding for its own sake. He may be aware of or even concerned with the practical applicability and consequences of his findings, but at that point he leaves the sociological frame of reference as such and moves into realms of values, beliefs and ideas that he shares with other men who are not sociologists” (Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 1963: 28-9)

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” (Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, 1845/1968: 28)

Writing about Cohen and Taylor’s (1972) study of ‘surviving’ long term imprisonment, Fielding and Fielding note that in contrast to psychological research in prisons which they suggest was at best “regarded as ameliorative, oriented to helping the men adjust to their position..., the sociology (of the time) was transformative and aimed strongly at public opinion. It wanted to create an understanding - even sympathy - for the prisoners” (2000, p672). A distinction is drawn here between research which works within existing arrangements and seeks to improve but not question the status quo and that which not only questions but seeks to replace (or even abolish) the very institution in which the research is taking place. The distinction is overtly political but also theoretical and methodological. Cohen and Taylor knew ‘whose side they were on’ (Becker, 1967), situated their analysis within a labelling perspective which argued that ‘social rules create deviance’ (Becker 1963) and grounded their analysis primarily in discussions and correspondence with the prisoners, a naturalistic approach which stood in contrast with the diagnostic tests and experiments conducted by the psychologists next door. More broadly, questions about how to bring about change have long divided reformist Socialists from revolutionary Marxists and liberal from radical Feminists. Broader still, the key question is expressed in popular idiom: is it better to be on the inside of the tent pissing out, or on the outside, pissing in?

Both protagonists in such a debate can use the distinction to buttress their side of the argument. Within British criminology in the 1980s, the left realists (Lea and Young, 1984) argued that it was better to be inside the tent researching the reality of crime and victimisation for working class people and seeking to affect democratic control of criminal justice institutions. They dismissed as ‘idealist’ the same sort of social constructionist and abolitionist perspectives (Hulsman, 1986) which had informed Cohen and Taylor’s study. There are contemporary echoes of the dispute in the contrasting perspectives on gangs with those on the more constructionist side charging the realists with being too accepting of official definitions and of reifying the very problem they purport to want to get rid of (Hallsworth and Young, 2008).

However it can also be a false or misleading distinction. As Fielding and Fielding (2000) observe in their rereading of Cohen and Taylor’s data, one irony of the story in retrospect is that some of the prisoners who participated in the research reported that the process had helped them to adapt to the environment, rather as cognitive behavioural therapy can apparently help today’s prisoners to reason and rehabilitate (Gendreau and Ross, 1987). Another is that in their critical appraisal of the

study, some prisoners took Cohen and Taylor to task for their unsympathetic portrayal of prison warders, many of whom, one suggested, “were as critical of the regime as the prisoners” (Fielding and Fielding, 2000: 686) but whose attitude towards prisoners might harden were they to, say, read about their folk devil status in the papers. The implication is that the study’s impact was more functional than transformative and that the researchers’ efforts to empathise with the prisoners negated against a more ‘realistic’ or authentic account of prison life with potentially damaging consequences. To return to idiom, the suggestion is that Cohen and Taylor were actually inside the tent helping out after all, but that they were in danger of pissing on and off the camp guards, which might make things worse again. To be fair, Fielding and Fielding report that Cohen and Taylor were themselves well aware of these contradictions and that this was reflected in their choosing the title ‘Psychological Survival’ rather than ‘Psychological Resistance’ (ibid.: p688) when publishing their findings.

Most of my own research career has been spent inside the tent but it is fair to say that my awareness of this and of its significance has been a slow process of enlightenment. My first job was at the (then named) Policy Research Unit at Leeds Metropolitan University which relied almost exclusively on funding from central and local government and whose projects invariably involved looking for ways to improve existing public services. The questions for which we sought answers were set by politicians and civil servants and whilst we had more discretion over the methods chosen to collect the information, this was more a matter of technical efficiency than theoretical integrity. Certainly, issues of epistemology (concerning “how the world should be studied” (Bryman, 2012: 6)), or ontology (concerning “the nature of social phenomena” (ibid.: 6) did not much trouble this research assistant as I travelled West Yorkshire interviewing employers about their skill shortages or sat coding and inputting questionnaire data revealing residents’ views on the merits and demerits of trams versus guided buses. To be sure, it was fantastic training in the day to day grind of doing research and matters such as the reliability and validity of data entered my consciousness from this experience some time before I could explain what these terms meant in a classroom. Nevertheless, when I did become familiar with research methods textbooks, I found in them dirty words such as ‘positivist’ and ‘empiricist’ which seemed uncomfortably close to the bone.

To clarify and in fairness to my erstwhile colleagues, it is my own naivety, limited awareness and understanding that I am describing here. Although my academic background in philosophy and politics should in principle have prepared me well to consider how the nature of knowledge and of being affect the ways in which we obtain and interpret research findings, in practice ensuring that enough 16-19 year-old males were included in the sample was the more pressing concern. Over time, I think I have been able to synthesise better that part of my knowledge that comes from reading Descartes and Marx as an undergraduate with that learnt ‘on the job’ as an apprentice social policy researcher. What completed the triangle for me was criminology, well known for being a rendezvous discipline (Rock and Holdaway, 1997), where the politics of research, as illustrated by Cohen and Taylor’s work, are particularly visible. Equipped with this improved though still partial understanding, I can at least now make out that there is a campsite and that there is a choice about where to pee.

Applied Social Research: Tainted knowledge?

A different though related distinction to the one identified by Fielding and Fielding (above) can be found in respect of pure or basic or theoretical research on the one hand and applied or policy oriented research on the other. According to Junger Tas:

“The most important distinction ... is that the former addresses scientific questions, such as the accumulation or extension of knowledge, and aims at theoretical conclusions, while the latter addresses political and policy decisions, and as such is action oriented” (2005: 148).

At issue here is the question of what research is for. For some researchers, the point of their work is to bring about positive social change, for others as the 1961 Robbins Committee on British Higher Education put it, it is to “search for truth” (cited in Hayward and Young, 2007). Bachman and Schutt (2011) quote two former Presidents of the American Sociological Society whose words sum up nicely the opposing sides of this debate. In one corner, Lester Frank Ward, who in 1897 wrote that “The real object of science is to benefit man (sic). A science which fails to do this, however agreeable its study, is lifeless.” In the other, William Fielding Ogburn, who some thirty years later argued that “Sociology as a science is not interested in making the world a better place to live.... Science is interested directly in one thing only, to wit, discovering new knowledge” (both cited in Bachman and Schutt, 2011: 373).

Robson argues that the dichotomies exemplified by these contrasting statements about the nature and purpose of research “are not very helpful as they suggest absolute distinctions” when in fact “well designed policy research can not only be of value to those concerned with determining policy but may also be of interest to one or more academic disciplines” (2002: 10). To this one might add that the reverse may also be true: theoretical research may both extend and amend academic knowledge and have more practical spin-offs. This argument is commonly deployed by natural scientists. Thus particle physicists defend the huge costs of building the Large Hadron Collider at Cern in Switzerland on the basis that it not only promises to ‘prove’ or not the existence of the Higgs-Boson or so called God particle but has along the way brought society the world-wide-web and many other technological advances. The problem, we now know better than ever, is that the spin offs are not always benign – atomic physics brought us nuclear energy but also nuclear waste, radiation therapy and Hiroshima. In principle, even the applied physicist can differentiate between the science and the use made of that science by those with the power to do so. In practice this may not be so easy. Sennett describes how Robert Oppenheimer, leader of the project to create the atomic bomb told his staff that it was “good to turn over to mankind at large the greatest possible power to control the world” yet struggled personally to come to terms with the consequences of his work, recalling in his diary the words of the Indian God Krishna: “I am become Death, the destroyer of Worlds” (2009: 4).

In doing applied social research, a similar dilemma emerges. “You may, overtly or covertly, be serving the agendas of those in positions of power (Scheurich, 1997): perhaps hired to seek sticking plaster solutions to complex and intractable problems” (Robson, 2002: 11, citation in original). In criminology, where the problems and solutions lie in the realm of justice and morality, the danger is argued by some to be even more acute. According to Walters, “a vast amount of funding for criminological research is directed to administrative projects that aim to improve existing apparatuses of crime control” (2006: 7). Such structures, he argues, reinforce existing inequalities as

they are focused on the crimes of the poor; the crimes of the powerful meanwhile, remain under-investigated and so unseen (ibid.; Box, 1983). Bound up with this critique is the charge that policy research is dominated by quantitative methodologies and in particular the social survey which serve to “reduce research subjects to carefully controlled categories of counting and cross-tabulation” (Ferrell et al., 2008: 165), to turn people into particles as it were. For cultural criminologists, the result is not only unethical, it is bad science:

“The vivid experiential agony of crime victimisation transmogrified into abstract empiricism, the sensuality of the criminal event tabulated and footnoted – it would be a remarkable trick of methodological sanitation if only it weren’t so damaging to the discipline” (ibid.: 166).

Although the target of Ferrell et al.’s scorn is orthodox and mainstream academic criminology rather than applied criminology per se (it is academic journal articles they cite as evidencing the problem rather than grey literature such as research reports), there is a clear suggestion that infecting the issue is the fact that the research is *for* policy rather than *for* knowledge. “For United States criminologists especially”, they write,

“this quantified academic machinery has increasingly been coupled, through criminal justice departments and Federal research grants, to a parallel state machinery of surveillance, imprisonment and control - a state machinery that requires ‘objective’, quantifiable survey data for its operation and justification” (ibid.: 163).

In a very small way, I think I can illustrate the kind of research being lambasted here with an example from my own chequered career. In the late 1990s at the (then) University of Luton, I was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of two crime prevention campaigns designed to prevent street robbery. In essence these campaigns involved the distribution of leaflets and posters highlighting some facts about this form of crime alongside strategies members of the public could take to avoid becoming a victim. Both evaluations comprised a survey of town-centre visitors interviewed on the street using a structured questionnaire; the second also involved a small number of focus groups with school aged children. The aim was to assess levels of awareness of the campaign, what people took to be its main messages and whether it was likely to change their behaviour.

This may all seem harmless enough but the title of the first campaign, ‘Cowards Rob’ give a clue as to what a critical reading of the enterprise may conclude. It would not be difficult to locate these apparently benign attempts to inform and advise the public as part of an exclusionary discourse which draws on and perpetuates images of the folk devil in our midst, heightening the fear of crime and simultaneously justifying a range of technological and social instruments of control, from CCTV cameras to Crime Hotlines, ‘needed’ to address such fear (See Stenson and Sullivan, 2001, for more nuanced versions of this thesis). In this reading, the evaluation adds the gloss of academic credibility to the process but little of intellectual value. Whatever the conclusions reached about the effectiveness of the campaign, the sum of human knowledge has hardly been stretched. Moreover, even where the researcher in question does raise concerns of precisely the sort described above, he/she may be easily ignored, thereby demonstrating who owns and controls the agenda. The response to my point in the evaluation of the ‘Cowards Rob’ campaign, that the title and the accompanying photograph of a young man snatching an elderly lady’s bag might be unnecessarily

and unhelpfully stereotypical, was to name the follow-up a year later 'Beat the Thug'. Not that this prevented a second evaluation -we needed the money.

The critique of applied social research is damning in two ways. First is the charge of witting or unwitting collusion in the generation of knowledge for power; whether he or she knows and/or acknowledges it or not, the researcher is a mere pawn in the game. Both the questions they ask and the findings they produce are ultimately controlled by the organisation funding the research. Furthermore, whilst Oppenheimer could legitimately argue that he was a scientist first and foremost and that his work was concerned with the laws of physics rather than the laws of people, social scientists have no such excuse. We (should) all know by now that knowledge equals power (Foucault, 1977). One of the first lessons in criminology is that criminal statistics (collated by applied researchers) are socially constructed and tell us as much about the priorities and workings of the criminal justice system as they do about levels of crime. Technical improvements to the data collection and analysis process can be made and qualifications aired about the nature and accuracy of the figures and what they do or do not tell us. In the end though, it is the Home Secretary's prerogative to tell us what the year's statistics mean and whether or not the rise or fall in imprisonment is a good thing.

The second criticism is possibly the more wounding. This is that the knowledge produced by the applied researcher has little intrinsic value as knowledge per se. For much the same reason that the research is politically compromised (to do with the questions being asked and the interpretations being made), it is also theoretically impotent. Bierstedt, writing over sixty years ago, makes the following observations about Community Studies:

"Community studies have ... come to be increasingly popular and are in many places considered to be examples of sociological research par excellence. We currently labour under the impression that for some impression it is important to invade American communities with a battery of schedules and questionnaires and to compile as many facts about them as possible to stuff into a filing cabinet... In so far as sociology is concerned, community studies have probably reached the points of diminishing returns. The United States Department of Agriculture has every reason to study more communities, the contemporary sociologist almost none. Although it is doubtless a radical statement, there is substantial ground for asserting that the sociologist, in so far as he is a scientist, has no present business in the field unless he is testing a hypothesis or trying to corroborate one" (1949 in Bulmer, 1977: 51).

Like Berger (1963), quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Bierstedt here seeks to define for sociology some hallowed epistemological ground, a place of high theory at the boundaries of the sociological imagination. There is a patronising wink to the applied researcher at the Department of Agriculture, who is not necessarily doing the devil's work implied in some critical criminological accounts and may even be promoting positive social change. But their work is not to be confused with science because it subsumes theory/rationality to research, collecting facts if not quite for the sake of facts then for some equally pragmatic and intellectually lifeless purpose. For Bierstedt, this puts the empirical cart before the rational horse:

"It is reason after all, which tells us what situations to study, what hypotheses to entertain, what conditions to observe, what operations to perform, what experiments to undertake

and what data to collect, and it is reason, finally, which helps us to weigh the accumulated evidence and to put it in its proper place” (ibid.: 54).

Or as Descartes put it, “I think, therefore I am”. Or to invert Marx, applied social researchers have only changed the world, in various ways, the point is to understand it.

It is perhaps unfair to suggest that Bierstedt’s ‘Critique of empiricism in sociology’ is effectively a critique of applied social research. Nowhere does he suggest that all applied research is empiricist or that all empiricist work is applied. This is not his agenda; like Ferrell et al. (2008), it is to his colleagues in academia that he is talking. Applied research is not so much lesser knowledge in his account (whereas empiricism is), rather it is a different type of knowledge altogether with a different purpose. Nevertheless, and perhaps because I have a section of filing cabinet, if not stuffed, then certainly replete, with community studies, quite a few with my name on the cover, I think these criticisms resonate with my own experience of doing applied research. My academic journey, from a policy research unit attached to a university, to a department of Applied Research Studies, to a department of Criminology and Sociology was influenced in part by a desire to move away from the empirical swamp towards the theoretical uplands of knowledge. In the end, I will argue below, whilst the criticisms levelled above can and do characterise some, maybe even a lot of applied social research studies, they do not apply to all of them. What they instead highlight is a need for reflexivity and for theory in all research whether it be policy or science oriented. To begin this next stage of the argument, I want to consider first the case of experimental criminology.

Applied Social Research in practice 1: Experimental Criminology

The issues discussed so far are central to contemporary criminological theory and research because it is a discipline plagued just now (though not for the first or last time) with self doubt. The 2009 British Society of Criminology Annual Conference in Cardiff focused on the role of criminology, asking in effect, what is criminology for? One plenary speaker was Professor Lawrence Sherman who presented a paper entitled ‘Evidence and Liberty: The promise of experimental criminology’ (subsequently printed in *Criminology and Criminal Justice* (Sherman, 2009)). This amounted to a rallying call for a scientifically sophisticated criminology. By upholding the highest standards of methodological rigour, specifically through the meta-analysis of random controlled trials, criminology can produce theoretically and empirically sound knowledge for society. Such scientific rigour, Sherman argued, has been revolutionary in the context of medicine and it should be harnessed in the pursuit of effective criminal justice as well.

Sherman is an advocate of ‘experimental criminology’. For example, by experimenting with different ways of reducing gun crime, it should be possible to identify the most effective method, thus reducing murders and so increasing the wellbeing of society. His argument reads as a riposte to Bierstedt, an impassioned plea for more evidence and less theory:

“Evidence is central to criminology in determining whether a hypothesis is false. Criminology has long been rich in theory, but poor in evidence. And without evidence, liberty has suffered at the hands of theory. From the dogmatic jurisprudence that claims punishment *will* prevent crime to the Information Commissioner’s recent order that old criminal records should be destroyed (Information Tribunal, 2008), both governments and criminals may reduce or increase our liberty on the basis of theory, not evidence. Where those theories are

normative statements of value, this is perhaps as it should be. But where even normative judgements are made upon untested factual assumptions about cause and effect, liberty remains vulnerable without evidence” (ibid.: 6).

In putting forward this argument, Sherman refers to advances in medicine brought about by the use of the meta-analysis of Random Controlled Trials (RCT). In basic terms, an RCT involves randomly assigning subjects in an experiment to two groups, one of whom receives some form of intervention, one of whom doesn't. If statistically significant change is observed in the experimental group and this change can be attributed to the intervention, the trial constitutes scientific evidence that the intervention works. What meta-analysis of such trials adds to the picture is reliability, any residual uncertainty in the findings from any one study can be increasingly ruled out by examining the results of several. Sherman exemplifies the point with reference to the symbol adopted by the Cochrane Collaboration, “an international research effort funded ... in order to develop what the new field called ‘evidence-based medicine’”. This depicts the cumulative findings of random controlled trials of corticosteroids used to prevent infant mortality from premature birth. The image shows that few of the trials on their own produced sufficient evidence to persuade policy makers to fund the use of these drugs. Collectively however, the evidence is clear, the average effect of all the trials was demonstratively positive. Subsequent uptake of the drug has saved one million babies lives.

Funding RCTs in the field of crime and criminal justice, Sherman argues, would yield great dividends. He cites the example of a meta analysis of seven tests of restorative justice meetings: “these experiments produced an overall difference of 27 per cent fewer reconvictions over two years after random assignment” (ibid.: 11). He bemoans the lost opportunity to conduct an experiment when in 2008, the British government approved the early release of offenders 18 days before the end of their sentence to custody.

“By randomly assigning the different offenders to early release of different lengths – perhaps six months or a year – we could have learned what differences the length of a sentence really makes by incapacitating crime while they are inside and deterring or increasing it after they come out” (ibid.: 13).

Another example of the promise of experimental criminology relates to crime hot-spots.

“Koper’s analysis of over 5000 hours of independent observations of hot spots showed how long police visited them and how long it took until the first crime occurred after police left. The Koper curve shows that the optimal time for a marked police car to park in a hot spot is 11 to 14 minutes. More or less police time in the hot spot predicts a faster occurrence of the next crime than staying for just that amount of time” (ibid.: 20)

Later on, Sherman writes that “Hot spots policing research may have prevented thousands of murders in the USA.” and refers to research which “has prevented an estimated 40,000 cuttings with broken bar glass each year in the UK” (ibid.: 24). “The promise of experimental criminology” therefore:

“is not just better knowledge, although that is essential. It is not just more evidence-based guidance, although that is also necessary. Rather, the promise of experimental criminology is that better evidence can help reduce harm and increase liberty.” (ibid.: 24).

Recalling the two former Presidents of the American Sociological society quoted earlier, if Bierstedt (1949) echoes William Fielding Ogburn in defining the role of sociology as being to discover new knowledge, then Sherman here sides with Lester Frank Ward, for whom the real object of science was to benefit humanity. If for Bierstedt, what sociology as science has to offer is theory supported by evidence, for Sherman it is evidence underpinned by theory. If for Bierstedt, the hallowed epistemological ground is a place of pure reason, for Sherman it is a field of random controlled trials. If for Bierstedt, the point of sociology is to better understand the world, for Sherman it can and should help change it, though not quite along the lines envisioned by Marx.

It is not difficult to see the appeal of experimental criminology for policy makers. “Whether you are a crime victim, a Police Superintendent, a Magistrate or a Probation Officer”, Sherman enthuses, “you will be able to go to www.campbellcollaboration.org to find exactly the right kind of information. What is the most effective strategy to prevent auto theft? Do burglar alarms work? What can I do to prevent domestic violence by my partner? What sentence is optimal for a chronic burglar?” (ibid.:16) In response to the question, what is criminology for, the answer Sherman appears to give is that experimental criminology is for those in need of and responsible for the maintenance of order and justice – the police, the courts, the national offender management service – and by extension both victims and offenders and so on to society as a whole. What is on offer is the most reliable (i.e unbiased) evidence criminology can provide. Surely it makes sense to use that in society’s interest.

Imagine for a minute though, Sherman shunned by those he (to date very successfully) seeks funding from – governments, the police etc. - and advertising instead for less savoury clients. ‘Want to know the most effective way of bumping off your wife – experimental criminology holds the key’. ‘Fed up of not being able to get into houses. We tested seven different modes of entry into domestic buildings. For results, go to www.criminologyforcriminals.com’.

The point is that, however sophisticated, evidence has no moral compass in and of itself. On the one hand, Sherman seems to acknowledge this. “The promise of experimental criminology”, he writes, “is that our evidence can increase liberty. There are no guarantees that it will, given the uncertainties of history and democracy. But the odds of reducing crime are far greater with evidence than without it” (ibid.: 24) On the other hand, this statement itself appears to suggest that it is possible and desirable to bracket off the research evidence from the social, political and temporal context – “the uncertainties of history and democracy” - in which it is generated. On the one hand, positivism is dead. On the other, long live positivism.

The positivist impulse in experimental criminology is apparent in Sherman’s willingness to treat the world as a laboratory. This raises ethical issues which one could brush aside if he was not absolutely serious. Randomly assigning someone to the group that serves six months in prison may be good scientific practice but is it morally acceptable to treat people this way? There are also theoretical and methodological questions. What, for example, will be the effect on an offender of knowing they have been assigned to the six or twelve month trial group? Won’t how she or he reacts affect the experiment in some way? If we adopt the ‘Koper curve’ in practice, won’t potential criminals clock that the cops are likely to move on after approximately 15 minutes and adapt their own methods accordingly? Whilst it is wonderful if lives have been saved by the introduction of plastic cups in

pubs and clubs, is it the scientific method to which credit should be assigned, or just a very good idea?

The logic of experimental criminology, evident in Sherman's use of medical research to exemplify its potential, is that the social world is akin to the natural world in the sense that interventions will have fixed, measurable, replicable outcomes, that under controlled conditions a specified cause will have a specified effect. The logic becomes clearer if we consider an alternative epistemology, that of symbolic interactionism, for which "(t)he world is constituted through multiple refracted perspectives: it is indeed a 'plural world', one that is constantly changing and never fixed, and one where meanings are always being negotiated" (Plummer, 2005, xi). Here the world is not *treated* as a laboratory, rather it is *seen* as such, a place of continual experimentation and one open to numerous interpretations, an unfolding drama (Goffman, 1958) where causes and effects mutate like everything else. In making this point, I am not committing myself to an interpretivist epistemology and certainly not claiming to have adopted one in my own evaluative work (see Submissions 5 and 6) which are as positivistic as they are humanistic. The key issue is more political than methodological and rests with the claim of experimental criminologists to produce value-free unbiased knowledge.

The political appeal of experimental criminology stems in good part from its claim to be scientific and therefore apolitical. In one of a number of responses to this article (see also Tilley, 2009; Hope 2009), Carr (2010) provides a compelling account of a test case in experimental criminology which problematises this key claim. On the basis of positive experimental evidence provided by none other than Sherman himself, the newly elected Mayor of Philadelphia instructed the police in 2008 to increase the use of 'Stop and Frisk' tactics, especially in the most problematic districts, in order to 'crack down on violent crime.' Early indicators, Carr reports, suggested that the policy was working, a drop in homicides particularly in the districts targeted apparently offering confirmation of the wisdom of evidence based policy making. Already in 2009 however, conflicting data was apparent raising the issue of what time frame such an experiment should be evaluated within and at what stage it is scientifically correct for the policy involved researcher to leave the field. A second issue concerns what gets measured. Citing the considerable evidence that stops and searches can have negative consequences for police-public relations, Carr points out that no amount of methodological rigour can liberate social scientists from choosing what questions they ask:

"it is not too difficult to picture a forest plot of studies that demonstrate the negative consequences of aggressive policing on citizens. The question then becomes which forest plot takes precedence, the one illustrating that Stop and Frisk reduces violent crime, or the one demonstrating that the tactic erodes trust and reduces cooperation?" (2010: 8).

Although Sherman gives examples of the avowed benefits of existing experimental criminology throughout the paper, his argument is also couched in plaintiff terms, a plea for more funding to support research which he argues could tell governments if their vast criminal justice budgets were being spent wisely. In the field of youth crime and youth justice, this is particularly ironic because as Goldson and Hughes point out:

"The influence of such approaches within governments globally can hardly be over-stated as the 'evidence-based', 'what works' paradigm comprises an ever-consolidating orthodoxy in policymaking circles—especially in Anglophone societies. Indeed, it is increasingly assumed

that experimental methods—modelled on natural science—can best produce reliable evidence to enable governments to ‘tackle’ the problem of youth crime and youth offending ‘scientifically’ (Muncie, 2005, 2009; Muncie and Goldson, 2006; Hughes, 2007; Leigh, 2009)” (2010: 221-2, citations in original).

The idea that ‘effective practice’ is evidence based practice is one of the defining characteristics of the ‘new youth justice’ (Goldson, 2000) ushered in via the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, at least in theory (Stephenson et al., 2007; Smith, 2006; Bateman and Pitts, 2005). When the newly created Youth Justice Board for England and Wales began issuing development funding for new methods of preventing and reducing youth offending in the late 1990s, the projects commissioned were approved on the basis that they were the most promising according to available evidence and on condition that they be subject to sustained monitoring and evaluation, ideally involving RCTs, certainly involving the meta-analysis of similar studies, i.e. precisely along the lines Sherman proscribes. Moreover, as I argue in Submission 9, the other side of the coin to the ‘What Works’ movement, ‘Risk Factor’ research, is equally positivistic with the prospective longitudinal study afforded a similar status to the RCT as the gold standard for researching offending behaviour (Farrington 1996; YJB 2001) and has been just as influential, forming, again in theory at least, the basis for Youth Offending Workers’ assessments as to whether and why young people are likely to re-offend and what should be done to minimise this possibility (Case and Haines, 2009). Whatever case therefore that can be made for experimental criminology, the notion that its unfulfilled promise is the result of a lack of resources or political commitment (on either side) is one of the less persuasive arguments.

A final criticism of experimental criminology is that it is insufficiently curious about the problem of crime itself. The overt appeal to follow the example of evidence based medicine in Sherman’s argument only increases the sense that is the kind of criminology described by Young, one which “views crime as a blemish which suitable treatment can remove from a body which is, itself, otherwise healthy and in little need of reconstruction” (1998: 70). Disinterested it seems in wider political and theoretical questions about the place and meaning of crime and criminal justice in contemporary societies and accepting instead of common-sense and populist definitions of crime problems, this model of applied social research exemplifies the kind of “courthouse criminology” (Polsky, 1967) railed against by Ferrell et al. (2008), a kind of criminology for which the “*method is the message*” (2008: 168, italics in original).

Before moving on, and having used Sherman’s arguments in one article to illustrate the problems with some forms of applied social research, it seems only reasonable to report Tilley’s (2009) attempt to save the man from himself. Tilley argues that there are two Lawrence Shermans, the realist and the rhetorician, and that the work of the former demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of theory and methods which belies the arguments in this article and his championing more generally of experimental criminology. Far from eschewing alternatives to the RCT for example, Sherman’s “pragmatic use of diverse sources of data and methods of data-collection in testing and refining ... theories is realistic about the sources of evidence that are available and can be used” (Tilley, 2009: 135). His work on domestic violence, Tilley says, is informed by diverse theoretical perspectives which are then synthesised in models of the problem, opening up in turn alternative practical strategies for reducing harm. The realist Sherman’s work is neither a-political nor a-theoretical but on the contrary works through the political and theoretical implications of

competing arguments about justice and morality in real-life contexts and subjects these to empirical testing.

This approach, Tilley acknowledges, is far removed from the model espoused in 'Evidence and Liberty'. An eclectic use of methods according to need and resources, guided by sociological theory and sensitive to political realities, a concern to empower practitioners by identifying the differential impact and consequences of alternative modes of action, all underpinned by a broad commitment to social justice. This is much closer as he says to Tilley's preferred theoretical and methodological position, that of realism (Bhaskar, 1975; Pawson and Tilley, 1997). It also shares much with the second model of applied social research I would like to discuss, action research.

Applied Social Research in Practice 2: Action Research

According to Elden and Chisholm, credit for the term 'action research' is usually attributed to the Social Psychologist, Kurt Lewin, who presented it "as a way of generating knowledge about a social system while, at the same time attempting to change it" (1993: 121). Lewin's most famous work involved the use of experiments in the context of industrial relations in order to explain and transform workers' traditional resistance to changes in methods and jobs. In part this research operationalised Lewin's theories concerning the relationship between democratic participation in the workplace and productivity. At the same time, in applying these ideas in a concrete situation, real social change was brought about as management quickly embraced the changes suggested by the research. In this way, van Elteren (1992) argues, Lewin considered that action research successfully integrated theory, research and action, delivering simultaneously, understanding and positive change.

There are clear parallels between Lewin's approach and that promoted by Sherman the rhetorician, not least in the choice of the experiment as the preferred method for obtaining knowledge about the world. Moreover, Lewin's critics took him to task in much the same manner as critical criminologists do crime scientists, observing that Lewin's "democratic participation in the workplace did not include any critique of the wider society, particularly the range of economic relations between worker and employer, capital and labour" (Adelman, 1993: 10). Latter day action researchers, would place some clear blue water between their approach and that of its founding father. Carr and Kemmis identify three key differences:

"First, they would regard group decision-making as important as a matter of principle, rather than as a matter of technique.... Second, contemporary exponents of action research would object to the notion that participants should, or could, be 'led' to more democratic forms of life through action research. Action research should not be seen as a recipe or technique for bringing about democracy, but rather as an embodiment of democratic principles in research, allowing participants to influence, if not determine, the conditions of their own lives and work.... Third contemporary action researchers would object to the language in which Lewin describes the theoretical aims and methods of social science.... This would now be described as positivistic and incompatible with the aims and methods of any adequate social or educational science" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, cited in Hart and Bond, 1995: 21).

Contemporary action researchers' commitment to doing research with rather than on participants results in a greater affinity with flexible, qualitative research designs than controlled experiments

(Robson 2002). As it is the problems of participants rather than those of the researcher which constitute the rationale for doing the work, ethnographic, narrative and arts-based research designs which enable participants to 'discover' and present their own knowledge are especially valuable, if not integral, to the process (O' Neill, 2010). Certainly this characterises the more radical version of the approach, known as participatory action research (PAR). Whyte observes that "PAR is applied research but it ... contrasts sharply with the most common type of applied research, in which the researchers serve as professional experts" (1991: 20). In action research, the participant is no less an expert than the researcher.

The relationship between action research and theory is more complex than it may at first seem. With its emphasis on action, this approach seems on the face of it to sit firmly in the 'the point is to change the world' camp but embedded within the philosophy is a refutation of the view that theory is ever absent from such a project. Contemporary action researchers would reject the dichotomy implicit in Marx's dictum or rather an interpretation of it which did not see that understanding and change are inextricably linked. From this epistemological perspective, no special status is to be granted to grand theoretical problem solving as opposed to practical problem solving. Indeed, it can be argued that participatory action research, precisely because of its inclusive approach to knowledge, can advance social scientific understanding in ways beyond the reach of more orthodox research methods (Whyte, 1989). Holter and Shwarz-Barcott (1993) and Lathlean (1994) (both cited in Hart and Bond, 1996) identify the generation of theoretical knowledge as integral characteristics of action research.

O'Neill's research with sex workers provides a case in point. Adopting a feminist cultural criminological perspective, O'Neill argues that historically, the problem of prostitution has been dealt with by the regulation and control of the bodies, sexuality and access to public spaces of the (mainly) women involved. This strategy was justified, ideologically, through the official labelling of prostitutes as essentially deviant individuals whose behaviour contravened morality, gender norms and the law. More recently, she argues, interventions reflect a more sympathetic, liberal awareness of prostitution but are still tied to the deviancy model and as such are "skewed towards helping women out of sex-work, through processes of rescue, desistance, self governance and rehabilitation for which the individual women must take responsibility" (2010: 217). Meanwhile, contemporary debates within feminism about how to address the issue are polarised between those who argue for greater recognition of prostitutes' cultural rights to identity with those who claim that this only serves to diminish their economic rights to financial security, a battle between those who would seek to normalise prostitution and those who want to abolish the sale of sex for good.

Citing her own and others work, O' Neill argues that because it foregrounds participants own accounts, participatory action research generates an understanding of sex work which transcends this debate by challenging dominant (pre) conceptions of prostitutes (thus recognising and respecting their cultural rights) yet simultaneously highlighting how money, or the lack of it, is a central organising feature of their involvement in the work (thus confirming the importance of economic rights). At the level of action, she suggests, the inclusive approach and participatory methods can provide tangible changes in the governance of sex work at local levels by raising awareness and developing innovative solutions. At the level of theory, the knowledge generated contributes to much wider debates concerning the nature of and barriers to social justice, and in this

instance specifically, the relationship between the cultural politics of difference and the social politics of inequality (Fraser, 2004).

Hart and Bond (1995) observe that there are considerable variations in the form which action research takes reflecting the range of academic and institutional contexts (e.g, education, health, business) in which it is used, methodological differences (e.g. from experiments to theatrical performances), the level of collaboration between researcher and participants, the type of problem that requires solving, the form of intervention deployed during the project and the theoretical framework adopted. Notwithstanding this complexity, the distinguishing features of action research can be illustrated through the example of the research partially reported on in Submission 1 (and details of which are also discussed in the critical review, see chapter 4). Funded as part of a broader Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) programme of cross-disciplinary research into violence (Stanko, 2007), the problem addressed by the project was inter-group and inter-racial youth violence and the impact of this on students at one secondary school in the neighbourhood concerned. This was a practical problem for those affected but also of course a sociological problem of longstanding interest. Although the mixed-methods research design was mostly conceived in advance by the researchers, considerable efforts were made to involve school students, staff, school governors, local government managers and practitioners and local residents at various stages of the project, from the design of questionnaires to the dissemination of its findings to the planning and implementation of interventions.

Three broad phases of the project were envisioned. First, a victimisation survey of students (the focus of Submission 1) followed up by focus groups and face to face interviews with students, staff and non school based professionals were undertaken to better understand the nature, extent and impact of youth violence for those concerned. The findings of the survey formed the starting point of the focus groups which in turn provided a forum for discussing their validity and meaning as well as imagining and creating potential solutions. Similarly interviews provided both perspectives on and interpretations of the problems of violence as well as existing and potential strategies and methods for addressing these issues. It fell to myself to collate the information gathered in these ways and to formulate an 'action plan' which then went through several rewrites as a result of the feedback provided in dissemination meetings. The action plan reported the key findings from the research identifying various aspects of the problem (including, for example, the high turnover of students at the school, vulnerable spaces, places and times, territorial disputes between young people in the catchment area) and summarised the collective suggestions for interventions at various levels (including, for example, a strategic review of school exclusions policy within the LEA, the prioritisation of pupil safety in new building works and more targeted youth-work provision in the neighbourhoods feeding the school).

Phases Two and Three are more easily summarised, involving, respectively the implementation of the action plan and an evaluation of its impact. The researchers' role in phase Two was essentially one of monitoring the changes introduced, predominantly through a series of meetings with the staff member (a Deputy Head) designated overall responsibility for actions at school level and an interagency project steering group involving local managers and practitioners who had 'signed up' to the plan. The evaluation of the project was to involve a repeat of the survey and further group and individual interviews alongside the analysis of quantitative and qualitative monitoring data more specific to the interventions undertaken.

In the event, for reasons to do with time, cost and changes in personnel, the evaluation phase never happened. Still the essential components of the action research model are clear. A problem is identified and clarified, a form of intervention is devised and implemented, an evaluation of the intervention is undertaken to assess if, how and why desired changes have occurred. The problem is one that directly and immediately affects a particular group or community and they are active collaborators in both the research and the action. The researcher's role is to advise and assist in technical matters such as data collection and analysis, to make available as appropriate theoretical and empirical disciplinary knowledge relevant to the project and to disseminate the findings from the research to a wider audience.

On the face of it, action research appears to constitute a form of applied social research which is resistant to the dangers alluded to earlier in this discussion. Far from being a mere adjunct of the State's power-knowledge-control nexus, action research of the kind exemplified by O'Neill's study seeks to give a voice to disadvantaged and/or vulnerable groups and communities, to speak the 'truth to power' (Said, 1996) and to transform existing social relations from the bottom up, at least on a local scale. Far from being divorced from the more lofty theoretical questions engaged in by self appointed 'proper' sociologists, action research involves using, testing and developing theory in a democratic process which does not privilege one kind of knowledge over another and is able to speak to and with different audiences. Far from insisting upon 'unbiased', scientific, quantitative methods of inquiry, contemporary action research is open to a range of data and of ways of collecting it and emphasises the particular advantages of qualitative techniques. Thus the charge that applied social research is compromised politically, theoretically and methodologically is challenged at every turn.

However, and as partially demonstrated by my own limited experience, such a characterisation of action research overstates its strengths and understates its weaknesses. First, whilst it is true that action researchers should, if true to the emancipatory spirit of the approach enter the field with their political eyes wide open, often fuelled by a particular standpoint, the political and structural barriers to change risk making a mockery of any such pretensions. Action research has had an extended run in the area of community development in England and Wales since the 1960s (Hawtin et al., 1994) yet the core problem targeted by such projects, relative deprivation and poverty, remain as intractable as ever. This raises the issue as "to what extent it is possible through local initiatives to promote the kind of fundamental socio-economic change at national level that might be necessary to overcome such problems" (Hart and Bond, 1995: 29). Even at the local level, the political commitments which inform an action research project will soon come across conflicting political commitments and priorities, such that the resources and changes required to make the interventions work do not in fact transpire. In the youth violence study described above, even relatively modest proposals for certain kinds of school based activities had to compete with others originating from equally worthwhile initiatives. In the worst case scenario, action research risks raising and exploiting participants' hopes and expectations of and for change in a way which other approaches do not.

Secondly, whilst theory can inform and learn from action research, it seems probable that the emphasis on harbouring local, contextually specific and practically useful knowledge in ways that are meaningful to participants does not exactly ease such an exchange. An awful lot of theoretical labour and translation has to go into turning action research into cutting edge theory and visa-versa,

which is not an argument for not doing it but does indicate that they remain distinct spheres of activity that need to be bridged. Action research may be a source of new theoretical insights but by definition this is not its primary aim which remains the resolution of problems of everyday life. Conversely, certain theories, most obviously theories of how change comes about may lend themselves to an action research approach but more often a different research design chosen specifically to test the theory in question will be more appropriate. Ultimately, action research needs theory more than theory needs action research. In the examples I have considered, the knowledge generated – of female prostitutes “life worlds” (O’ Neill, 2010) and of young people’s experiences of youth violence – did not require action research as such, only research.

Thirdly, whilst the commitment to involving participants as equal partners in research may improve the study, for example by maximising participation rates, refining research instruments or adding to the validity of findings etc., there is also the risk, as Robson puts it, that “if notions of collaboration and participation are taken seriously then some power of decision about aspects of the design and data collection are lost by the researcher” (2002: 216). In any case, action researchers do not have or claim a monopoly over such quality indicators which are or should be a concern whatever the methodology employed. Moreover, the presence of participants in the process does not negate the fact that different methods will generate different kinds of data and that the rationale for choosing a survey over or in addition to qualitative interviews depends on the inherent strengths and weaknesses of these methods, on what one is trying to find out and on the resources available. This is true whether or not the goal is to understand the world, or change it, or both.

So What? The Abiding Importance of Reflexivity and Theory

Notwithstanding the qualifications, the action research paradigm illustrates a kind of applied social research that seeks to be politically engaged, views theory and evidence as two sides of the same coin and privileges qualitative ‘non-scientific’ research methods. Conversely, the evidence-based practice paradigm shows a kind of applied social research which seeks to be politically neutral, maintains a rigid distinction between theory and evidence and privileges quantitative quasi-natural-scientific methods. In this way, the traditional distinctions drawn between different approaches to social research in general, between inductive and deductive strategies, between quantitative and qualitative methods and between objectivist and constructionist visions of the nature of social reality also apply to applied social research. To the extent that these other distinctions signify and represent very different ways of understanding the world and of the role of theory and research in changing it, the distinction noted towards the outset of the chapter between applied and theoretical research and knowledge looks much more problematic.

Up to a point this argument echoes Greer who observes that whilst policy problems can be differentiated from what he calls ‘problems of social philosophy’ and ‘problems intrinsic to scientific disciplines’, “they are not mutually exclusive: policy problems, philosophical problems and generic scientific problems may coexist in the same research project and indeed in the same social scientist’s concerns” (1969: 60). As in but not exclusive to action research, the same study may reveal valuable information with which to address both a policy or practical problem and a problem of interest to theorists. The argument also chimes with Goldson and Hughes’ (2010) concern that whilst the avowedly apolitical stance of crime scientists is disingenuous and misleading, a boycott of government funded studies (as advocated by Walters, 2008) on the grounds that this merely shores

up the walls of power risks leaving the field open to experimental criminologists and the like and underestimates the degree to which State policy can be influenced by politically reflexive, theoretically literate, methodologically transparent research.

Basically, I agree with these positions. My reason for rehearsing these longstanding debates concerning the nature and role of applied social research is that they provide a framework for reflecting upon my own research and its contribution to knowledge and policy in the broadest senses. It is in some ways a rather defensive argument, an apology for the under-theorised and insufficiently reflexive nature of some (if not most or all) of my published output and a way of saying, 'ah, but I know better now.' At the same time, what I take from the discussion is a sense that what can rescue or insulate applied social research from the positivism and empiricism that does indeed characterise some government funded policy oriented studies is precisely the reflexivity and theoretical awareness which critics say such studies lack. Moreover, I would concur again with Goldson and Hughes (2010) in saying that a considerable amount of British scholarship in the field of youth crime and youth justice, including most of the studies I have cited in my literature review, derives from applied social research in the first instance yet when translated into publications with a wider audience than the commissioning body, is eminently critical, theoretical and politically informed.

So whilst it is true that the applied social researcher must to a degree follow the tune of the funder, seek answers that reflect their political standpoint and practical requirements and in turn wider ideological and structural conditions, this is clearly no barrier to situating the findings from research within wider debates and reflecting on their theoretical significance, or at least I hope not because of course this is exactly what I am trying to do in this context statement. I shall return to these reflections in my conclusion. First, however, it is necessary to look more closely at the methods I have used in my work and the rationale for doing so.

Horses for Courses: An 'Everyman' approach to Applied Social Research

This part of the discussion is organised along similar lines to a chapter on 'Methodologies for Needs Assessment' (Porteous, 1996) written when I was working for the Policy Research Unit in Leeds. Thus I distinguish first between the collection of secondary (i.e. existing) and primary (new data) and then discuss the various options available under these headings, focusing especially on the difference between quantity and quality. The submissions themselves as well as the critical review of them includes more detailed accounts of the specific methods used in each case as well as reflections on their strengths and weaknesses for the particular job at hand. The purpose here is to describe and explain the spread of and reasons for adopting these methods, as well as their advantages and disadvantages in more general terms.

Though more by default than design, my eclectic use of different research methods over the course of my career illustrates the point made by Bryman that "research methods are more autonomous in relation to epistemological commitments than is often appreciated" (2012: 625). Nevertheless, without ever explicitly extolling the merits of a mixed methods approach, my experience is that quantitative and qualitative methods and data are as complimentary as they are different and that taken together they can provide for a richer analysis of the problem at hand. This is true in both primary research projects and desk based critical reviews. In short all methods have their strengths and limitations, as I will try to show with reference to examples from my own research.

The Use of Existing Information

Criminal statistics, whilst rightly mistrusted by criminologists and the general public alike (Maguire, 2007), are widely available and, treated critically, offer broad indicators of trends in and the distribution of crime and victimisation which most criminological theorists and researchers refer to even if they arrive at different conclusions as to what they mean. My work on the criminal victimisation of children and young people (Submissions 1, 3, 4) has involved analysing and interpreting quantitative data generated by or for governmental bodies and in large scale social surveys conducted by academics and researchers in non-governmental organisations. Such sources need to be viewed in historical context and the facts they report as constructed – it is necessary to reflect on what they don't show as well as what they do and for whom and what purpose they were produced (Muncie, 2009). It is important that as wide a range as possible of these indicators are considered so as to differentiate the short term from the long term, to examine contradictory evidence and to appreciate how methodological differences (between say interviews and self-completion questionnaires) might lead to different results. In most cases, the sources are reports on (some of) the data, collected, compiled, interpreted and presented by the authors in question, adding more distance between the 'facts' and the reader. But the fact that the facts do not speak for themselves does not deny their utility, it just qualifies it (Bryman, 2012: 324-5). Sometimes, it would be criminal not to use them.

Although I have used existing information of this kind in my research, more significant has been the collection and analysis of secondary data that was not produced for informational purposes as such. In evaluative work (Submissions 5, 6), this has included documents outlining the aims, objectives, methods to be used and targets achieved by projects as well as training materials, application and referral forms, feedback sheets, risk assessment forms, reflective diaries and project monitoring data recording, for example, the number and duration of client-worker meetings. In the research into the relationship between exclusion from school and offending, the key findings were generated from trawling through the case files of young people held by an educational charity to which they had been referred. The files included school incident reports, psychological assessments, letters between schools and parents, referral forms, police and youth justice related documentation including pre-sentence reports, meeting minutes and case workers' progress reports. In addition to this, and having signed the Official Secrets Act, we were given access to the court records of these young people via the then Home Office, detailing appearances and convictions.

In applied social research, where the budget is determined as much by what is available rather than what is needed (it is never enough!), such secondary sources of information have the advantage that they are relatively inexpensive to collect. More importantly, being evidence that was not collected primarily for the purposes of research, such documents provide a valuable record of intentions, events and outcomes that is to a degree independent of the research process. Interviews with project workers might produce a slightly different story, about say the success and impact of a mentoring scheme, to the one revealed by analysis of project records set against project targets and so both are worth including in the mix. The major disadvantage of this method, as I have found to my cost on occasion, is that the researcher is at the mercy of those whose job it was to produce the documents in question. Sometimes, documents or data that you were promised do exist, and may even have based a substantial part of your research design on, don't. More commonly, they have gone missing, are incomplete or inconsistent, or, as is the case with court records, they are

generated by processes (e.g. crime reporting, police arrests, decisions to prosecute etc.) which are necessarily selective and as such unreliable indicators of the thing one wants to measure, in our case whether or not an individual had offended in a certain time period. It follows that secondary analysis of this kind of existing information involves compromise, qualification and/or, most straightforwardly, gaps.

Analysing existing records has furnished quantitative and qualitative data. In the Home Office funded study (Submission 2), aside from descriptive information regarding the characteristics of the young people in the sample, the number of and reasons for exclusions experienced etc., the analysis centred upon the sequencing of events and specifically whether permanent exclusion had preceded offending behaviour or visa-versa. Underpinning this exercise was an implicit positivist concern with cause and effect which became increasingly problematic as the study unfolded. Wading through case files sometimes a foot thick, it became more and more difficult to accept the significance of supposedly key moments such as the date of permanent exclusion which was often sometime after a child had effectively been absent from school and which could hardly be seen as more important than say bereavement, family break-up, learning difficulties and other issues in the young person's lifetime. Note though, that it was the search for quantitative data itself, and the fact that it had to be unearthed in qualitative documents, which exposed the reductionism implicit in the exercise. Moreover, whilst the key finding of the study in quantitative terms, that permanent exclusion preceded offending more often than the other way round does not in and of itself have any causal significance – the qualitative interviews were in fact a better guide to the processes by which exclusion might precipitate offending – it did provide an indicator of what needed to be explained (the sequencing of events) which to the extent that it replicated existing studies could be said to be reliable.

A third and arguably the most important kind of secondary data available to a researcher is existing scholarship which includes statistical bulletins and reports discussed above but goes far beyond. I am uncertain if it is a personal failing or a weakness of social research more broadly but the single greatest limitation of my own research studies and publications concerns the degree to which they have been related to the wider knowledge base. Submissions 1, 6 and to a lesser extent 5, examining youth violence drug prevention projects and mentoring respectively, do make reference to other research studies but in quite a narrow way. A more complete disregard for existing literature characterises many more unpublished research reports that I have submitted, so called "grey literature" (perhaps due to the mount of dust that accumulates?). In part this reflects my own meandering path as an applied researcher, traversing over the years, labour markets, health promotion, community needs, transport, community safety, youth violence, drugs prevention, policing, mentoring, surveillance, teenage pregnancy, school exclusion, youth work, bail and remand services, homelessness, street crime – jack of all trades, master of none. In part it does reflect the political economy of applied social research, a conveyor belt of research proposals, fieldwork, reports, presentations and administration and in part, the role of the junior researcher within all this.

Whatever the reasons or excuses, my more recent publications hopefully represent progress in this regard. Securing a lectureship at Middlesex helped enormously and I made a conscious decision to spend more time doing desk-based research in order to redress precisely this issue. My later work on mentoring (Submissions 7 and 8) drew on and sought to summarise and critique research and policy

developments in this area. Submission 3, reporting on a study of young victims of street crime, although it remains primarily a summary of research findings, does locate them within a broader policy and research context; Submission 4 goes much further and includes these findings but only as part of a review of the literature and research on young people's victimisation in public spaces; Submission 9 finally is a wholly desk based analysis of the significance of the 'risk factor prevention paradigm' in youth justice in England and Wales in recent years. The other study to mention is the Home Office study of school exclusion and offending (Submission 2) which does top and tail the findings with a review of existing literature and a discussion of their broader significance and meaning in the context of related knowledge. However, credit for this good practice goes to my colleagues on the project who showed me how it was supposed to be done.

Although it is not generally referred to as secondary data or as a research method (excepting the recent emergence of systematic reviews in social science (Wakefield, 2011; Bryman 2012)), collecting and analysing existing scholarship is crucial to good research for all the reasons outlined in methods textbooks: to avoid 'reinventing the wheel' and to develop an argument concerning the significance of the research. Acknowledging that my own work has not always lived up to the principle, I would concur with the following comment:

"It could be said that the most important part of any research project is the literature review. Indeed, it would not be too strong for us to state from the outset that it is the responsibility of any researcher to have a very good understanding of the literature which exists in his/her field of study before embarking on a research project" (Crow and Semmens, 2008: 82).

A knowledge of existing scholarship provides the bridge between the individual research study and wider developments, debates and disputes in the topic area. If the criticisms of applied social research that I discussed earlier in this chapter - that it is politically naïve, theoretically barren and overly empiricist - are to be resisted, then it is by continuous, reflexive engagement with existing scholarship.

Primary Data Collection: Quantity and Quality

This said, even the most reflexive and knowledgeable applied researcher's decisions about the most appropriate methods of data collection in any one study are as likely to be governed by the questions the funding body wants answered as by those which the 'ideal type' of literature review suggests are important. An intellectual commitment to this or that epistemological framework is all very well but if the question posed includes phrases such as how much, how many, or how long or conversely, why, what does that feel like and in what ways, then the choice of a quantitative or qualitative methodology is to some extent pre-determined. In my own research at least, the use of questionnaires, interviews and observation to collect new data has been driven primarily by what the funding body wanted to know alongside other pragmatic issues like time, a resources and access. Less defensively, my experience at the coalface of applied social research has persuaded me that a mixed methods approach is often appropriate.

In the action research study described earlier (and see the critique of Submission 1 below), the choice to conduct a victimisation survey of students was informed by three main considerations: first, that the survey would provide descriptive information about the scale and distribution of

different kinds of violence experienced by pupils inside and outside of the school; secondly, that a survey of the whole school, was a way to involve the whole school population in the research and the wider project; and thirdly that the survey would generate baseline data against which to evaluate the effect of the forthcoming action plan. A fourth outcome was less intentional; the survey results provided a useful starting point for focus group discussions with students and staff. In turn both focus groups and face to face interviews were an important means to evaluating the validity and exploring the significance of the numbers generated by the survey and the reasons behind them. For example, the survey finding that students from ethnic minorities experienced the highest levels of racist victimisation was greeted with angry disbelief amongst White students and grim resentment amongst Black and Asian students. This seemed to confirm the validity of the statistic but also to beg further questions about the meaning of racism for different groups and individuals best explored qualitatively.

In the two evaluative research projects reported on in Submissions 5 and 6, a combination of self completion questionnaires, face to face, semi-structured interviews, non participant observation and focus group interviews have been deployed. Due to the small scale of the projects concerned, any concern with generating sufficient responses to reach statistical significance which can be an advantage of self-completion studies was irrelevant and the only reason for asking respondents to complete questionnaires themselves has been pragmatic – either individuals were unavailable for interview or there were insufficient resources to conduct interviews with everyone. There are clear advantages to interviewing over self completion questionnaires. It minimises non responses, allows for probing of issues in more depth and helps to ensure that questions are not misunderstood or interpreted in different ways by respondents (Babbie,1995).

The focal point of interviews (and where used questionnaires) in these evaluative projects has been with the experience and perspective of different actors: clients and family members, mentors, practitioners and managers. A difficulty which can arise concerns the fact that frequently those interviewed have a vested interest in the project, either because their jobs depend upon it, or because their hopes are invested in it, or because refuting its worth would invalidate their participation in and commitment to it. Moreover, in the case of clients and their families, the researcher's dilemma is often that it is only those who have stayed with a project who are available and willing to be interviewed, raising the possibility of positive bias even further. The good practice interviewing technique of gaining rapport so as to maximise trust and validity might even be said to make matters worse if it leads to the interviewer avoiding asking difficult questions which it is feared might antagonise respondents and result in them pulling up a drawbridge.

In very small ways, the use of focus groups and non participant observation in these studies provided alternative sources of qualitative data to interviews and as such stood as a partial bulwark against these potential problems. In a collective forum, "the social dynamic of respondents reacting to each other's input" (Noaks and Wincup, 2004) may lead to problems being raised and discussed which the same individuals may be more reluctant to confide in a one to one interview with, as one manager of an organising funding my research gloriously expressed it, the 'Validator'. Of course the reverse may also be true but that the possibility exists shows how group and individual interviews may complement each other because of the different dynamics involved. Observation of specific project events in action and of the more day to day running of projects (as one sits in a corner reading through case files for example) offer a further vantage point from which to survey and

assess what is going on and against which to compare, contrast and evaluate the views expressed in interviews. A researcher's observations need not be thought of as any more or less a selective and subjective interpretation of certain happenings for the method to provide one more kind of evidence to the mix.

The primary research for the Home Office study (Submission 2) and for the study of young people's experiences of street crime in East London (Submission 3) involved semi-structured qualitative interviews with young people (and in the former, their family members). Interviewees were purposively sampled reflecting the aim of seeking to understand the experience of being excluded, or having offended, or having been robbed rather than establish the frequency of such events and to examine how age, gender, ethnicity or class seemed to refract these experiences rather than how they were distributed, numerically, amongst younger and older children, boys and girls etc.. In the study of street crime (Submission 3), the inattention to this issue, to how far the respondents' experiences were representative of young people in the area more generally, did limit the findings in terms of reliability but these were framed with reference to contextual secondary data and research. In any case, the great strength of qualitative data is its relative validity. The method provided the best way of conveying these young people's experiences and perspectives accurately, not least through direct quotation, meaning and meaningfulness often being best expressed in an interviewee's own words.

In analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, my approach has been both deductive and inductive. The design of questionnaires and interview schedules has involved identifying variables and themes that the analysis has subsequently explored but this has involved less an elaboration of a clear theoretical model to be tested than a flexible framing of the research questions being asked. The Home Office study (Submission 2) followed a deductive logic to the extent that the data we collected on exclusion and offence dates enabled us to test the hypothesis that the former typically precedes the latter temporally. However, the theorisation of this 'fact' owed more to the analysis of the qualitative interviews which led, for example, to the typology of 'non-starters', 'starters', 'persisters' and 'desisters' through which we explored some of the complexities in the relationship between exclusion and offending. In my evaluative studies, questions like 'what are they trying to do, why and how?' have been answered inductively but then used to formulate hypotheses (e.g. drug use will be less likely following the intervention) which other evidence gathered could be assessed against. In the study of young victims of street crime, the interview questions were open ended and exploratory and the analysis essentially descriptive, summarising the broad range of experiences and perspectives emerging from the interviews, followed by some inductive reasoning as to their significance.

To speak of formulated hypotheses risks overstating the use of formal analytical techniques and procedures in my work. I have a solid but rudimentary knowledge of SPSS which has enabled me to generate basic descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and cross-tabulations without invoking what to me remain somewhat mysterious (and potential mystifying) statistical tests such as 'Gamma', 'Lambda' and 'Pearsons r'. Working with an applied research context, this has not been a major disadvantage for the reason that one's target audience is no more likely to understand (or miss) these terms or their usefulness (or otherwise). I have not used NVivo or similar qualitative analysis software, not least because their now widespread use is quite a recent development which predates many of the studies reported on in my submissions. The, admittedly ambiguous, term

'thematic analysis' (Bryman, 2012) describes best the method I have followed, seeking out repetition in particular, but also points of difference.

Underpinning all my data analysis has been an ethical commitment to presenting an accurate picture of the subject matter that fairly reflects the contrasting experiences, perspectives of and circumstances facing participants in a study. I take seriously the ever present danger that research can be exploitative in that it may not be clear whose interests are being served by the work or what consequences may follow from it. As a minimum, this involves taking the "responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of an individual participating in research is not adversely affected by participation in the research" (British Society of Criminology, 2006, para 4.1). Beyond this is the duty not to deliberately misrepresent findings or and (though this is more difficult) to not have them misrepresented by others, to be transparent about sources used to arrive at the conclusions one has reached and to make good use of the research through dissemination. These are commitments which it is not always easy to live up to. One of the most uncomfortable moments in my research career was when a finding from a draft action planning report relating to how many young people had been offered drugs was leaked, with the school in question named, to a local newspaper who subsequently included this as front page 'news'.

I would concur with Goldson and Hughes, following Said (1996), when they argue that "the formative intention of the social scientist-qua-sociological criminologist should be to pursue the search for 'truth' and its communication to 'power'" (2010: 225), accepting, as these authors do, that such a task is circumscribed by working in an applied social research context where the funding and the questions come from the same source. The ethical commitments that matter here are those to critique and to reflection, for which time and contextual knowledge are needed. The audiences for theoretical and applied research and publications are different and bridging the gap requires developing a broader set of skills and, again, knowledge. Situating the findings from small scale, localised studies commissioned for bureaucratic purposes within wider theoretical debates is arguably a matter of ethical good practice, perhaps particularly in criminology because, as Winlow and Hall put it, "it exists at the forefront of moral condemnation" (2012: 401). To give an example, a positive evaluation of a mentoring scheme, based on the outcomes for participants in terms of getting back into education or finding work, may be seen through a critical lens as an endorsement of a dark form of social control. Having an awareness of these possibilities is arguably as important as obtaining informed consent from participants in a study, though less likely perhaps, to the trouble the ethics committee.

Conclusion

In the appendix to 'Folk Devils and Moral Panics', Cohen (1973) lists the following sources: press references from all national daily and several local newspapers, recordings of radio and TV broadcasts, a collection of 724 press cuttings, local publications – parish newsletters, council minutes etc., Hansard reports, letters and reports received by the National Council of Civil liberties, interview schedules used in a separate research project, two pilot questionnaire surveys administered to probation officers and to college teachers and students, interviews with editors, MPs, Councillors and (sixty five) members of the public, observation whilst employed as a volunteer youth worker and on visits to field sites on all Bank Holidays over a two year period, a survey of 133

'social control agents' and twenty five essays written by third and fourth year pupils from an East London school, "entitled simply 'The Mods and Rockers'" (1973: 173-177).

I can think of no better advert for 'triangulation' and no better example of how it can be used to good effect. The broader lesson is of the importance of theory – people do not remember Cohen's classic account for the appendix – but I take some reassurance from Cohen's pluralistic approach to data collection precisely because it shows that how you obtain information matters less than what you do with it. Reflecting on the significance of the collective findings of my empirical work, I am confident that the evidence itself, whilst framed and limited in certain ways by having been conducted within an applied social research context, is sufficiently robust in terms of reliability and validity to withstand translation into a broader theoretical framework. The main conclusion I have drawn about the potential limitations of applied social research discussed in this chapter is that though they are real enough, the key to transcending them lies with political and theoretical reflection. As a youth crime researcher, I have encountered, listened to and recorded the "private troubles" of many young people. Turning them into "public issues" (Mills,1959) has proved more complex than I once knew, but I am still trying.

Chapter 4: A Critical Analysis of the Submitted Works

Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the nine submissions put forward for the PhD by Public Works. The somewhat eclectic character of my research, in terms of the focus of study, the methods employed and the form of publication, means that rather than applying an 'off the shelf' tool for analysing the works, I have drawn on general guidance (EPPI Centre, 2010; Aveyard, 2007; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006) for critically reviewing research studies and related publications as well as drawing on more general indicators of good practice in research and academic writing (e.g. Babbie, 1995; Bryman, 2012; Davies et al., 2011). The EPPI (Evidence for Policy and Practice) Centre note that some kinds of review "may need to include methods for coping with the diversity of issues and evidence being considered" and suggest that one of the strategies available in this case is to provide a "clear conceptual framework (or theoretical or logic model) to review and interpret the evidence" (2010: 2). With this in mind, I have identified the following elements of the submitted works as appropriate for critically analysing them:

(1) Their relevance and place within existing knowledge

Each review describes the context for the submission, specifying the purpose for which it was written and indicating the area of knowledge within which the contribution fits. Given the applied nature of the work, the policy context is explained and reference made to key literature, much of which is included in the broader review of contextual research and theory in chapter 2. The aim here is akin to what Gilbert advises in respect of literature reviews. To paraphrase him, "the hallmark of a good (critical review) is that it locates a hole in the research literature" (2001: 370) that the research conducted has addressed.

(2) Their logical coherence and the extent to which a clear argument is expounded

Each review includes an account of the structure of the submission, including a summary of the argument developed and an evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, considering questions such as is it accessible, is it engaging and do the conclusions follow from the arguments and evidence presented? In certain of the reviews, a longer exposition of the argument has been provided because this has seemed the best way of evidencing its distinctive aspects.

(3) The appropriateness of the methodology and methods adopted for the research

In the case of those submissions which report on the findings from primary research (Submissions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6), an account and assessment of the methods deployed in the study is provided, noting any particular strengths and limitations. As I have provided a general review of the methods adopted across my research in chapter 3 above, the focus here is on the rationale for choosing these specific methods in each case. For the one article (Submission 8) and three book chapters (Submissions 4, 7, 9) which involve narrative reviews of existing literature on the subject in question, the suitability of the literature for the discussion and how well this is interrogated are considered.

(4) The reliability and validity of the findings generated by the research

As with point 3, the focus here is mainly on the submissions which reported on primary research. The reliability of each study's results concerns whether the same methods applied to a similar research object would have reached the same conclusions (Babbie, 1995: 124). Validity refers to the credibility of a project's conclusions, (Davies et al., 2011) to how far they can be trusted to reflect the matter under study in terms recognisable for example to research participants. The review considers both the internal and external reliability and validity of the research findings, the latter referring to whether the findings are or have been replicated in other settings. The degree to which the arguments and evidence considered in the 'narrative review' type submissions are representative of comparable writings on the subject is used as an indicator of their reliability and validity.

(5) Their originality and the extent to which 'new' knowledge was generated by the research

Each review attempts to make a judgment as to how far and in what way the publication adds to what we know and understand about the topic at hand. Assessing originality is not straightforward as the term can apply to the 'discovery' of something previously unknown, the novel articulation of familiar ideas and facts or simply something which has never previously been written, i.e. that has not been directly plagiarised from another source. It inevitably links to point 1 about the place of the submission in the context of existing knowledge as is also true of point 6. Where appropriate, I have sought to highlight precisely what was 'new' knowledge.

(6) Their impact and significance

Discussing research impact, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) cite the Research Council's UK definition of the term: "the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy" and go on to distinguish between academic impact - the contribution to significant advances in understanding, method, theory and application - and societal impact - the contribution to society and the economy, accruing benefits for individuals, organisations and nations. Impact must be demonstrable and based on research of the highest quality – "you can't have impact without excellence" (ESRC, 2013).

In evaluating the academic impact of my own work, I have used the Google Scholar (GS) citations index but also referred where appropriate on other supporting evidence. The former is a useful and easy tool but also somewhat crude, and sometimes cruel! One issue is that my earlier studies predate Google itself, another that through Scholar one can find citations that are not recorded in the index so the figures it generates, whilst reliable, are likely to be underestimates. Where appropriate, I have indicated other ways in which my work has had an academic impact, for example through presentations to conferences or involvement in subsequent research. Societal impact is even harder to measure not least when one is working within a wider research community whose collective impact is not always easily attributable to particular research studies or indeed individuals working in teams on them. I have attempted to evaluate my contributions by reference to current policy and practice, but briefly and hesitantly. Significance (of the substantial rather than statistical kind) is closely related to impact, originality and the place of the work in the context of existing knowledge but centres on what the findings from an academic enquiry mean and whether and why they are worth writing home about (Babbie, 1995).

Petticrew and Roberts (2006) observe that reviews can suffer from too much criticism and too little appraisal. The latter involves more than saying whether a piece of research or writing is “good enough” and involves a systematic approach examining specified elements of items under review perhaps involving a checklist or scale. Yet as Hammersley has argued, reviewing also involves “judging the validity of the findings and conclusions of particular studies , and thinking how these relate to one another and how their interrelations can be used to illuminate the field under investigation” (2001, cited in Bryman, 2012: 109). This seems to describe well the main purpose of this review and so in analysing my submissions, I have tried to tell the story of each one as well as to draw out what of significance emerges from them. In the process, I have not stuck so rigidly to a pre-ordained structure as the above list implies but hope that what is sacrificed is made up for by the greater fluidity this approach affords. In order to make the continuities explicit, the chapter concludes with a synthesis of the main themes to emerge from the review as well as an overall assessment of the submissions in terms of the analytical criteria outlined above.

Submission 1: Porteous, D. (1998a) ‘Young People’s Experiences of Crime and Violence: Findings from a Survey of School Pupils’ in Marlow, A. & Pitts, J. (Eds) *Planning Safer Communities*, Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing

This submission reported on the findings of a survey of school pupils undertaken as part of a wider Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project examining ‘Inter-Group and Inter-Racial Violence and the Victimization of School Students in a London Neighbourhood’ led by my former colleague, Professor John Pitts. The chapter appeared in a book examining a range of issues in community safety which was still at the time a relatively new approach to crime prevention, control and reduction. The book’s publication coincided with the passage of the Crime and Disorder Act in the same year, legislation which along with many other things introduced a requirement on local authorities to undertake crime audits and publish community safety strategies (Marlow & Pitts 1998). Central to the concept of community safety is the idea that tackling problems of crime and disorder is best achieved through partnership working between agencies with ostensibly different responsibilities, for health, housing, education, social services, transport etc, rather than being the sole preserve of the police and other criminal justice organisations (Home Office, 1991; Crawford, 1998). As Marlow & Pitts explained in their introduction to the book, one facet of this approach was that “local multi-agency partnerships should give particular attention to the issue of young people and crime in preparing a portfolio of crime prevention activities” (1998: 3).

The research project was one of twenty commissioned by the ESRC as part of its Violence Research Programme (Stanko, 2002). It was an action research initiative which sought to identify the origins and dynamics of youth violence in an inner London neighbourhood and, on the basis of the research, develop a multi-pronged and multi-agency programme of interventions designed to ameliorate and reduce conflict amongst young people in the area. The project was based in a secondary school which as I explained in the chapter had been chosen because it was a “microcosm of the wider community” that provided a “gateway to groups of young people and their families” and was “itself a site of conflict” (1998: 131). The survey of pupils on which the chapter reported was just one element of the research which also included qualitative individual and group interviews with students, their parents, school staff and practitioners from local organisations such as the local education authority, the youth service, a voluntary agency for the homeless, the police and social services and ethnographic, observational research in the local neighbourhood. Although other

elements of the project (especially the ethnography) were largely the work of other colleagues, I led the survey research and was responsible for the design of the questionnaire, for managing its distribution and collection and for analysing and disseminating its findings. The chapter was written part way through the project, the wider findings of which were published elsewhere (Pitts & Porteous, 1998; Marlow & Pitts, 1999; Pitts, 2003).

The survey involved the completion of a self report questionnaire by pupils aged 11-16 in years seven to eleven. The questionnaire was designed by the research team but importantly this was done in conjunction with a steering group comprising staff and students with the latter in particular influencing the choice of wording used; for example, they suggested the term 'touched up' for the questions referring to sexual harassment. Significant effort was put into preparing pupils for the survey through briefings in assemblies about it and the wider project which emphasised the aim of reducing conflict and promoting their safety. The questionnaire was administered on one day during a one hour personal and social education lesson and members of the research team as well as members of the steering group attended as many of these classes as possible to explain and assist with the process. Insofar as possible then, the survey was conducted *with* rather than *on* students and, to the extent that these efforts engaged them and helped them to understand its purpose and meaning, this increased the validity of the results. This said, as was acknowledged in the chapter, the largely tick box character of the questionnaire limited the degree to which the survey captured the range of pupils' experiences or how strongly they were affected by them. It did nevertheless constitute an effective means of quantifying how many pupils had engaged in or been the victim of anti-social behaviour and violence inside or outside of school during the year in question. Moreover, it was reassuring that in focus groups with students held after the survey, which began with a brief summary of the findings, the general feedback was that they did represent a more or less accurate picture of their experiences. This also suggested that the findings were reliable in the sense that they reflected the experiences of all the pupils in the school and not just the 60 per cent of those on the roll who filled it in. A further indication of this was that the survey was broadly representative of pupils in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

In terms of external reliability and validity, the most telling indicator is that the findings replicated in many ways those from similar surveys undertaken with school aged children both prior to and after this research took place. By this I am not referring so much to the precise proportions of pupils who reported being a victim or having committed certain acts, which as explained in the review of literature above have varied widely, but rather to the general patterns which emerged. To illustrate, the following are some of the findings reported on in the chapter with examples of studies with comparable results shown in parentheses:

- a higher number of pupils reported having been a victim of anti-social behaviour and violence than is generally found in surveys of adults (Aye Maung, 1992);
- more pupils reported being a victim than being a perpetrator of anti-social behaviour and violence (Hartless et al., 1995);
- there was a positive correlation between the seriousness of acts suffered or committed and age with younger pupils reporting more name calling and older students reporting more serious acts of violence (MORI, 2002, cited in Jubb, 2003);
- the majority of incidents reported on by pupils were fairly low-level (e.g. name calling) and had only happened to them a few times but a significant minority had been frequently

victimised and suffered serious offences that would be considered crimes if suffered by adults (Brown, 1995, cited in Brown 2005);

- there was a link between gender and victimisation with boys more likely than girls to have been victims of theft and violence but girls more likely to have been sexually harassed (Wilson et al., 2006);
- there was a positive correlation between being a perpetrator and being a victim (McAra & McVie, 2010) ;
- whilst a lot of incidents had taken place inside or near to the school, in general students said that school was a safe place (Hayden, 2011).

Interestingly, pupils from ethnic minorities reported higher levels of victimisation and were more likely in particular to report being the victim of racist abuse and violence, a finding which as Muncie (2009) observes has not been clearly established in other studies of young people yet which corresponds with the results of victimisation surveys involving adults. In the context of a project which was in part concerned to investigate inter-racial violence, this was a significant finding to take back to pupils and staff, not least because some of the white boys involved in the Steering Group had been adamant that pupils from ethnic minorities 'gave as good as they got'.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the research, however, was simply that it provided quite graphic and convincing evidence of the high levels of anti-social behaviour and violence which children and young people experienced. At the time and within the school, this did not seem particularly surprising; the project had after all been set up with the school's and the local authority's support precisely because of the high level of concern locally about youth violence in the neighbourhood. Yet in an academic context and with hindsight, this most basic message of the survey does seem to have been significant, more so than I at least realised at the time. It generated knowledge of children and young people's experiences of crime and victimisation in an area of relative deprivation which was still relatively rare in 1998 and which subsequent studies suggest was reliable, valid and significant.

This being the case, perhaps the most disappointing aspect of this submission is the little impact it had within the field. In reading some of the relevant literature for this Context Statement, including a number of quite extensive reviews (Jubb, 2003; Brown, 2005; Muncie, 2009; Hayden & Martin, 2011), I have found literally no reference to it whilst GS records two citations (as at 19.04.2013), both from the book's editors in their own separate publications (n.b there are 10 GS citations to the book in which the chapter was published). To a large degree, I suspect that this has to do with the nature of the publication, a short chapter in an edited book targeted mostly at practitioners in the field of community safety. In addition, a significant weakness of the chapter was that it made virtually no reference to other literature itself. This in turn reflected the fact that I was a relative newcomer to the field of youth crime and, more importantly, the fact that as an applied social researcher, I was engaged in doing fieldwork on several other projects and spent very little time in the library!

This would matter less if I could clearly demonstrate that the project, the goal of which as action research was more to bring about change in the school and the neighbourhood than to create new knowledge, had had a lasting impact there. Unfortunately, this is difficult to substantiate. On the one hand, many pupils and some staff appeared to positively welcome the opportunity to have their

voice heard and suggested that the project was effective in bringing in to the open issues such as racism and sexism which they felt had previously been tolerated or ignored. In this way, the participation of pupils and others in the research process, almost regardless of the knowledge generated, seemed a valuable end in itself. More concretely, the action plan that emerged from the survey and the qualitative work which followed identified a broad range of possible interventions within the school and beyond.

However, whilst it had always been planned to evaluate the impact of the changes recommended in the action planning report produced on the back of the survey and the other research conducted, this did not happen. A year or so after the survey was completed, a new Head Teacher arrived at the school and our attempts to continue with the research were politely rebuffed. So whilst it is quite possible that the various strategies suggested in the conclusion to the chapter were both implemented and successful, the sad truth is that we shall never know.

Submission 2: Berridge, D., Brodie, I., Pitts J., Porteous, D. & Tarling, R. (2001) *The Independent Effects of Permanent Exclusion from School on the Offending Careers of Young People*, London: Home Office

This submission reported on research examining the impact which being permanently excluded from school had had on young people's offending careers. It was a co-authored report in which my own contribution was roughly equal to that of other members of the research team although my colleagues had much more extensive knowledge of school exclusion (in the case of Berridge & Brodie) and offending (in the case of Pitts & Tarling) at the time the work was commissioned (Brodie & Berridge, 1996; Brodie, 2001; Pitts, 1999; Tarling, 1993). I was involved in collecting the secondary data from three of the six local authorities we visited and for around a third of the interviews with young people and their parents. I oversaw the input of the secondary data and was partially responsible for the quantitative analysis but perhaps my key contribution was in the thematic analysis of the face to face interviews and the corresponding section in the report.

The research was funded by the Home Office and reflected a desire for more information about the relationship between two forms of problematic behaviour which were well known to correlate with each other from existing research (Graham, 1988; Graham & Bowling, 1995; Hayden & Martin, 1998; Martin et al., 1999). The key question, as indicated by the title of the report, was whether evidence could be found to demonstrate a causal link, whether being permanently excluded from school precipitated and/or accelerated a young person's involvement in crime and if so, how and why this process unfolded. The study represented the first systematic analysis of this issue conducted in England and Wales and the sample of 343 permanently excluded young people was the largest ever assembled at that time.

As we explained in the report, the ideal method for analysing the relationship between permanent exclusion and offending would be a prospective longitudinal study, akin to the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development (West and Farrington, 1973), which would track a randomly selected group of young people from the beginning through to the end of their school career with particular attention given to those who found themselves in trouble at school, or with the police, or both. The main difficulty with such a design, apart from the timescale involved, is that the number of offenders in such a random group would be small and the number permanently excluded even smaller, so without an unfeasibly large sample, the statistical significance of the findings would be minimal.

A second possible approach would be to draw one's sample from amongst young offenders, identify those who had been permanently excluded and conduct a retrospective analysis examining the sequencing of events. A key question would be what came first, the exclusion or the offending and one could go on to investigate whether and how these were related. Such studies have indeed been undertaken, with one (Martin et al., 1999) showing that the proportion of persistent offenders who had been permanently excluded from school was 55 per cent (compared with something like 0.2 per cent in the school population overall) but also that the majority of this group had begun their offending career before being excluded. The problem with this approach is that it can tell us nothing about pupils who have been permanently excluded but not offended.

An inherent weakness of the methodology that was adopted is the reverse of this last problem. In focusing upon only children and young people who had been permanently excluded from school, the research always risked overstating the impact of permanent exclusion on offending. Many more young people attending the same schools at the same time as those in our sample will have offended at some point without being permanently excluded so even in this basic sense it is clearly not the crucial variable in explaining offending that the study's title implies. A related issue is that permanent exclusion is only one way in which children may come to be out of education and a focus upon such dramatic events rather than the wider issue of detachment from school (involving for instance truancy) is misleading, again giving undue attention to one variable (Stephenson, 2007).

Beyond these conceptual difficulties was the more practical matter of defining and then operationalising the terms permanent exclusion and offending. The sample was constructed from the administrative files of six projects located across England and Wales, using a pro-forma to record key characteristics, processes and events. In the process, we decided to include in our sample of 'excluded pupils' a significant number (72/343) who we described as having been unofficially or informally excluded. In terms of offending, we were reliant on official data in the form of Police and Youth Offending Team records and so are likely to have underestimated the frequency of offences, a point made in passing in the report (Berridge et al., 2001: 39) but which was perhaps more problematic than acknowledged.

Subsequent studies which have relied more on self reported offending data (Daniels et al., 2003; Hodgson & Webb, 2005) have found significantly higher levels of pre-exclusion offending than was the case in our study. On the other hand, precisely because we only included formal police-recorded offences and because the sample was relatively large, a good level of reliability can be inferred. Moreover, it is plausible that officially recorded offences (as opposed to offending as such) are more likely post exclusion nor least because, as McAra and McVie (2010) observe, the fact that a young person has been permanently excluded can influence decisions to prosecute as well as increase their exposure to police surveillance. This finding is consonant with our own results, albeit that we also reported how "exclusion tended to trigger a complex chain of events which served to loosen the young person's affiliation and commitment to a conventional way of life" (Berridge et al., 2001, pvi).

In other respects the reliability and validity of the study is less open to doubt. The secondary analysis of case files generated detailed evidence concerning the series of events leading up to exclusion and of the troubled and troublesome educational careers, often underpinned by familial or personal problems, of the children concerned. The case studies, involving interviews conducted on average four years after the date of exclusion, confirmed the validity of these findings and provided insights

into the aftermath of exclusion over the short and longer term. Our conclusions, about the characteristics of excluded children, the preponderance of social and educational disadvantage, the reasons for exclusion and its impact broadly echoed and corroborated existing research (e.g. OFSTED, 1996; Hayden, 1997; Hayden and Martin, 1998; Sinclair and Gibbs, 1998) and that undertaken since (Daniels et al., 2003; Hodgson and Webb, 2005; McAra and McVie, 2010; Gazely, 2010).

The report is well written and structured, locates the study within the context of existing knowledge and policy and draws on a range of theoretical perspectives in outlining the import and significance of the findings. Its headline finding that permanent exclusion had occurred more often than not before young people had had criminal offences recorded against them was significant because it drew upon the largest sample of excluded pupils to have been researched at the time. It is unfortunate that another of its key messages, that permanent exclusion could not really be separated from and seen as 'independent' from wider issues was obscured by the title but this in turn reflects the politics surrounding the issue (see chapters 2 and 3 above).

There are 49 citations recorded by GS (as at 19.04.2013) and the report is still a key reference in new research into school exclusion and offending (e.g. Holt, 2011). Without there being a direct link between this particular study and policy changes, the downward trend in permanent exclusions in the decade since it was published and the corresponding increase in 'managed moves' (Gazely, 2010) reflect the logic of the report's conclusions. At the same time, the jury remains very much out on how far these movements in policy address the kind of deep seated economic, social and educational inequalities that correlate so strongly with both offending and school exclusion (Yates 2010; DfE 2011).

Submission 3: Porteous D., Chatwin C., Martin D & Goodman A. (2007) 'Young Victims of Street Crime in an East London Borough' in Community Safety Journal (now 'Safer Communities') Volume 6, issue 3, pp29-35

This submission reported on the findings from a small scale qualitative study of young victims of street crime. The research was funded by a local authority and reflected concerns about an apparent increase in street robbery and associated offences against younger people in the borough (as elsewhere). This was a co-authored journal article written by members of the research team. I was the project manager, undertook approximately a quarter of the fieldwork conducted and was the lead author of the research report as well of this article. The findings are also reported on in an article for the journal Criminal Justice Matters (Martin et al., 2007) and in a chapter in an edited book on crime, anti-social behaviour and schools (Hayden and Martin, 2011) as well as being briefly referred to in the book chapter that comprises Submission 4.

As is common in applied social research (see chapter 3 above), both the aims of the project and the methodology deployed were largely determined by the research tender document. This stipulated those issues on which information was sought, that it was qualitative data which was required (so as to capture experiences, attitudes and feelings) and that the research take place in three secondary schools already identified as willing in principle to participate. Within these parameters, the methods chosen were designed to best capture the different kinds of information sought. Thus face to face interviews with individual students seemed best suited to obtaining information about personal experience of crime, anti-social behaviour and bullying as we believed pupils were likely to

feel more comfortable talking about these issues on a one to one basis. By contrast, information about places and times where people felt unsafe, what would make young people feel safer, attitudes towards gang membership and gang crime and towards bodies such as the police were seen as best collected in a group setting, so as to allow for a range of views to be heard, for ideas to be 'bounced' around and so on.

A purposeful sampling strategy was adopted whereby students known or believed to have been victims of crime, bullying and/or anti-social behaviour were identified by staff and invited to participate in the research. At the same time, through assemblies (in two of the schools) and the distribution of information packs, effort was made both to inform students about the research and to encourage their participation in the project. To this end as well, a website was designed especially for students to report experiences and views in an anonymous space.

As is acknowledged in the article, the sampling method and relatively small sample size (58) compromised the reliability of the findings though effort was made to seek a degree of internal representation in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. However, the qualitative approach ensured a good level of validity. The experiences, feelings and views of the young people are expressed directly through quotation and the commentary, in identifying (sometimes contradictory) differences in attitude as well as points of consensus, provides for a detailed and nuanced account which foregrounds young people's voices.

The article placed the research in the context of the growing awareness of children and young people as victims of crime in research (Aye Maung, 1995; Wikstrom & Butterworth, 2006) including street crime specifically (Smith, J 2003) and noted the concentration of victimisation in areas of relative deprivation such as the borough in question (Pitts, 2003). Essentially a descriptive account of the study's findings, the article sought to provide a qualitative dimension to compliment the preponderance of quantitative research in this area. It drew attention to the apparently widespread awareness of and fear of crime amongst respondents but also to the subjective, personalised and contextualised interpretations of and solutions to threats to personal safety. It revealed wide variations in young people's accounts and views and noted how these reflected the contours of wider debates about how, for example, to improve young people's safety (from 'life should mean life' for serious offenders to more activity centres for children) but also a broadly felt and grim sense of fatalism seemingly born out of experience of growing up 'around here', i.e. in an East London borough ranked third on the national deprivation index with high levels of recorded street crime. From the study also emerged "a wider sense of injustice concerning young people and their relationship with crime" and "a feeling of being let down on all sides", held disproportionately responsible for trouble and not shielded from it at the same time.

The focus on victimisation had advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the study design with its deliberate seeking out of young people who could speak as victims of crime meant that we effectively overlooked the overlap between offending and victimisation and offenders and victims and accordingly presented a rather one sided picture of young people's experiences and perspectives, including a tendency towards 'othering' of certain groups or 'strangers' or most broadly, 'the street'. On the other hand, qualitative research on young people's experience of crime as victims is sufficiently rare for the findings to matter because we do not hear enough of this side of the story. Quite simply the article represents a change from the dominant tendency in youth crime

research to investigate offending or delinquency by focusing on perpetrators. Through the eyes of young victims, the problem of (youth) crime and what needs to be done about it looks different, young people's safety become the priority and the responsibilities of adult society for their safety (as opposed to their behaviour and its control) are brought into view. This does not make the underlying issues any less or any more intractable but shifts concern from the prevention of youth crime to the prevention of crime against and involving young people as victims, offenders and bystanders, a shift which also affects how we interpret the term youth justice.

As at 14/06/2013, GS records one citation of this article (in a later edition of the same journal) though the authors, as noted, have discussed its findings in later published works. I was asked to speak about the findings at a conference organised by Victim Support in London and also presented them (with one of the co-authors) at a post-graduate conference in Greece (Porteous, 2008b; Chatwin and Porteous, 2008). The impact of the research on the borough's youth and educational policies is unknown. Tragically, within a year of the research being undertaken, a boy from one of the schools included in the research was the victim of a stabbing incident which made the national headlines. Perhaps the most that can be said about impact therefore, is that this is a small example of a much wider body of research which collectively challenges the perception of youth as threatening, presenting them instead as being and feeling under threat. Not a 'tipping point' then, more a drop in the ocean, "yet what is any ocean but a multitude of drops" (Mitchell, 2004: 529).

Submission 4: Porteous, D. (2008a) 'The Wrong Kind of Victim? Children, Young People and Street Crime' in Kennison, P. & Goodman, A. (Eds) *Children as Victims*, Exeter: Learning Matters

This submission appeared as chapter 2 of an edited text-book compiled by colleagues in the department of Criminology and Sociology at Middlesex which examined child abuse and child protection issues alongside crimes typically involving older children. The chapter picked up on and developed the argument around victimisation discussed in Submission 3. It is a narrative review of research into children and young people's victimisation in public spaces and 'on the street' in particular which sought to convey the high levels of victimisation experienced by young people, especially in deprived neighbourhoods, as well as how this feels to those involved.

The title and introduction borrowed from Christie's seminal work on 'the ideal victim' of crime, "a "little old lady" mugged by a large male stranger on her way home from caring for her sick sister" (Porteous, 2008a: 15) with whom he contrasts a young man injured in a bar-room brawl. The core of the argument was that this stereotypical conception of victims and offenders belies (and yet helps to reproduce) the reality which is that young people are more likely to be victims than offenders and more likely to be so than adults, a point captured well in Hartless et al.'s (1995) article entitled 'More Sinned Against than Sinning'. Christie's broader argument is that the terms 'victim' and 'offender' are essentially unhelpful: official labels imposed within a top-down system of justice which both obfuscates and simplifies the messy, situated conflicts of everyday life. This element of his thesis was picked up on in the chapter in the sense that the strong overlap between offending and victimisation was highlighted as were contextual factors which demonstrate that simply growing up in a particular area magnifies exposure to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Anchoring the discussion in Christie's work gave the article a clear sense of narrative and underlined the core point. Nevertheless, there are some tensions between the chapter and the abolitionist tradition to which his work belongs (Ruggiero, 2010). Characterised as 'left idealist' by the realist

school at Middlesex (Lea and Young, 1984), in the abolitionist vision, the very terms ‘crime’, ‘offender’ and ‘victim’ would fade or disappear from discourse to be replaced by ‘harm’ and ‘protagonists’ or ‘parties in a dispute’. By reviewing the quantitative evidence on children and young people’s experience of street crime, the chapter arguably affirms the label victim as much as it questions its validity in the way that Christie intended. The other tension concerns the fact that there have been numerous ‘ideal’ young victims of violent street crime in recent years, children whose names have become iconic including Jamie Bulger, Damilola Taylor and Stephen Lawrence. It is in this sense a strange argument to suggest that children do not make ‘ideal victims’ and it would have been truer to the constructionist perspective to have explored the circumstances in which some do come to public attention and others don’t. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I took the decision to overlook these putative complexities, perhaps sacrificing some theoretical integrity for rhetorical force.

The chapter provides a reasonably comprehensive overview of quantitative research on children and young people’s victimisation and also draws attention to qualitative studies (including that reported on in Submission 3) thereby identifying certain aspects of young people’s experience of crime and violence, notably the extent to which it can be embedded in and pattern their everyday lives and so is accepted fatalistically- ‘shit will happen’. Its originality, in a context where childhood and youth victimisation has become a staple ingredient of books about youth justice (e.g. Brown, 2005; Muncie, 2009), lies with the focus on street crime/victimisation in public places. It meets the requirement of a text-book chapter in drawing together relevant research and perspectives and questioning the direction and emphasis of public policy.

GS records no direct citations of the chapter but six to the book (as at 14/06/2013) and perhaps more importantly, Sage (who acquired ‘Learning Matters’ in 2011) are publishing a second edition (due January 2014) which suggests that copies of the first sold well. An only slightly updated and revised version of this chapter has been accepted. One revision to the new chapter involved removing the reference to the previous government’s ‘Every Child Matters Framework’ which itself faded and disappeared, largely unannounced, sometime in the last three years. The final lines of the conclusion, arguing that “existing research (...) suggests that children and young people in public spaces feel over-policed and under-protected, viewed with suspicion rather than care” and that “the challenge for government and society remains to explore and promote ways of reversing this perception” (Porteous, 2008a: 23) remain unchanged.

Submission 5: Porteous, D. (1998b) *Evaluation of the CSV On-Line Mentoring Scheme*, London: Community Service Volunteers

This is the first of the five submissions which focus less on youth crime, offending and victimisation and more on efforts to address these problems. The research described in the report was funded by a small grant (£5000) from the Sainsbury Family Trust whilst further monies from the Monument Trust were obtained by Community Service Volunteers (CSV) to fund its dissemination. I was the award holder with responsibility for research design, the instruments (e.g. interview schedules) used, around half of the fieldwork, all data analysis and for writing the final report and disseminating its findings. A research assistant completed around half of the interviews and did a preliminary literature search.

The evaluation was of a pilot project, the CSV On-Line Mentoring Scheme, which aimed to “reduce youth crime through the development of mentoring relationships between full time volunteers and young people who (had) been excluded from school or who (had) offended” (Porteous, 1998b: 1). As the introduction to the report explained, mentoring was a “rising star”, highlighted as a promising form of intervention by the Audit Commission (1996) and in the White Paper ‘No More Excuses’ (Home Office, 1997), both of which anticipated the changes to youth justice introduced in 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. At the time of the report’s publication, the newly formed Youth Justice Board had recently announced funding to support pilot mentoring schemes across England and Wales.

The evaluation was commissioned eighteen months into the (2 year) pilot with two goals, “to provide a descriptive account of the scheme’s work and to make some assessment of the impact of the scheme to date” (ibid.: 1). The report’s structure is clear. The introduction set out the policy context, reviewed existing research and explained the research aims and methodology. Subsequent chapters described the structure and organisation of the scheme, analysed the characteristics of mentors and clients and how they had come to be involved in the project, presented ten case studies of mentoring relationships and concluded with an overall evaluation of the scheme’s impact for clients and others and what factors seemed important in explaining why some ‘matches’ had been more successful than others.

The methodology incorporated a review of existing research into mentoring, the collection and analysis of project data and documents, ten case studies (including interviews with clients, mentors and agency workers though not all in each case), one focus group with mentors and four interviews with the managers of partner agencies. The report provided a short but clear account of these methods and noted the study’s limitations, highlighting the lack of a control group, its cross-sectional nature and the relative dependence on the “views of people with a vested interest in the scheme” (ibid.: 2).

Despite its shortcomings, the evidence underpinning the report is sufficiently robust for it to be judged both reliable and valid. The pilot project had worked with 56 clients overall and the analysis included a review of the project data available on all clients, effectively a 100% sample, just under a fifth of whom were the focus of case studies. A flaw in the account of the methodology is that the sampling strategy used to select case studies is not clearly explained. On the other hand, the case studies themselves include sufficient information about the different clients in terms of age, gender, reason for referral, the experience of mentoring and outputs and outcomes for it to be clear that this was a diverse group purposively sampled to capture an indicative spread of cases. Reliability and validity are also relatively assured through the triangulation of a number of different sources of information (Davies et al., 2011) and, in the analysis, the use of different methods to assess outcomes: descriptive accounts of the actual work undertaken and the effect, if observable; measures of the duration and intensity of the mentoring relationship; qualitative indicators of positive outputs and outcomes; the construction of a composite indicator to measure outcomes for all clients for whom data was available; and the specification of ‘success factors’ which sought to define and explain why positive or negative outcomes had resulted from a mentoring relationship having been established. A degree of external reliability and validity is indicated by the fact that the success factors identified in the report have been found to be common in other evaluative research studies of mentoring (Tarling et al., 2004; St James Roberts et al. 2005) as have its qualified

conclusions about the potential impact of mentoring on individual young people (Newburn et al., 2005).

It is interesting to compare the report with that on the findings from a much bigger and very influential study, Tierney et al.'s (1995) evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme in America. This widely cited report has been a key source of validation for mentoring in youth justice, largely because of its methodology, a random controlled trial, the gold standard in the eyes of experimental criminologists (Sherman, 2009) and central to the attempt to cement evidence based practice within English and Welsh youth justice policy (Stephenson et al., 2007). When I actually read the report however, rather than the précis of its most favourable findings courtesy of the National Mentoring Network, I found the technical aspects of the methodology totally impenetrable (to anyone but an advanced statistician) and that compared to its almost exclusive focus on the positive aspects of the BBBS, the "Evaluation of the CSV On-Line Mentoring Scheme" reads as a remnant of the days of the Spanish Inquisition.

Since I examined the BBBS research in more detail in Submission 8, I will save further discussion of its weaknesses for now. One difference between the two reports concerns the kinds of outcomes that were measured and how this was done. The BBBS research is deductive and focuses on matters such as school days lost and drug use measured via self-report questionnaires conducted before and after the period of treatment/control. The CSV Online research adopted a more inductive approach which generated a broader and softer set of outputs and outcomes including for example improved access to leisure services, emotional and practical support through a difficult period, periods of abstinence from drugs and enhanced self awareness. The research concluded that individual clients had benefited in these different ways but no claims could or were made about overall reductions in offending behaviour.

Unlike the BBSA programme (see critique of Submission 8), it was clear that the young people referred to the On-Line project worked with were collectively a troubled, difficult and vulnerable group of children for whom the support of a mentor could make a difference but rarely *the* difference. The outcomes identified and valued by mentors, agency workers and managers were often difficult to label, partial and contingent: "it's little steps towards it, its gradual and more of a long term process" as one volunteer interviewed expressed it (in Porteous, 1998b: 33). The report, whilst positive, reflected this cautious and qualified assessment. For example, it argued that the success of the project could only be assessed in the context of the often extremely difficult circumstances facing the young person in which the mentoring relationships came to be formed. Thus, it "is important to include even small changes in a client's behaviour or circumstances as long as they seem attributable to the mentoring work but it is no less important to realise that these small changes may not be sufficient to radically alter the young person's predicament" (ibid.: 32). Elsewhere, the report noted that "a higher proportion of girls had seen their mentor regularly whilst those who had met with them less frequently were on average older and more likely to have been referred in relation to offending" (ibid.: 35). As with Pawson's (2006) later review of several mentoring projects, I identified the openness and commitment of mentees and mentors to be critical to successful relationships alongside other factors – support from agencies and families (community base), a clear focus to the work (responsivity), flexibility (or 'multi-modality'), scheme management and organisation (programme integrity) and the regularity and length of the

relationship (dosage) – recognised as indicators of effective practice by the YJB (Stephenson et al., 2007).

Even though the report went so far as “endorsing the work of the scheme”, its measured assessment contrasts quite sharply with the definitive conclusions reached in the BBBS report and, in the light of the subsequent evaluative research on mentoring reported on in Submissions 7 and 8, could be argued to be the more balanced of the two. With its focus on young people excluded from school or with a criminal record, the research could also be seen as a more appropriate indicator of the contingent, limited but for individuals occasionally significant impact, the widespread introduction of mentoring in a youth justice context was likely to have. If the report now reads as essentially uncritical and as potential fodder for New Labour’s claims to be reforming youth justice on the basis of evidence of ‘what works’, it is because wider questions about why mentoring, why now were not on my or indeed the funder’s agenda.

As fodder anyway, Tierney et al.’s (1995) report was infinitely more important. As at 15/06/2013, GS records 2180 citations of the original impact study and 317 citations of a journal article reporting its key findings (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). More generally, the BBBS study is almost always referred to in studies or summaries of mentoring young people, my own work being no exception. By contrast, GS identifies four citations of my evaluation report which disappeared into obscurity some time ago. That said, this report and some earlier unpublished research (Porteous, 1997) enabled me to continue to research and write about mentoring. I was invited to contribute a chapter on mentoring to a text book for youth workers (Factor et al., 2001) which in turn led to the chapter included as Submission 7. It was in part as a result of my mentoring research that I was invited to be a ‘research expert’ in an EU funded project (‘RESTART’) examining interventions to tackle early school leaving (Porteous 2007c, 2007d).

Mentoring continues to be one of CSV’s strands of work and remains a widespread form of intervention in youth justice, as will be discussed further below. This report provided a fair and quite comprehensive assessment of how a particular model of mentoring was being used to support young people in trouble and of what seemed to explain success where it could be demonstrated. Fifteen years on, its conclusions still read as credible and relevant. Over time, I have come to see what these conclusions mean or signify, viewed from a wider historical and critical perspective, somewhat differently. This story is taken up in the critiques of Submissions 7 and 8 below.

Submission 6: Porteous, D. (1999a) ‘Casing the Joint: An Evaluation of Two Drugs Education Projects’ in Marlow, A. & Pearson, G. *Young People, Drugs and Community Safety*, Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing

This was the final chapter in an edited collection of papers collated following a conference with the same title as the book held at the University of Luton in 1998. It reported on a small scale evaluation of two separate drugs education/prevention projects funded alongside several others by one “Drug Action Team” in partnership with a local youth initiative. As the introduction explained, the study was one of numerous others commissioned to assess one strand of the government’s drugs prevention strategy. I was the award holder (£500 so not too much of a burden) and the sole researcher.

The first project was school based and involved a small number of year 12 students (aged 16/17) trained as “peer educators” to deliver drugs education to students in years 7 and 8 (aged 11-13). The second involved unemployed young people, aged 16-25 in a one off arts project “to design, produce and disseminate photographs conveying images of drug use and misuse” (Porteous, 1999a: 155). The evaluation of both projects commenced some time after they had started and so was largely retrospective. It focused on the question: “to what extent did the projects inform choices about drug use amongst participants and beneficiaries” thus avoiding the broader and more difficult question of whether they brought about an actual reduction in drug use (ibid.: 155) A second objective was to “identify why this was the case and how they and/or other similar projects could be improved upon” (ibid.: 155). Both were effectively determined by what the funding body required from the evaluation.

The methodology in both cases involved a focus group with a self selecting but numerically representative sample of peer educators at the school and participants in the community based project, alongside project workers in both cases. These were designed to elicit a picture of how each project had worked as well as views on the outcomes for themselves and others and on the strengths and weaknesses of the projects. Given that these views could be expected to be more positive than negative (all project participants were invited to attend but those who did were by and large the most committed and, as noted, project workers were also present), additional methods were used to further evaluate outcomes. This included: the observation of an at times lively debate on the legalisation of cannabis amongst sixth form students organised and presided over by the peer educators; a quiz submitted to one class of year 7 students on their knowledge of tobacco and smoking before and (some time) after a session on the subject delivered by the peer educators; and, in the case of the art project, the project’s own evaluation sheets, the photographs produced by participants and an observation of their presentation by some of the participants to a local conference organised by the area’s Drug Reference Group.

A final element of the methodology involved comparing the findings from the evaluation with those from similar research studies, Newburn and Shiner’s (1996) evaluation of drugs education workshops in Newham and Davis and Dawson’s (1996) analysis of the key features of six successful drug prevention projects they had examined. This comparative element is a strength of the chapter and adds a degree of external reliability and validity because there were evident similarities between the projects under evaluation and those subjected to scrutiny elsewhere. Overall the findings may be judged relatively reliable – a similar conclusion would likely have been reached by another researcher adopting the same methodology. However, in ideal circumstances an evaluation would always commence at the outset of a project and there would be less reliance on the views of those with a vested interest in the outcome. Both of these would improve the validity of this kind of research though this would also require greater resources. Given the time and money available for this very small-scale evaluation, the research and its dissemination represent good value, not least because, in my own experience at least, few applied research projects of this kind are published for a wider audience.

On the other hand, maybe we should be grateful for this. The weakness of the chapter, notwithstanding the good use made of the literature cited, is that it is not adequately situated in the context of existing debates and research in drugs prevention and education and as such is under-theorised. For example, in the concluding paragraph of the chapter it is stated that “the overall

message from this study is that drugs education should be delivered objectively, in an accessible manner, by people with whom the audience can identify and respect". As Blackman (2004) points out (citing my study, incidentally, as an example in a footnote) "calls for drugs education to be objective are all too easy to announce and they not only reflect an unrealistic vision of the social world but also fail to understand the history behind the politics of prevention" which includes an argument as to whether information on drugs should be against or about drug use and shows that "drugs knowledge is not objective" (2004: 156). To be fair, I think one can interpret the chapter's argument as a whole as making the case, on the basis of the evaluation, for drugs education working effectively (i.e. enabling people to learn more, quantitatively and qualitatively) when it is *about* rather than *against* drug use and delivered within the context of a broader harm reduction strategy (Duke, 2003), and so as deploying the term 'objectivity' in a slightly different way to Blackman. Nevertheless, since the research provided no comparable evidence concerning drugs education that was not "objective" in the sense I intended, there was little basis for making any claims about relative effectiveness.

The chapter made no assumption about whether this kind of drugs education would lead to a reduction in use, ending: "if more young people know more about drugs, will fewer take them? Now there's a question". It is perhaps though a limitation as much as a strength to concede that on this bigger issue the research had little to say. Some years after this chapter appeared, in a 2007 overview of UK Drugs Policy for the UK Drugs Policy Commission, Reuter and Stevens offered a definitive sounding answer on the point:

"There is little international or UK evidence to suggest that drug education and prevention have had any significant impact on drug use. The international literature consistently indicates that most school-based prevention efforts do little to reduce initiation. Even those programmes that are delivered effectively seem to have very little impact on future drug use" (2007: 10)

On reflection, it seems to me that my positive evaluation of these two drugs-education projects focused more on the process, on the mode of communication rather than the message itself. The peer educators could have been seeking to disseminate knowledge about sex or food and the arts based photography project taking pictures of the homeless; done in the same grounded, participatory, non judgemental and modest way, the results would have been little different. This though brings into the foreground the political and moral context by which some issues and problems come to be the focus for this kind of intervention whilst others do not and in turn highlights the obligation upon researchers to think about and communicate the place of their findings in the wider theoretical marketplace.

GS records two citations which includes Blackman's critical reference. However, as the edited book in which it appears is cited more widely (circa 35) according to GS (as at 17/06/13) and given that it was targeted at a broad audience including practitioners, policy makers, students as well as academics, GS is a limited tool for assessing its impact. Moreover, although I have not done further work on drugs education as such (though see Chatwin & Porteous, 2013, for an example of later work on drugs), I was invited onto the advisory panel for a Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded project exploring heavy cannabis use amongst young people (Melrose et al., 2007). Meanwhile, peer education remains a recognised educational tool used by schools, youth work organisations,

charities and governments on a range of issues (see for example UNICEF, undated; Scottish Peer Education Network, 2013) and the small charity which ran the arts based project continues its work, including that focused on the use of drugs and alcohol, fifteen years on.

There is some comfort to be drawn from this last point. As was also the case with the evaluation of the CSV On Line Mentoring Scheme, the findings of this research had consequences, in terms of future funding, for the projects, their parent agencies and the individuals involved and by implication for some of the unemployed clients of the second project in particular. In this situation, a researcher may feel several obligations beyond that to the truth. There is putting it bluntly a pressure to look for the positive in evaluations of this sort, not least when they are on such a small scale and a clear and present danger when one's key informants' jobs depend in part on the outcome that the research will be less than objective. A negative evaluation could have severe implications, at least in the short term, for those who one has an obligation as a researcher not to harm and with whom one develops a relationship within the course of such work. If this sounds like a confession, it is only a partial one. I confess to feeling the pressure but by no means to succumbing to it entirely. I find myself more troubled, on reflection, by the rather narrow policy focus of this chapter and its rather naïve complicity with the government's drug-prevention agenda, than by the generally positive findings which I believe accurately reflected the projects' relatively modest goals.

Submission 7: Porteous, D. (2004) 'Mentoring in Youth Justice' in Bateman, T., and Pitts, J. *The RHP Companion to Youth Justice*, Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing

This chapter appeared within an edited collection of chapters addressing various dimensions and elements of youth justice policy and practice in the mid 2000s and marketed as a "key resource for professionals and students undertaking the youth justice training introduced by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales" (Bateman and Pitts, 2005: back cover). The chapter followed a structure and form prescribed by the editors, identifying key points for discussion, focusing on the non specialist with only limited knowledge, covering definitional and historical/contextual issues, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of interventions and providing a guide for further reading. Notwithstanding this applied focus, the book and this chapter allowed for some critical reflection on the political and theoretical implications of youth justice in its present form.

The chapter traced the growing popularity of mentoring schemes in work with young people at risk and/or who had offended in the recent past and identified the core elements of such schemes, variations in the form they can take and the main processes involved in setting up and sustaining them, with reference to the Youth Justice Board's key indicators of quality and more generally to those factors which seem to be shared by successful schemes and mentoring relationships. The chapter then reviewed the research evidence as to the effectiveness of mentoring schemes and concluded that this provided a mixed picture: "The theory that mentoring can enhance personal development is born out by the evidence. The evidence that it can make a significant impact upon problematic behaviour is more circumspect" (Porteous, 2004: 196). Drawing on Pitts' (2000) digest of recent mentoring research for the journal *Research Matters* (which included a kind review of the CSV On Line Mentoring Scheme evaluation – Submission 5) the chapter reiterated the distinction between "emancipatory" and "correctional" mentoring and of the importance, for mentoring projects, of thinking "of their clients as being there not because of what they *have* done but because of what they *could do*" (Porteous, 2004: 197, emphasis in original).

Whilst this sounds rather corny and idealistic, the sentiment was based, as noted, on a realistic assessment of the evidence regarding the effectiveness of mentoring in terms of reducing offending and anti-social behaviour, one which chimed well with the editors' own conclusion to the book:

"The reality is that everything 'works' with somebody, somewhere, in that, for reasons we barely understand, it just happens to be the right thing at the right time. It is also true, of course, that most things don't 'work' with most people most of the time....

We also know that from time to time, new 'claim-makers' will emerge to market the latest of rehabilitative panaceas to governments who understand little of the complexity of the problem, but, being anxious to find a solution will buy what's on offer. Then, earlier orthodoxies will be rejected, as the claims of the new grow bolder. But we know too that these newer forms of intervention will in due course fail to fulfil their early promise" (Bateman and Pitts, 2005: 257-258).

Mentoring was one of a package of panaceas carefully choreographed under New Labour via the Youth Justice Board as part of its adoption of the risk factor prevention paradigm (Farrington, 2000). How and why it came to assume this status is something I discussed further in Submission 8 which in other respects echoes the argument elucidated in the quotation above. Whilst this dimension of issue was not elaborated in this chapter, neither could it be said to overstate what mentoring projects had or could achieve in terms of youth crime prevention.

The chapter identifies similar studies and findings from research into mentoring as Stephenson et al.'s (2007) comparable assessment of 'Effective Practice in Youth Justice'. This suggests further that it was a reliable account of the state of play as regards mentoring research, which for the purposes of the book in which it appears, was more important than originality. GS records no citations of the chapter specifically though a search for the book generates "about 68 results" and it is indeed a widely cited text in the recent generic youth justice literature. To what extent the book or the chapter have been consulted and used by the largely non-academic audience for whom it was written is difficult to know but I think it provides a useful account for the many people involved in mentoring of how schemes are organised, of issues related to their effectiveness and of the problems in evaluating their impact.

Submission 8: Porteous, D. (2007a) 'The Rise and Fall of Mentoring in Youth Justice' in *Prison Service Journal*, No. 170, March 2007

This journal article was based on a paper delivered to the British Society of Criminology's (BSC) annual conference held at Glasgow Caledonian University in July 2006. As the title indicates, the article posits the 'fall' from favour of mentoring as a form of intervention in youth justice on the basis of a growing body of evidence questioning its effectiveness for reducing reoffending and revealing as well that it was not demonstrably more efficient (i.e. cheaper) than alternative modes of intervention in spite of the fact that it was largely delivered by volunteers (Porteous, 2007a; St James Roberts et al., 2005). The article is written in a consciously reflexive tone, recalling how my own 'discovery' of mentoring in the late 1990s (see for example Submission 5) had coincided with New Labour's embrace of the method and expressing the doubts in it as a panacea (Bateman and Pitts, 2005) first voiced in Submission 7.

The Prison Service Journal was not an obvious place for an article on this subject and so the introduction first drew attention to a 2006 report produced by the Local Government Association, 'Children In Trouble', which called for the abolition of imprisonment for children and young people excepting the most serious, violent offenders. As the authors of the report themselves recognised, their proposals begged the question as to whether existing community-based alternative methods of punishment and control were up to the task. Since mentoring had been used as a means of providing support to young offenders leaving custody as well as in preventative work with those 'entering' the system, a review of the evidence of its effectiveness was of relevance to this question.

Although this was a suitable means for introducing the content of the article in light of the likely audience, it was also slightly contrived. It is worth mentioning that I was invited to contribute the article in an email from the editor of the journal shortly after the BSC conference. Only later on talking with colleagues did I realise that in all likelihood every presenter at the event had received the same email! A combination of vanity and naivety therefore explains why the article appeared here and at this time. With hindsight, a journal targeted more specifically at youth justice academics, workers and policy makers would have been more appropriate and quite possibly more demanding of intellectual rigour. For example, the evaluative research reported on barely discussed schemes explicitly focused on those leaving custody so it could be argued that the introductory hook was misleading in this respect. Moreover, the article did not return to the consequences of its argument for the debate around youth imprisonment which reveals the superficiality of this point.

This said, there is a clear direction and shape to the argument expounded in this article. In describing the coming to prominence of mentoring in the field of youth justice, it captured the evangelical tone of the promotional literature produced by projects and regurgitated in the media and in governmental reviews of good practice which spoke for example of the "unqualified love" offered by mentors, of the "rich seams of energy and ability" in mentees "smothered for so long under the dust of self doubt and compounded failure" of how "for the first time in their lives, these young people will have the undivided attention of an adult, trained to listen to them and take their concerns, problems, hopes and accomplishments seriously" (all cited in Porteous, 2007a: 21). It also documented the diversity of mentoring schemes and the inherent adaptability of the model for different groups of children and young people in different contexts: "Mentors are recruited to befriend and advise looked after children, children excluded from school, young people on bail, young people on drugs, young people serving a community sentence, young people leaving care or custody and young people subject to an Intensive Surveillance and Supervision Programme (ISSP)" (ibid.: 21).

The article then suggested that given New Labour's commitment to evidence based practice, it could be expected that robust evidence about its effectiveness underpinned the promotion of mentoring by the Youth Justice Board and others in the "new youth justice" (Goldson, 2000). In fact the best that could be said of the early evidence was that mentoring showed promise and that more recent meta-evaluations of mentoring projects (e.g. Roberts et al., 2004; St James Roberts et al., 2005) had served to dampen down these early expectations. Going further, the article provided a critical assessment of the mother of all mentoring evaluations, Tierney et al.'s (1995) evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS) programme in America which, as noted in the evaluations of Submissions 5 and 7 above, I had cited myself in previous works as the most rigorous trial undertaken to date.

The problem, I explained, was that the research report in question, whilst dressed up in an undoubtedly sophisticated methodological suit, was so obviously an exercise in brand management.

For example, “take the headline finding that ‘Little Brothers and Little Sisters skipped half as many days of school as did control youth’ (ibid. piii). What the research actually found is that on average young people in the control group missed less than one day of school during the research period whilst those in the treatment group missed less than one half of one day on average, a much less impressive statistic than we are given to suppose” (ibid.:23). Similar statistical trickery, I suggested, enabled the researchers to claim that mentees were almost half as likely to have taken drugs as those in the control group without actually specifying how many young people did consume drugs before, during or after the period in which the research was conducted. Finally, I observed that even if one did accept that the BBBS was an effective mentoring project, assuming its findings would be replicated in a youth justice context was unjustified because only seven per cent of all the young people in the sample (including the control group) had been arrested at the time when they were accepted onto the programme (ibid.:23).

If robust evidence from evaluative studies does not explain the rise of mentoring then, the article ponders, what did? My answer proposed three possibilities. First, it was important to stress that mentoring could not have emerged as an attractive ‘solution’ to the problems of young people at risk unless there was a kernel of truth in the idea that sometimes, for some people in some places, the matching of a caring, trustworthy, motivated adult with a vulnerable young person in trouble did not work to improve the latter’s situation – clearly it did but just as clearly, not as often as one might hope. Secondly, I drew on Nellis’ (2005) account of the ‘tracking controversy’ in probation during the 1980s in which he traces the roots of mentoring and electronic monitoring of offenders back to the Children and Young Persons Act 1969; in this analysis mentoring is old wine in new bottles. Thirdly and most speculatively, I argued that the “the stimulation of the market in social care provision from the late 1980s onwards, in which increasingly large numbers of non-governmental organisations effectively compete for contracts and clients, can be seen to have generated a need for such bodies to market their wares” resulting in just the kind of promotional literature discussed towards the beginning of the article (ibid.:24).

Effectively then, the article was a case study of one of the “rehabilitative panaceas” which according to Bateman and Pitts (1995) cyclically excite the interest of politicians in need of a good story about how they will address the problem of youth crime to the electorate. It concluded as follows:

“Perhaps the overriding lesson from all this is that it is important to check our sources. In Homer’s original tale (circa 8th century BC), Mentor to whom Odysseus entrusted his son plays only a very minor role. The main significance of his character is that his form is assumed by the goddess Athene when she seeks to persuade Telemachus to leave Ithaca, against his own mother’s wishes, in search of his father, a course of action that leads in the end to a triumphant family reunion. The moral for community-based work with young people seems clear enough — mentoring might not work but a mythical goddess could do the trick” (Porteous, 2007a: 24).

It may have been better and would certainly have been apposite to say that mentoring was itself something of a modern day myth, a good story with elements of tragedy, love, hope, courage and triumph over adversity which skirts over areas of implausibility and is clearly based as much on

fantasy than reality. In this sense, the ‘rehabilitative panacea’ is a kind of mirror image of a “moral panic” (Cohen 1973; Young, 1971) – a new mode of intervention emerges to become defined as a solution to societal problems; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the solution is propagated by editors, bishops, politicians and other right thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their confidence in its impact.... Then again, it is pleasing (to my vivid imagination at least) to substitute for the goddess Athene the bespectacled former Home Secretary Jack Straw, dispensing advice, guidance and moral authority in the guise of a thousand and more mentors throughout England and Wales.

The subject matter is of course more mundane and more serious - it is perhaps a weakness of this article and of my writing more generally that I am readily drawn to irony at the expense of theoretical and empirical integrity. One obvious problem with the argument in hindsight is evoked by Mark Twain’s response to reading his obituary in the *New York Journal*: “the report of my death was an exaggeration” (*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*: 554). Six years since its publication, mentoring shows little sign of disappearing from youth justice services. To give just one example, in April 2013, the “forward looking social business”, Catch 22, announced the launch of a new “community payback mentoring pilot for young offenders” through which “mentors will assist young offenders to make positive changes to their lives, and ultimately reduce re-offending” (Catch 22, 2013). A second flaw was that it overlooked an article in the journal *Youth Justice* published around the time of my original conference paper which in similar vein to my own article argued that mentoring “was an approach that has benefited greatly from being the latest fashionable idea, but there is a danger – as with all fashions – that it will become unfashionable just as quickly (and irrationally) as it became fashionable” (Newburn and Shiner, 2006: 39). Reference to this piece would have bolstered my own argument and may have prompted a more considered analysis of what role mentoring could and should play shorn of the early evangelical rhetoric.

The fact that “research finds no ‘convincing evidence’ that mentoring reduces offending” was also included in the *Youth Justice News* series in the *Youth Justice* journal in August the year before my article was published (Bateman, 2006: 159). This alongside Newburn and Shiner’s article suffices to demonstrate that there was little originality in either the argument or the evidence I presented though the critique of Tierney et al.’s study remains distinctive as does the narrative arc the article followed. As for impact, GS records one citation of my article as compared with nine citations of that by Newburn and Shiner, reflecting perhaps both the greater scope of the latter’s contribution as well as the fact that its authors were known and the *Youth Justice* journal was a more appropriate place for an article on the subject.

More positively, to the extent that the article provides a more contextualised and theorised exploration of the role of mentoring than characterised my earlier contributions, it reflects aspects of my own academic development that I referred to in chapter 3 above and, in particular, a critical edge that was previously lacking. The article does not deny the practical help and support which mentors can offer but draws attention to the tenuous nature of the evidence on which a good deal of talk about the promise of mentoring was based. The broader policy context in which this talk flourished was the subject of the final submission.

Submission 9: Porteous, D. (2007b) ‘The prevention of youth crime: a risky business?’ in Thom, B., Sales, R. & Pearce, J. (Eds) *Growing Up with Risk*, London: Policy Press

The final submission appeared as the final chapter in an edited collection designed to provide “a critical analysis of ways in which risk assessment and risk management – now a pervasive element of contemporary policy and professional practice – are defined and applied in policy, theory and practice in relation to children and young people” (Thom et al., 2007: back cover). Contributions examined these issues in a variety of contexts including children’s play, road safety, parenting, drug and alcohol use, disability and sexual exploitation. My chapter considered the way in which the concept of risk had become a defining feature of youth justice since the election of New Labour in 1997.

As with Submission 4, the chapter constituted a narrative review of academic and policy related literature which sought to provide both an accessible introduction to developments in this area as well as a critical commentary upon them. The introduction detailed how, through the use of the profiling tool *Asset* by Youth Offending Teams, risk assessment had come to be pivotal, in theory at least, to the planning of interventions with young offenders. Furthermore, because at least as far as the Youth Justice Board was concerned, criminological research had identified the principal risk factors associated with offending even amongst children still gestating in the womb, a risk management system had developed both inside and outside of formal youth justice services, offering protection against risk “from cradle to rave” (Porteous, 2007b: 259). The main focus thereby established, the chapter promised to tell the story of how this situation had come about and to evaluate its impact and consequences.

The subsequent argument divided roughly into two halves. In the first, it was argued that distinct but overlapping connotations of risk had been mobilised in the establishment of the new youth justice (Goldson, 2000). In political discourse the risk posed by disorderly youth and how the government would confront it had been mobilised by New Labour in its efforts to distinguish itself from earlier Labour Party policy on crime (Pitts, 2003). In administrative discourse, the Audit Commission had characterised the previous youth justice system as inefficient, uneconomic and ineffective in ‘*Misspent Youth*’ (1996) and proposed that systematic risk assessment combined with evidence based practice (‘what works’) provided the key for more effective crime management. In academic discourse, the risk-factor prevention paradigm and the ‘What Works’ movement developed by the likes of Farrington (1996) and McGuire (1995) offered the intellectual and empirical basis for organising youth justice services around knowledge of risk factors and how these could best be tackled. The chapter then summarised how the risk assessment tool *Asset* was designed to operate “like a filtering and sorting device” enabling “YOT staff to distinguish the serious and persistent offender from the less deviant majority” and to tailor their interventions accordingly (Porteous, 2007b: 265).

The second half of the chapter put forward a critique of these developments, beginning with Baker’s (2004) evaluation of *Asset* and the return of the Audit Commission to take stock of the changes it had helped bring about, and going on to invoke amongst other arguments Cohen’s (1985) concerns about net widening, Armstrong’s (2004) critique of risk factor research and Crawford’s (1998) and others’ warnings about the ‘criminalisation of social policy’. The chapter concluded that “the ‘new youth justice’ had failed to stem the growing number of children and young people in custody but had succeeded in increasing the number of relatively low risk first and second time offenders with whom work is done in apparent ignorance of the lessons of the past that such

practice threatens to label many unnecessarily and does not address the complex and deep rooted problems of the few who really are 'at risk' and 'a risk'" (Porteous, 2007b: 274).

None of this was particularly original. Versions of this kind of critique can be found in numerous contributions to Youth Justice and other journals in the course of New Labour's three terms in office (e.g. Muncie 1999; Pitts, 2001; Armstrong 2004; Case, 2006; Kemshall, 2008; Gray, 2009). On the other hand, as a contribution to an edited text-book exploring various dimensions of childhood and risk, the chapter serves its purpose reasonably well. It is clearly structured and meets the editors' requirements insofar as it includes discussion of theory, research, policy and practice. The fact that its arguments and the evidence it examines are rehearsed elsewhere suggests that it is a reliable and valid record of the 'facts', interpreted in a modestly original way. If academics were somehow disallowed from producing variations on the same theme, very few would get into print.

There is, however, the question of impact. GS records one citation of it in a later journal article and it is referenced in Case and Haines' (2009) book on risk factor research, policy and practice. The edited book in which the chapter appears generates around 40 results and from this it seems reasonable to infer that it has entered the wider literature on children, young people and risk, albeit that different specialists will inevitably cherry pick chapters in which they have a particular interest. As for the impact on policy, no specific claims can be made for this chapter but as with Submission 4 (examining the victimisation of children and young people), it belongs within a broad set of critical accounts of New Labour's youth justice policies which warned against the simplistic and reductionist implications of the risk-based approach to youth justice, highlighting its net widening effects and castigating politicians for deriving electoral capital from the plight of amongst the most vulnerable members of society. Unfinished business to be sure, but no less worthwhile for that.

Summary and Synthesis

To return to the six criteria used for critically analysing the submitted works and outlined in the introduction, the following observations can be made about the submissions as a whole.

(1) Their relevance and place within existing knowledge

The collective concern of these studies is with youth justice policy and practice. Written within the context of New Labour's overhaul of the youth justice system in England and Wales, at a time of ongoing public concern about the troubled and troublesome behaviour of young people, they have contributed to academic and practice knowledge about children and young people as victims of crime, the links between social exclusion and youth crime and victimisation, the impact of interventions like mentoring and peer led education and the politics of youth crime and youth justice during this period. Although this is less true of the submissions reporting on action oriented and evaluative research, the works make adequate reference to and are situated within relevant academic and policy related literature and debates.

(2) Their logical coherence and the extent to which a clear argument is expounded

A strength of the submissions is that each provides an accessible, clearly structured account of the object of study. The reports on primary research provide sufficient information on methodology and on how conclusions were drawn for a measured assessment of their significance to be made. The writings based on narrative literature reviews have an element of originality in terms of the

argument put forward as much as the content examined. Although a limitation of the submissions in general is that they do not have theoretical depth, this reflects their applied focus and the audiences for which they were written. Moreover, the later submissions do engage to a greater extent with existing literature and policy debates and so reflect in part my increasing questioning of the role of applied social research as discussed in chapter 3.

(3) The appropriateness of the methodology and methods adopted for the research

The various methodologies adopted in the primary research studies allowed for their aims to be met but their limitations are also recognised in the submissions. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods has been used in most instances and data triangulated to provide both statistical and more ethnographic forms of evidence. The smaller-scale studies by dint of their size have relied most upon interview data and the two evaluative studies in particular are slightly compromised by their reliance on participants with a vested interest in the outcome. On the other hand, the qualitative data presented in Submissions 2 and 3 in particular enhances the research findings, providing 'appreciation' (Matza 1969; Noaks and Wincup, 2004) of subjects' personal experiences and feelings.

(4) The reliability and validity of the findings generated by the research

The fact that the findings from these various studies have been replicated in similar work indicates a good degree of external reliability and validity. Issues such as sample size and the transparent use of evidence to support conclusions suggest an adequate level of internal validity augmented by the triangulation of different sources and kinds of information. Appropriate caveats about generalising from the findings or drawing unwarranted conclusions from them have been made.

(5) Their originality and the extent to which 'new' knowledge was generated by the research

The primary research studies generate original data on victimisation, the relationship between school exclusion and offending and the dynamics and impact of mentoring and peer education. Analysis of this data has largely been limited to answering questions posed by the policy makers who have commissioned the research and no new theoretical avenues have been opened up. The narrative literature reviews which form the basis for four of the submissions are by definition summaries of existing knowledge which include an element of critical analysis and therefore provide an original take on a familiar topic. A number of the submissions include analysis of the workings and effectiveness of forms of practice of potential interest to professionals in the field.

(6) Their impact and significance

Google Scholar records few specific citations of the submitted works in other academic books and journals with the exception of the co-authored Home Office research report (Submission 2). However, the edited texts in which the chapters (five in total) appear are more widely known and cited so these publications may be said to have reached a reasonably wide audience amongst students and other academics. The journals in which two of the submissions appeared were targeted as much at practitioners as at academics and the chapters and research reports were also written with an applied focus and so with a professional audience in mind. This said, it is difficult to assess the impact on society of my own works in isolation. It is plausible to argue that the subjects they have addressed have been ones of interest to policy makers and so are matters on which the

research community at large have made an impact but this says little about the societal impact of these works in particular.

As for what the works mean or signify and whether this matters, this is a question more comprehensively taken up in the next chapter. For now and to conclude this critical review, it is possible to identify the following key themes as emerging from the body of submissions as a whole:

- Submissions 1, 3 and 4 deal with the experience of children and young people as victims of crime and violence. The evidence presented in these works suggests that children and young people are as if not more likely to be victims as offenders, that the extent of this is often hidden, that victimisation and offending overlap at an individual level and within particular social contexts and that being a victim is structured by factors such as place, class, gender and ethnicity as well as age. This research also suggests that because crime and victimisation amongst children and young people is disproportionately concentrated in areas of deprivation, it constitutes a form of social exclusion which shapes and affects young people's lives in such areas in negative ways.
- Although it is only Submission 2 which explicitly examines the relationship between exclusion from school and offending, the extent to which this 'risk factor' has been linked within recent youth justice policy is evident in Submissions 5, 7, 8 and 9 inasmuch as mentoring has been targeted at young people designated 'at risk of offending' because of problems at school and because of the general focus on risk factors as key to youth crime prevention policy. Although the research reported on in Submission 2 affirmed the correlation between school exclusion and offending, it also emphasised the role of social and educational inequality in reproducing these problems, as with the victimisation of children and young people.
- The evaluative work on mentoring and peer-led drugs education projects demonstrate, respectively, that these can be valuable ways of supporting young people and disseminating information. However, the later work on mentoring emphasises that evidence as to its impact on offending is limited and inconclusive to the point where the story of how it came to be seen as one of a number of promising new forms of intervention becomes interesting. Submissions 8 and 9 critically examined and evaluated two key areas of recent youth justice policy – evidence based practice and the risk factor prevention paradigm – which raise questions about their origins and consequences and so represent case studies in the politics of youth justice and the continuing significance of myths and myth making in contemporary society.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: Utopian Youth Justice?

“In Britain, the relationship between criminal justice policy and youth crime is, at best, oblique” (Pitts, *The new politics of youth crime*, 2003: 1).

Introduction

One of the reasons for undertaking this PhD by Public Works was to try and make collective sense of the various one-off studies pertaining to youth crime and youth justice in which I had been involved over a period of approximately ten years. As I described in chapter 3, a characteristic of applied social research studies is that they tend to be narrowly focused on policy related questions framed by funding bodies: does school exclusion cause offending ?; does mentoring work? In my experience, there is rarely the time or resources for applied social researchers at the coalface, much as they might like to, to reflect on broader political and theoretical questions on which the findings might have some significance. Well I no longer have this excuse and so in this chapter I will attempt to outline an argument fashioned from the submitted works as a whole, drawing on the wider literature reviewed in chapter 2, the critique of applied social research outlined in chapter 3 and the critical analysis of the individual submissions in chapter 4. In the process I will indicate the significant contribution I have made to contemporary knowledge and debates in the field of youth crime and youth justice. To allow for the argument to flow, I have not re-referenced material cited in the earlier chapters, but do draw on further literature to contextualise this stage in the argument as necessary.

Understanding Youth Crime

The literature on children as victims reveals first that despite a long history of concern with youth crime, young victims have been largely overlooked and second that when researchers did start to take notice, they quickly found victimisation to be as if not more widespread amongst children and young people than amongst adults, that young victims outnumber young offenders but that they are also frequently the same people and that victimisation frequently precedes and sometimes explains offending. As well as age and in terms of both quantity and form, victimisation has also been shown to be structured by class, gender, ethnicity and place and to be concentrated amongst certain disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Victimisation is both an indicator of and made more likely by social exclusion, a term denoting “something that is done by some people to other people” (Byrne, 1999: 1) through a systematic, dynamic set of processes which serve to minimise access to political, social, economic and cultural sources of power (Percy-Smith, 2000). So of course, is offending. It is slightly tautological to observe that offending and victimisation correlate. You don’t tend to get one without the other. Yet it is frequently forgotten that youth crime involves both.

As John Pitts has observed, youth crime in the most deprived neighbourhoods and areas of the UK’s inner cities tends to be, amongst other things, implosive, symmetrical and violent (Pitts, 2001b: 138). One of the most compelling examples of this I have come across occurred in the course of the action research project reported in part on in Submission 1 though not described therein. It involved walking towards home from the school where our research was based with two groups of boys, one Asian British, one White-British. Along the way we asked them to identify places where they felt safe or vulnerable and to explain why. The journeys, undertaken on different days, followed a similar route and had more or less the same end point, a major London train station which divided the two

neighbourhoods in which the boys lived. What emerged were accounts that mirrored each other in obvious ways. Both groups pointed out graffiti targeted at their community by the other side. Both groups described incidents where they or their friends had been attacked or where inter-group fights had taken place. Both groups felt victimised by each other and could draw upon localised narratives of ways in which their community had suffered the most; both groups invoked techniques of neutralisation to justify violence against the other - self defence, retaliation and provocation.

Interestingly, the results of the survey of students, as is recorded in Submission 1, revealed significantly higher levels of reported victimisation amongst students from ethnic minorities at the school, a finding which some of the white-British boys we had walked with found difficult to explain or accept. In passing it is worth noting how this illustrates the value of having both the reliability offered by quantitative data and the validity which qualitative data brings. The survey provided a reasonably objective measure of victimisation that suggested it was structured by ethnicity and that Bangladeshi students were particularly vulnerable. However, the white students were in a small but notable majority in the school and many came from areas not characterised by a recent history of racial tension, whereas the majority of Bangladeshi students came from one of the two neighbourhoods alluded to above, segregated by ethnicity and the focus for longstanding racialised conflict. For those white boys in the school who came from the opposing neighbourhood, their chances of being a victim in their local area felt, and may well have been, similar to that of the Bangladeshi students. From their perspective, reality looked quite different to the picture revealed in the survey.

In the kind of street-based inter group violence experienced by these students, offending and victimisation can be seen to overlap and even merge into one another and both offenders and victims appear as victims of circumstance, unlucky enough to grow up in a high crime environment. This does not mean individual behaviour is determined or that individual level characteristics are not important - indeed it highlights the significance of subjective experience and how individuals may interpret similar events very differently- but it shows that these experiences and perceptions are shaped by, reflect and act upon wider social structural divisions, organised around class, race and gender. In summarising the findings of the survey, I argued in respect of the overlap between offenders and victims that “those who abstain from anti-social behaviour improve their chances of being left alone” (Porteous, 1998a: 138 (Submission 1). I think now that this overstates the choices available to the young people involved.

In the East London study reported on in Submission 3, where the focus was solely on young victims of street crime, one of the most striking findings concerned the fatalism with which the students viewed crime and violence in the area. The personalised safety strategies described by respondents involved avoiding certain places and people at certain times but there was a sense, born out of bitter experience, that this knowledge of dangerous spaces and groups would only get you so far. Once again then, the threat of crime and violence was felt by respondents to be embedded in the physical and social environment. How you navigated this environment was informed by personal choices but being there in the first place was not.

Like street crime, school exclusion is concentrated amongst the most disadvantaged in society. Indeed although the focus of the study reported on in Submission 2 ostensibly questioned whether there is a causal relationship between school exclusion and offending, its findings were consistent

with perspectives that see the key variable as social exclusion. Research shows that being excluded from school has longstanding implications for individuals' life chances, a limiting of options on the one hand and an exposure to risky, alternative, illicit sources of income and status on the other. It also reveals that exclusion from school, especially if the term is broadened out to reflect other forms of authorised and unauthorised absence, is produced by and reproduces social and educational inequality and disadvantage. Exclusion correlates with offending, yes, sometimes resulting from it, sometimes serving to accelerate it, but both thrive on personal, familial, social and economic difficulties which are in turn structured by factors way beyond the individual: on one side, limited labour market opportunities, a shortage of affordable, appropriate housing, limited 'cultural capital', a lack of money; on the other, lots of free time and easy access to drugs, alcohol and to existing criminal networks and opportunities. This is not to deny agency or the specificities of individual cases. Exclusion can be experienced as exchanging the boredom and restrictions of the classroom for the freedom and the opportunity to transgress on the street (Hayward, 2002) but also as adding the insult of excommunication to the injury of special educational need. Once again, individual terms and conditions apply but in a relatively fixed social market.

As Jock Young puts it, "it is the social context, the structural problems of the system, which produce crime rates" (1998: 81). This does not mean that the violent, impulsive street crime which afflicts the poorest inner city neighbourhoods of the UK can be reduced to poverty or its correlates. For one thing this would be to deny the role of conspicuous consumption, of wealth, in the generation of social strain (Merton, 1938). For another, not all poor neighbourhoods are crime ridden and only a minority of residents in such neighbourhoods are involved in crime. For a third, why deny that family breakdown, bereavement, illness, addiction, disaffection, anger, sloth, domestic violence, recklessness, and prejudice are in some way connected to crime – how else do we explain the royal family. But it is equally fallacious to reduce the problem of youthful street crime to individual or familial characteristics and not to acknowledge the lean, dishevelled and slightly left out feeling elephant in the room. What is now termed social exclusion remains the most important correlate of delinquency:

"When the cobwebs of historical myth are cleared away, then we can begin to see that the real and enduring problem that faces us is not moral decay, or declining parental responsibility, or undutiful working mothers, or the unparalleled debasement of popular amusements – or any other symptom of spiritual degeneration amongst the British people. Rather, it is a material problem. The inescapable reality of the social reproduction of an underclass of the most poor and dispossessed is the material foundation to these hooligan continuities" (Pearson, 1983, p236).

Pearson's seminal work on the enduring spectre of the 'hooligan', 'street arab', 'garrotter' and so on reminds us that contemporary fears about young gang members are not new. Still the focus is on the young criminal. The significant contribution I have made to knowledge in respect of youth crime has been to add empirical weight and depth to the evidence concerning the extent, distribution and experience of victimisation amongst children and young people in schools and public spaces. The research findings have to be understood in the context of other work which shows that the threat and experience of victimisation is exponentially higher to children and young people growing up in areas with high rates of street crime. These areas and neighbourhoods within areas, with their high levels of unemployment, financial poverty, overcrowded housing, environmental degradation,

overstretched public facilities etc., are the outcome of economic and social arrangements and policies and the significant redistribution of wealth and resources which occurred in the UK from the late 1970s to at least the mid 1990s making one tiny minority fantastically rich and another much bigger minority, considerably poorer (Dorling, 2011; Taylor, 1999). In this period, children and young people in general became more likely to live below the official poverty line and, as a consequence, more likely to be the victim of street crime. The apparent rise in street crime victimisation amongst young people in the 1990s that I documented in Submission 4 was in part the result of a hitherto hidden problem being brought into the limelight but also that of the political decision that the price of economic restructuring in terms of social inequity and strife was one worth paying. Young victims of street crime in such neighbourhoods are picking up the tab. Those actually taking their money at knifepoint are only the most immediately culpable. Victimisation is a social problem and a social responsibility.

To say that children and young people's victimisation has been brought into the limelight is only partially true. My research with that of others shows that much bullying and street crime remains hidden on a day to day basis, through fear of retaliation and the fact that access to justice is mostly gate-kept by adults (Finkelhor et al., 2001). Much more goes on than gets reported. Thus researchers have an obligation to channel the experiences of young victims to a wider audience, to communicate their sense of helplessness, fear, anger and frustration and to explain the social origins of their unhappiness. This is the contribution I would like to think I have tried to make. That task seems as important as ever in the present context. On the day I write this, the pin-striped trousered misanthropists running the current government see their plans to cap benefits finally rolled out in practice, guaranteeing further hardship to the least well off in society. If Bourdieu, writing ten years before the worst global depression for almost a century, was right, the consequences will be grim:

“You cannot cheat the law of the conservation of violence: all violence is paid for, and, for example, the structural violence exerted by the financial markets, in the form of layoffs, loss of security etc., is matched sooner or later in the form of suicides, crime and delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, a whole host of minor and major everyday acts of violence”
(1998: 40)

The corollary of this argument is that when times are good, economically speaking, and when governments invest significant resources in redressing the distribution of wealth and resources, the quality of life in disadvantaged neighbourhoods should improve. Empirical support for this thesis has recently been provided in a report on the impact of policy under New Labour on neighbourhood renewal (Lupton et al., 2013). Citing the Social Exclusion Unit's indictment - “*we should not have neighbourhoods where so many people's number one priority is to move out*” (cited in Lupton et al.: 7), the authors argue that at the heart of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal “was an intention to reform the way that government approached poor neighbourhoods and the distribution of resources and services between places, principally on equity grounds” (ibid.:31). And in significant ways, the strategy worked:

“By 2007 evidence was indicating that that NRF and mainstream central government spending was generating large and noticeable improvements in neighbourhood environments and services: for example new childcare centres, health centres, and community buildings, better neighbourhood management and policing and reduced crime, a

higher standard of housing, new school buildings and extended services in schools. Gaps in neighbourhood satisfaction were closing slightly, overall, and residents of programme areas reported that their areas were getting better" (ibid.: 31).

Evidence for a reduction in crime in poor neighbourhoods matches that for England and Wales as a whole (Flatley et al., 2010), and may have been more profound for young people. Results from the British Crime Survey's second ever sweep of under 16-year-olds suggesting that there has been a substantial reduction in victimisation amongst them between 1992 and 2009. In 1992, 60 per cent of children interviewed reported one or more incidents in which they had been a victim and 18 per cent reported incidents which they considered a crime (Aye Maung, 1995, :13). The comparable figures in 2009 were 24 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (Millard & Flatley, 2010: 11). It may be telling that in a time when the criminal victimisation of children and young people has been increasingly recognised, it also seems to have more than halved. It seems extremely unlikely that a significant input of human and capital resources and a reduction in crime and victimisation in poorer neighbourhoods was entirely coincidental though with the important caveat that both a drop in the crime rate and a policy focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods predated the election of Tony Blair, as did the sustained upturn in the British economy.

That's the good news. Lupton et al. also note that whilst certain "gaps", including the crime rate, narrowed between the poorest neighbourhoods and the average neighbourhood, "all gaps remained large" (ibid.: 4) and some have widened since the financial crisis in 2008. Meanwhile, comparisons between adults and children at any one point in time seem to confirm that the latter are at greater risk and that, as Brown puts it, that "despite young people's undoubted widespread involvement in ()offending....(this is) far outweighed by their vulnerability as victims" (2003: 122). The distribution of victimisation remains structured by one's age, one's class, one's ethnicity; and it depends on where you live as much as on what you do. At a time when inequality seems likely to widen once more, monitoring the impact upon children and young's people's safety and wellbeing is a matter of social justice.

Understanding Youth Justice

As the crime rate fell, the numbers of young people sent to prison rose. The number of custodial sentences imposed upon children rose from approximately 4000 per annum in 1992 to 7,600 in 2001, a 90% increase (Goldson and Muncie, 2006: 145) such that by "Spring 2002, England and Wales had more children under lock and key than at any time since 1908 (Pitts, 2003, p60). It has since fallen again: by 2012, the daily population of young people in custody was half that of just four years earlier. There are, as Bateman (2012) observes, eerie echoes here of the Thatcher years, the last time such a dramatic fall in youth imprisonment occurred. Since that drop corresponded with a doubling of the recorded crime rate (Pitts, 2003), it may be tempting to see a correlation: when prison rates drop, the amount of crime rises and visa-versa. The link is however almost certainly illusory. First, the 'dark figure of crime', the huge number of unreported, unrecorded and undetected offences mean that who gets sent to prison bears only passing resemblance to who has offended. Secondly, for those who are in custody, the experience would appear to increase rather than reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Thirdly, a "growth in the numbers of children locked up is almost entirely due to harsher treatment, rather than changes in the pattern of youth offending and youth crime" (Bateman 2006: 74) – doubling the length of sentence for the same offence is an

example of how this can occur. Thus as Fionda stated, though at a time when the numbers were a lot higher than now:

“The reason for the continued use of imprisonment must therefore be political; it serves the purposes of a government to whom political appeal is more important than achieving long term reductions on the crime figures.” (2005: p171)

The emphasis upon not making excuses for young offenders and on nipping things in the bud through early intervention and prevention that in part characterised New Labour’s reforms to the youth justice system had, as is noted in Submission 9, the effect of significantly increasing the number of first time entrants to that system. The Audit Commission, when it returned to evaluate the impact of the changes to youth justice that it had significantly influenced through its report *Misspent Youth* were slightly critical of this development, observing that “(w)hile some young offenders are benefiting from early pre-court interventions, too many minor offences are taking up valuable time” (Audit Commission, 2004, cited in Porteous, 2007b: 268 (Submission 9)). In relation to custody, as Bateman (2012) argues, there is evidence to suggest that an increase in first time entrants will lead, for a combination of reasons, to an increase in the number of young people locked up down the line but that the reverse may also be true. In the early years of the New Labour government, the number of entrants increased markedly as did the custodial population, whereas it is since the introduction of a target requiring a reduction in first time entrants in 2007 that the significant decline in the youth custody population in England and Wales has occurred. It is not the only reason and the evidence is not as straightforward as this sounds but the example illustrates the key point that how youth crime is dealt with reflects the changing needs and behaviour of policy makers in ways that relate only indirectly to the changing needs and behaviour of young offenders or victims.

Writing about the ‘American prison experiment’ through which the size of the US prison population more than doubled between 1985 and 1996 reaching 1.6 million, equivalent to the city of Philadelphia, a figure which trebles if those on parole and probation are included, Jock Young writes:

“It is not part of the social contract which underpins liberal democracy that it should imprison and oversee so many of its citizens. Nor that it should do so while being so palpably incapable of protecting them. The rates of violence in the United States are exceptional amongst the stable democratic countries: its overall homicide rate is seven times that of England and Wales; its murder rate for young men is a staggering 52 times higher, whilst large tracts of its great cities are no-go areas for its citizens, whether men or women” (1999: 146).

This point further undermines any notion that imprisonment is a solution to a high crime rate. However, it is important to see that Young does not dispute that something needs to be done, the issue is ‘what is to be done?’. In the 1980s, writing in a book co-authored by John Lea (Lea and Young, 1984), Young was highly critical of the tendency amongst those he termed ‘left idealist’ criminologists to focus wholly on the harms of criminal justice (like mass imprisonment); in so doing, they overlooked and underestimated the ‘real’ harms caused by crime. As I have done above in respect of the victimisation of children and young people, Lea and Young observed that these harms were unevenly distributed amongst the population with victimisation concentrated amongst the least well off. With their left realist colleagues, Lea and Young subsequently pioneered local

victimisation surveys which revealed that crime was more hidden and more prevalent than suggested by national crime surveys (Kinsey, 1984; Jones et al., 1986).

In his analysis of the reforms to criminal justice introduced by New Labour through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 referred to in chapter 3, Brownlee argues that New Labour borrowed from or exploited (he allows for both possibilities) the left realist message that crime was to be taken seriously (by Socialists) and that this helped opened the door to the punitive tone and quality of its criminal and youth justice reforms:

“ The development of this pragmatic and gradualist paradigm on the centre left of criminology was a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition for the emergence of New Labour’s new tough stance on law and order because it provided a coherent and robustly defended theoretical justification for abandoning some of Labour’s old shibboleths about crime and its control” (1998: 321).

Although Brownlee’s identification of contradictions in New Labour’s criminal justice policy, for example between a commitment to getting tough on crime and to managing it more efficiently, is apposite, the suggestion that left realism was a necessary condition for the former seems overly contrived. The argument relies heavily on an equation between Young’s argument that “(c)crime, like any other form of behaviour, involves moral choice in certain restricting circumstances” (1994, cited in Brownlee, 1998: 320) and a New Labour policy document asserting that “recognising that there are underlying causes of crime is in no way to excuse or condone offending” (1996: cited in *ibid*: 320). But the difference between these two points, as Brownlee does partially acknowledge, is significant. The first suggests that offending involves making a moral choice but that this is conditioned, though not determined, by context. The second states that offending is immoral whatever the circumstances. The first follows Marx’s dictum that people “make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances of their own choosing” (1852/1968: 96), whilst the second states only that people make choices. Moreover to say that there are ethical implications to offending does not necessarily condemn the behaviour and in left realist theory, “restricting circumstances” include ideological structures or conditions so that what is defined as immoral is not fixed but contingent.

Whilst echoes of left realism could certainly be detected in New Labour rhetoric on crime and criminal justice (Newburn, 2007: 268), it makes more sense to say that its biggest influence was in providing evidential and theoretical support for the ‘old’ Labour notion that crime has its origins in relative deprivation but with the important addendum that it is the relatively deprived who suffer most from it. Subsequently, Young (2007) criticised New Labour’s policies on social exclusion, arguing that they addressed its symptoms rather than its causes. Reformulating his and Lea’s earlier arguments regarding relative deprivation (defined as an “excess of expectations over opportunities” (Lea and Young, 1984) Young argued that:

“The movement from an inclusive to an exclusive society involves an unravelling of the labour markets: a creation of large sectors of the population who are either economically precarious or actually excluded. Relative deprivation becomes blatant in the comparisons across such a dislocated social terrain. Meanwhile the same market forces which transformed the labour market generate a new world of lifestyle and consumerism on the back of which emerges an individualism which permeates society (see Currie, 1997a). Crime

springs from this combination and becomes a normal feature of everyday life” (see Lea and Young 1993; Garland, 1996)” (Young 1999: 132, citations in original).

Whilst acknowledging the unequal distribution, quantitatively and qualitatively, of crime and victimisation which concentrates some forms of crime in some neighbourhoods, Young draws attention to the fact that in late modern societies, “the incidence of crime ... spreads palpably and obviously across the map” (ibid.:132) – the problem is not one of criminogenic neighbourhoods, it is of a criminogenic society. In targeting certain neighbourhoods and certain groups (for example, teenage parents, children not in education employment and training – NEETs), New Labour’s social exclusion policies implicitly reflected ‘moral underclass’ and ‘social inclusion’ versions of social exclusion discourse, a result of the fecklessness of individuals and families (Murray, 1990) or of the lack of opportunities for them to ‘rejoin’ society whilst their broader economic policy fell short of the more radical redistributive and transformative strategy which ‘stronger’ versions of social exclusion discourse would entail (Young, 2007; Byrne, 1999; Levitas, 1998).

If realism was an influence on New Labour’s criminal justice strategy then it is arguably the right realism of Murray (1990) and of Wilson and Kelling (1986), with their talk of an underclass and of zero tolerance of disorder that was the more profound. However, the most direct theoretical influences on youth justice policy were the risk factor prevention paradigm developed by Farrington and others, the communitarian philosophy of Etzioni (1995) and the notion of triangulation captured in the phrase ‘the third way’ (Giddens, 1998). It is these ideas which constitute the intellectual basis for the emphasis on the prevention of youth crime, on young people having responsibilities as well as rights, on the importance of involving the community, of policy being joined-up etc. at the heart of New Labour’s reforms. It is these ideas which provided the theoretical justification for the more punitive approach to youth crime which Blair and his colleagues calculated as necessary for electoral success. It is these ideas which the Audit Commission (1996) drew upon in articulating what a more efficient, effective and economic youth justice system would look like and which subsequently placed risk assessment and evidence-based practice at the centre of work with young offenders, spawning new forms of intervention including parenting projects, youth offending panels and mentoring schemes.

My work on mentoring represents a case study in one area of the new youth justice whose implications reflect and reveal the logic but also the hubris of the wider strategy. Mentoring fitted in with the suite of preventative strategies developed under the aegis of the Youth Justice Board in that it chimed with the kinds of behavioural and skills training identified within the Home Office under the banner ‘what works’ (Goldblatt and Lewis, 1998; McGuire, 1995). Whilst lacking the clinical rigour associated with cognitive-behavioural therapy, the logic underpinning mentoring is similar in the sense that it is under the advice and guidance of a trusted and trustworthy role model that the at-risk mentee will recover their moral compass and engage in the kind of purposeful activity needed to fulfil their potential as a good citizen. Thus mentoring is clearly an individualised method of prevention, one which as per risk factor research, locates many of the causes of crime and anti-social behaviour within the offender – the mentor’s role is to help the young person to take personal responsibility for their own actions. Likewise, mentoring is a ‘flexible friend’ with the potential, theoretically, to address different risk factors according to circumstance – drug misuse, difficult family relationships, peer-group pressure, problems at school, impulsivity and so on. In respect of ‘bad parenting’ or the absence of parents (and especially fathers) which the new

government had identified as “one of the biggest causes of serious juvenile delinquency” (Straw, 1998, cited in Pitts , 2003: 45), a potential role for mentors according to Jack Straw (in an interview with The Sunday Times Newspaper) was as a kind of ‘surrogate parent’ (cited in Muncie 1999: 157). In accordance with communitarian theory, mentors would be drawn from the same area as their mentee. If child curfews and ASBOs represented the bad cop of the ‘third way’ approach to crime reduction, the mentor embodied the good.

Yet as a method for preventing offending, for all this promise, mentoring proved to be something of a disappointment. As I evidenced in Submissions 7 and 8, the collective finding of evaluative research over time was that there was little evidence that mentoring on its own could have a significant impact upon offending behaviour. This is very different from saying that in some cases, mentoring cannot help young people in any number of ways which may coincide and help with desistance from offending. It simply points out that such successes are limited in number and scope, that they are contingent on other factors such as the young person being sufficiently engaged with the process and/or having a place in training or a job that satisfies their needs and expectations, and that imagining volunteer mentors as even part of the solution to youth crime is to ignore its enduring, complex, politicised and social character.

I would characterise youth justice interventions such as mentoring in the same way that Marx and Engels viewed Robert Owen and others’ attempts to establish living models of ‘socialism’ in the north of England, as utopian. These models were based, Marx and Engels (1848/1968) argued, on an idealistic conception of human nature abstracted from the material reality of industrial capitalism and the conflict of interests which it bred yet also depended upon. Likewise, a faith in mentoring as a solution to youth offending can only be sustained if one believes that the problem resides within the individual and their personal history and circumstances, abstracted from the uneven and uncertain society in which they live.

My work on mentoring makes a significant contribution to an extensive critique of recent youth justice policy in the literature, only elements of which I have drawn upon in this statement. However, I would not like to see lost in this reflexive and critical analysis, the positive aspects of mentoring (Submission 5) and peer-based drugs education (Submission 6) practice which I have witnessed. As I have tried to emphasise in the critical review chapter, my research in these areas has provided reliable and valid evidence of the small but tangible gains which can be achieved by small scale projects working with disadvantaged and vulnerable young people and of the dedication and commitment of practitioners and volunteers involved with them. Utopianism does not characterise such interventions at this level; those at the coalface are typically well aware of the bigger social and economic forces underpinning youth crime or drug misuse and of the “restrictive circumstances” in which they and their clients must operate.

But for this reason also, it behoves the applied social researcher to step back from the immediate context in which these kinds of project operate, to situate their analysis within a wider political and theoretical framework, and to be critical. It may well be that young people learn more effectively about the harms of illicit drugs from those closer to them in age and experience but if the greatest harms arise from certain substances being criminalised then questions arise as to how helpful such a policy is; it could serve to reproduce the problem it seeks to resolve. It may be that some young people with a criminal record will be successfully mentored into a promising career but it is as well

to remember that some are simultaneously being mentored into the local gang and that what prevents many young people from taking the more socially acceptable route is the parlous state of the local labour market. Interventions such as these may help to heal those wounded by the inherent contradictions of late modern capitalist societies, but if in doing so they also serve to deflect attention from such underlying, generative factors, they can be interpreted as doing the devil's work for him.

Conclusion

In 'States of Denial', Stanley Cohen analyses the ways in which various forms of suffering are denied, from the smoker who refuses to take on board the irrefutable evidence of the harmful effects of tobacco, to the parent who does not acknowledge that their partner is abusing their child, to the villagers living nearby a concentration camp not understanding the significance of the occasional smoke and noxious smell, to the TV watcher who turns over when an appeal is made in the wake of a famine (Cohen, 2001). Cohen is compelled and dismayed by the seemingly timeless and universal human capacity to see and not see, to know and not know about, the unpleasant, appalling, and grotesque things happening to and around them. The 'seemingly' is important though. Cohen also describes the manner in which extreme denials of suffering are scarcely ever sustained – the leaders of the holocaust are brought to trial, apartheid is abolished, the suspicion of institutional racism becomes 'official' – thereby drawing attention to the sometimes heroic stands against suffering and for justice which individuals and groups can and do make and reminding us all that to see or not see, know or not know, is a choice, albeit in circumstances not of our own choosing.

In the critical criminological tradition in which I choose, or rather, wish to locate my own work, there are longstanding strategic tensions, between resistance and reform, between principled critique and pragmatic engagement, between idealism and realism. These strategic tensions have their theoretical counterparts in disputes over the role and nature of social control, over what are the key variables (in the broadest sense) in explaining crime, over whether crime 'exists' in the first place, and they characterise methodological arguments concerning whether, what and how things should be measured at what time and in what place. What unites critical criminologists, however, is a concern with power and powerlessness, with harm and suffering, with offending and victimisation (again, in the broadest sense) and a conviction not that science equals progress but that the status quo is not inevitable and that not knowing is insufficient excuse.

My modest contributions to this tradition, as represented by the submissions put forward for this PhD by Public Works, add to our understanding of youth crime and youth justice in the following ways. On the one hand, my work has illuminated the suffering experienced by young victims of school and 'street-based' crime and violence and revealed how this is concentrated in and contributes towards broader forms of social disadvantage, whilst emphasising that victimisation and offending correlate not because of the characteristics of the individuals and families involved but because of the restricting circumstances of late modern capitalist societies. On the other hand, my work on mentoring is a case study in the way in which such 'solutions' to the crime problem are destined to fail precisely because they focus predominantly on changing the attitudes, behaviour and circumstances of those deemed a risk to society and so cannot and do not have a significant bearing on the wider social and economic context. The important caveat to this, however, is that for

as long as such interventions mitigate suffering, we are better with than without them. Utopia and reality may be closer than we realise.

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